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Polish-Ukrainian Borderland Cultural Heritage Bridges—Lesson Drawn from Forced Population Relocation

Bohdan Cherkes , Józef Hernik , Karol Król *  and Magdalena Wilkosz-Mamcarczyk 

Department of Land Management and Landscape Architecture, University of Agriculture in Kraków, Balicka 253c, 30-198 Kraków, Poland; tscherkes53@gmail.com (B.C.); rmhernik@cyf-kr.edu.pl (J.H.); mwilkosz-mamcarczyk@gmail.com (M.W.-M.)

* Correspondence: k.krol@onet.com.pl

Abstract: Due to the turbulent history, unstable political situation, and the diverse ethnic composition of the population, there are numerous and varied cultural heritage objects in the Polish-Ukrainian borderland area, which has also developed characteristic landscape forms. The aim of the paper is to identify the elements of Polish cultural heritage that have remained in the collective memory of inhabitants of the Ukrainian side of the Polish-Ukrainian borderland 75 years after the forced relocation. The questionnaire survey was carried out in 2019 in selected cities of Eastern Galicia, namely, Zhovkva, Mostyska, Horodok, and Rava-Ruska. The study demonstrated that even 75 years after the forced relocation, Polish cultural heritage is still alive and has an effect on the development of the border towns and cities of Eastern Galicia. It is the elements of non-material culture, including the gastronomic culture of relocated nations, that have been preserved the best in the collective memory of borderland inhabitants. The Ukrainian population also demonstrated a good knowledge of Polish traditions and Catholic feasts as well as folk songs and Christmas carols. These are “cultural heritage bridges” that may serve as both a forum for mutual understanding and a platform for a dialogue and cooperation.

Keywords: cultural overlaps; heritage; cooperation; reconciliation; development policies



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1. Introduction

Over the last several years, the status of the Polish borderlands has changed radically. In the post-war years, the borderlands were areas on which secret services and strategists primarily focused their attention. Over time, as the opportunities to cross national border increased, the borderlands became an area of contact, clash, and cooperation among representatives of different cultures and interests [1].

Poland and Ukraine are neighbouring countries that belong to various systems; however, they are political and economic partners. The concept of “neighbourhood” expresses the nature of relations between different national groupings living in a shared area and the ways in which these relationships developed [2]. The dynamically developing cooperation between these countries is currently taking place on many levels, including regional and local ones (see Appendix A). However, the multicultural past of the Polish-Ukrainian borderland has been largely destroyed by genocide, ethnic cleansing, deportations, and various nationalism-based ethnic conflicts [3]. Since 1989, pilgrims, survivors, tourists as well as religious, political, and social activists have been re-discovering the Polish-Ukrainian borderland. Poles, Ukrainians, Jews as well as Russian and western travellers cross borders in search of memories of their childhood, places of deportation, war experiences, or, simply, the province they have lost [4].

The national borders of the Polish-Ukrainian borderlands are a result of the Second World War when Poland lost territories to the Soviet Union. This resulted in displaced heritages and difficult memories, but this past becomes part of the present bordering

narratives in very different ways. The “cultural overlaps” have recently been considered as opportunities for cooperation and new institutions [5].

Cross-border cooperation is a significant factor that stimulates the socioeconomic development of the Polish-Ukrainian borderland [6]. Ukraine is Poland’s political and economic partner. Due to its location on the European Union’s external eastern border, this neighbourhood is also of strategic importance to the entire Union. The large scale of population movements and the highly dynamic economic processes in the border regions of Poland and Ukraine are primarily due to the imbalance among the economic, technological, institutional, and infrastructural potential, and to legal solutions that facilitate the transparent development of entrepreneurship or local governments [7,8]. In recent times, disintegration processes related to the unstable political situation in Ukraine have contributed to a greater intensity of cross-border interactions in the Polish-Ukrainian borderland [9].

Due to the turbulent history, unstable political situation, and the diverse ethnic composition of the population, there are numerous and varied cultural heritage objects in the Polish-Ukrainian borderland area, which has also developed characteristic landscape forms. The multicultural heritage of the borderland, despite its complicated history, is more and more often perceived as a heritage that deserves to be both preserved and paid attention to by the general public [10]. The cultural landscape that evolved over the centuries was largely destroyed and transformed during the Second World War. Moreover, the demarcation of a new border between Poland and the USSR (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) in 1944 had a profound impact on the landscape of this area, in particular, on the population density, settlement structure, transport network, and the spatial development structure [11].

In independent Ukraine, as elsewhere in Europe, cultural landscapes and heritages have been a concern of a growing number of stakeholders and, consequently, a potential zone of conflict between private and public interests [10]. The aim of the paper is to identify the elements of Polish cultural heritage that have remained in the collective memory of the inhabitants of the Ukrainian side of the Polish-Ukrainian borderland 75 years after the forced relocation. The authors seek answers to whether the Ukrainians who live in the Polish-Ukrainian borderland cherish the memory of Polish cultural heritage assets. What is their attitude towards the heritage and what components of the heritage are anchored the most in their memory to be used as threads of the Polish-Ukrainian understanding? The research approach followed the concept of memory embodied in certain places where the sense of a historical continuum remains, as proposed by Pierre Nora, where “There are lieux de memoire, sites of memory, because there are no longer milieux de memoire, real environments of memory” [12] (p. 7).

This paper is organised as follows. The introduction is followed by Section 2, with the main concepts related to collective memory. The third section of the article offers an analysis of problems related to the borderland. It contains a classification of types of borderland and typical features of such areas. It furthermore describes conditions for the socioeconomic development of the Polish-Ukrainian borderland. With the basics introduced, the next section defines the methodology of the study. It is followed by results and a literature review enhanced with figures. A discussion and key conclusions summarise the research.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Collective Memory

In cognitive and biological sciences, memory is mainly conceptualised as an individual ability. On the other hand, in social sciences memory is most often interpreted as a collective phenomenon. Collective memory has been put to diverse uses, ranging from accounts of nationalism in history and political science to views of ritualisation and commemoration in anthropology and sociology. All these appeals to collective memory share the idea that memory “goes beyond the individual,” as Wilson [13] put it.

The study of collective memory has grown remarkably since Halbwachs (1925/1992) first discussed the topic many years ago [14]. As stated by Schwartz [15] (p. 302): “Col-

lective memory is a metaphor that formulates society's retention and loss of information about its past in the familiar terms of individual remembering and forgetting." According to Halbwachs [16], memory is the product of a social group. It is a past that is shaped by and meaningful for a community. Communication is a critical element of collective memory. According to Edy [17] (p. 72), communication makes possible the unique capacity of collective memory to preserve pasts older than the oldest living individual.

As was suggested by Schuman and Scott [18], collective memories are widely shared knowledge of past social events that may not have been personally experienced, but are collectively constructed through communicative social functions. Wertsch [19], on the other hand, believed collective memory to be a representation of the past shared by members of a group such as a generation or nation-state. Memory is shaped by the participation in collective life. Various groups create different accounts of the past [16].

The term collective memory refers to a community's understanding of its shared past. As Wertsch [19] (2008) established, collective memory is often understood in terms of loose analogies with memory in the individual. Olick [20] (p. 333) noted that "Two different concepts of collective memory compete—one refers to the aggregation of socially framed individual memories and one refers to collective phenomena *sui generis*—though the difference is rarely articulated in the literature." Therefore, Olick distinguished the individualistic and collectivist understanding of collective memory. The former is open to psychological considerations, including neurological and cognitive factors. Still, it neglects technologies of memory other than the brain and how cognitive and even neurological patterns are constituted in part by genuinely social processes. The latter emphasises the social and cultural patternings of public and personal memory but neglects how those processes are constituted in part by psychological dynamics [20]. On the other hand, Kansteiner [21] (p. 179) noted that "The memory wave in the humanities has contributed to the impressive revival of cultural history, but the success of memory studies has not been accompanied by significant conceptual and methodological advances in the research of collective memory processes. Most studies on memory focus on the representation of specific events within particular chronological, geographical, and media settings without reflecting on the audiences of the representations in question. As a result, the wealth of new insights into past and present historical cultures cannot be linked conclusively to specific social collectives and their historical consciousness."

It is not always clear what scientists understand by the term "collective memory". Gedi and Elam [22] noted that the term has been replacing older and possibly more useful ones such as "ritual". Fabian [23] stated that the concept of (collective) memory might be difficult or even impossible to distinguish from identity or culture. On the other hand, Berliner [24] initiated a discussion on the so-called "abuses of memory" [14]. According to Wertsch and Roediger [25] (p. 318), to outline the conceptual landscape that frames discussions of collective memory three oppositions are proposed: collective memory versus collective remembering; history versus collective memory; and individual memory versus collective remembering. From this perspective, collective remembering is perceived as an active process, often accompanied by lively discussions and arguments between people, rather than a static resource of their knowledge. Collective remembering is also viewed by Wertsch and Roediger [25] as privileging identity formation and contestation over the sort of objective representation of the past that is the aspiration of formal historical analysis. Wertsch [19] noted that interest in collective memory is also found in popular culture with its debates about memory for the Vietnam War, the Holocaust, and other such topics.

Sociologists and social psychologists use the terms "collective memory", i.e., the memory shared by groups or societies, or "social memory" [26]. Here, collective memory is used as memory built together by a group of people with shared lineage who live in similar socioeconomic conditions and pursue similar goals. This approach looks for a balance between the individualistic and collectivist approach to societal processes. It helps analyse a specific aspect of individual memories while considering their social frameworks and the public discourse about the past. The differentiation stems from different concepts of

culture as such, which can be perceived subjectively (individually), or through the socio-public lens [27].

2.2. Borderland Areas

The word “borderland” has many meanings; however, it is most often considered from the geographical and sociological, or, in other words, spatial and cultural perspective. The borderland is an area or a territory located near the border or far away from the centre. Within the borderland, socio-cultural contact takes place between various nations or ethnic groups. This is where the “new people and their culture” are formed. A borderland is sometimes precisely delimited, e.g., based on natural objects such as rivers or mountain ranges, or on administrative attributes. It is, however, most frequently determined on the basis of settlement geography. Its actual area and range are determined by migrations, colonisation, and cultural diversity of its inhabitants [28]. Importantly, it should be assumed that in order for a borderland to emerge, a specific state of awareness needs to develop among the inhabitants of a particular area [29].

Primarily, the borderland has a spatial dimension; it is delineated territorially as an area near a border. However, perceiving a borderland exclusively in the spatial context, i.e., as a region located “near the state border”, is not very exhaustive in terms of the spatial and geographical aspect. In administrative terms, the basis of a cross-border region is the administrative division of units directly bordering on each other. The Polish-Ukrainian cross-border region is comprised of five regions, including Lubelskie Voivodeship and Podkarpacie Voivodeship on the Polish side, and, on the Ukrainian side, the Lviv, Volyn and Zakarpattia Oblasts (provinces in Ukrainian nomenclature) [6]. Borderlands, however, are not formed by the elites’ cross-border declarations or administrative and political borders on the map. Borderlands are established by the people who live there, through diverse contacts that occur when individual needs are being satisfied, and as a result of the formulation and achievement of collective objectives [30]. Similar to the identity, the borderland can be regarded as a synthesis of the relationships between the structural and the functional aspects. Nowadays, a borderland is a category for discovering new areas of cohesion and distinctiveness, freedom of choice and obligation, and a basis for the processes of information and participation in which various forms and levels of life are focused. Therefore, not only does a borderland appear in individual life but also in different systems, organisations, and institutions of social life [31].

Borderlands and constituent border regions are particularly vulnerable to changes in international relations, compared to areas located within the country [32]. Their specific attributes are: the nature of the state border, the geographical (geopolitical) location, differences in levels of development and the functioning of the economies of regions adjacent along the border, differences in the state of development in relation to border regions of neighbouring countries, the institutional distance associated with the competence inadequacy of neighbouring administrative regions and sub-regional units [33], socio-cultural conditions connected with the functioning of national and ethnic minorities, and stereotypes about the population of neighbouring border regions [32].

A border region is an area that is part of a geographical space determined by its location along a state border, on one of its sides [34]. However, a borderland is a transitional area between not only two or more countries but also between different nations or religious, linguistic or cultural groups. This may be a consequence of historical changes in the political affiliation of a particular territory, the mixing of populations due to colonisation processes, and the intersection of political influences. Settlement processes, migrations, and the national, linguistic, religious, cultural, social, and economic diversity among the inhabitants provide the basis for the borderland zone delimitation. They are also the main factors that determine its distinctness and dissimilarity to other regions [35].

2.3. Borderland Types

In general, two borderland types are distinguished, namely, contact and zonal borderlands. This division is based on linguistic and ethnic differences [36]. The contact borderland is characterised by the fact that communities with clear linguistic distinctiveness are found within its area, e.g., Polish and German or Hungarian and Slovak. A zonal borderland concerns the related, e.g., Slavic, communities. Contact borderlands are usually more distinctive and have a smaller area, as opposed to zonal borderlands in which the focus of division is often blurred. A specific type of the borderland area is the so-called Kresy, or Polish former eastern territories. In Polish literature, they are most often considered equivalent with the southeastern ends of the First and Second Polish Republic, i.e., the area of contemporary Ukraine [35].

The eastern borderlands, which in the interwar period spread along the frontiers of Poland with Lithuania and Latvia on the north, the Soviet Union on the east and Romania on the south, had the reputation of an “exotic territory” on the one hand, and “uncivilized” and neglected on the other. Each region of this phenomenon was distinctive in terms of its cultural specificity outlined in the interplay of various religions, languages, and nationalities [37].

Moreover, ethnic borderlands, i.e., zones of contact between two or more ethnic communities, can also be distinguished. The existence of this borderland type is not necessarily related to the current course of national boundaries. It is often a consequence of population relocations, migrations, or historical, territorial, and political changes. Its space functions primarily in the inhabitants’ consciousness. Certainly, nations are internally diverse in terms of their sense of identity, and the integration and assimilation processes lead to the blurring of ethnic differences, which hinders the precise typology of ethnic borderlands. There are known cases when even a part of a village or a town, situated on the other side of the river, is referred to as, e.g., German, Russian, or Polish. It also sometimes happens that the lines of ethnic division actually run within individual families, between persons connected by blood. In general, however, the area of an ethnic borderland has no clearly defined boundaries, even in public awareness [35]. The literature also distinguishes the cultural borderland, which is defined as an area of contact and interactions between at least two separate cultures and their representatives [38].

Economic globalisation and the development of means of transport have stimulated intercultural migrations, intensified the processes of intercultural communication, and contributed to the growth of cultural diversity through the extension of borderland areas from the periphery to socioeconomic and political centres. They have also multiplied the cultural diversity by bringing together, in terms of territory, the representatives of cultures which, in the past, rarely met or had no idea about one another. Hence, the so-called “global borderlands” can also be distinguished [38]. Moreover, according to Gładysz [39], the borderland areas may be regarded as an “entrenchment” (protection against all things alien), a bridge-head (an area acquired as a stage for further expansion), and as a “foot bridge” (the transition to the mutual exchange of material and spiritual values) [39].

2.4. Borderland Characteristics

The most frequently mentioned specific attributes of the Polish-Ukrainian borderland include: (1) its geographical location as well as the nature and function of the state border, (2) a peripheral position in relation to other regions, (3) a low level of development and urbanisation, (4) poor communication accessibility, (5) differences in the state of development as compared to border regions, (6) social and cultural determinants (including those concerning national and ethnic minorities), and (7) multiculturalism [40]. The socioeconomic development of borderland areas is determined inter alia by the diversity of institutional space, including the diversity of economic operators, the cooperation relations and the level of the development of negotiation structures on both sides of the border, the performance of formal communication channels, and the network of institutions that promote innovations, transfer of knowledge, and cooperation [41].

The diversity of borderland inhabitants is not only related to ethnic or religious issues but also to social differences in a broad sense, which are mainly formed due to the territorial expansion and the colonisation of the population dominant in a particular territory. The social, cultural, and economic differences occurring between the incoming and the local population are usually clear and may increase over time. Social differences are enhanced by the nature of colonisation, since the inhabitants of cities and villages differ in many respects, and the population coming to the borderland inhabits mainly towns and cities, while the majority of rural community are indigenous [35].

The social coexistence in borderlands is usually not a partnership in nature. As a rule, the group that is dominant, particularly in economic and cultural terms, and not always in terms of numbers, imposes its culture on indigenous people. The manifestations of socio-cultural contacts do not always have to take negative forms, as it is a very broad term—from extreme separateness and segregation, through confrontation, rivalry, willingness to dominate and subordinate, and finally assimilation, ending with harmonious cooperation [35].

In the characteristics of a borderland, the cultural dimension is of significance. Within a borderland area, various elements of culture intermingle and may have an effect on the differentiation of the communities living there. As a consequence of the contact and mixing of various communities characterised by different cultural traditions and various value systems, the “borderland culture” with specific features and numerous borrowed ideas is established in borderlands. A clash of cultures almost always results in the so-called cultural diffusion. Therefore, in a borderland, as a result of the interpenetration of cultures, a “new type of people” as well a new type of a community and its culture develop that are sometimes referred to as “borderland people”. Borderland people are formed by at least two cultures and sometimes even participate in cultural life, traditions, and values of two or, sometimes, more communities [35]. They have a sense of belonging to two nations at the same type and often have a good command of many languages.

Maria Lewicka [42] conducted a cluster analysis and revealed five clusters: two types of place attachment (traditional and active attachment) and three types of nonattachment (alienation, place relativity, and placelessness), corresponding to David Hummon’s five types of sense of community. A representative national sample of 2556 residents of Poland was drawn at random from the population so that they best represented the country profile with respect to age, level of education, and community size. Lewicka [42] demonstrated that traditional place attachment is based solely on local identity, and active place attachment is associated with European and nonterritorial identity, along with the local attachment. Her research demonstrated that places retain their meaning in times of intensified socio-economic development, but the form of attachment changes: the active and self-conscious attachment replaces the traditional attachment. In her other study, Lewicka [26] analysed the collective memory of residents of two twin cities: Львів (Lviv, Ukraine, previously Lwów, Poland) and Wrocław (Poland, previously Breslau, Germany). They both belong to different states after territorial changes in Central and Eastern Europe following the Second World War, which affected their populations. Lewicka [26] focused on the memory of place of residence and on its relationship with place identity and place attachment. She proved that the degree to which place attachment is associated with the higher-order (national) or lower-order (local) identity predicts the amount of ethnic bias in perceptions of the pre-war past of the two cities.

Borderland people are born, live, and/or die within a borderland, but they act for the benefit of their own little homeland even when living far away from it. Their activities are full of respect for both their native culture and for the culture of their neighbours. They actually have a sense of being the borderland people, i.e., they have a double cultural identity (are characterised by the so-called cultural bivalency or polyvalency). The significance of their activities goes beyond the area of their little homeland [43]. The so-called “borderland man” was characterised in such publications as the research on the Polish-

Czech-Russian borderland under the international project Universities for Borderland. The project involved research teams from the Czech Republic and Poland [43].

Borderland people are usually more open or critical towards strangers, and more attached or indifferent to the value of their own national group than the inhabitants of the centre. Borderland people are more resourceful and enterprising, more innovative and eager to accept ideas and innovations incoming from the outside, particularly when they can notice their positive consequences [30]. According to Zbigniew Kurcz [30], observations of Polish borderlands suggest that their residents usually exhibit a different attitude towards the nearest neighbouring nation than people from the inland. It is not by accident. It results from historical experience modified by social memories and recent developments interpreted from the individual perspective of borderland residents.

What is very important in ethnic and cultural relations in borderlands is religion, which often provides the basis for ethnic differences. Where ethnic differences overlap with religious ones, it is theoretically easier for minority groups to maintain their identity and sense of distinctiveness. On the other hand, where the distinctiveness is only found at the national level and the religion is common, cultural rapprochement as well as the blurring of differences between particular communities may occur. These days, the maintenance of national identity by a minority group in an ethnically and religiously diverse borderland is determined by many factors, including the number and degree of territorial concentration, political and legal determinants, the system of education, the group integration level, and the activities of minority group members [35].

The so-called “borderland sociology” can be distinguished as well. Borderland sociology includes social phenomena and processes triggered by border crossings [44]. Without a large number of border crossings, there would be no borderland in sociological terms, since an area situated near the border becomes a social borderland only because of individuals moving about. In this way, an administrative borderland becomes a social borderland that is formed by individuals moving about [1].

2.5. Determinants of the Socioeconomic Development of Polish-Ukrainian Borderland

The Polish-Ukrainian borderland covers an area of approximately 100,000 square kilometres and is inhabited, according to various sources, by approximately 8–9 million people [45,46]. The boundaries are very complex and unique in geographical, historical, political, and economic terms. The Polish-Ukrainian borderland comprises, on the Polish side, Lubelskie and Podkarpackie Voivodeships (13.8% of the area of Poland), and on the Ukrainian side, Lviv, Volyn and Zakarpattia Oblasts (9.1% of the total area of Ukraine) [46].

The economic development of the Polish-Ukrainian borderland, whose state border is 535 km long, is associated with the acquisition of foreign investors, economic activation of the regions, and the equalisation of development opportunities. The boundary of the cross-border area running along Lubelskie Voivodeship is 296 km long, while that running along Podkarpackie Voivodeship is 239 km long [6]. The population in the border region of over 8 million people is distributed almost equally, with 4,361,700 inhabitants on the Polish, and 3,769,400 on the Ukrainian side [45].

When assessing cultural processes that take place in the current Polish-Ukrainian borderland, not only the tragic events of the 20th century but also the changes occurring in recent years should be taken into account. The long period of strict border controls during the communist regime was followed by a period of frequent border crossings resulting from the independence achieved by Ukraine in 1991 [47].

The development of the Polish-Ukrainian borderland is currently affected by numerous factors including: (1) historical determinants such as the agricultural nature of the borderland and its many features of a marginalised region; (2) spatial determinants including significant remoteness from social and economic centres, which results in the borderland being considered a peripheral region; (3) geopolitical and administrative determinants [33] including the consequences of the influences of the communist system, which was an impediment to socioeconomic development, particularly in the areas of

Polish-Soviet borderland. The border existing there was the so-called “hard border” in nature, which prevented the establishment of contacts between the inhabitants of neighbouring localities. Both the accession of Poland to the European Union in 2004 and the introduction of visas for neighbouring countries from outside the EU hindered economic cooperation, in particular, for the Ukrainian side [48]. The crucial criterion defining the territory of the Polish-Ukrainian borderland is the common existence of Poles and Ukrainians in that area. As a result of compulsory and voluntary migrations after the Second World War and the dispersal of the Ukrainian community in the territory of Poland, the area of the Polish-Ukrainian borderland has increased [49].

Due to the location near the border combined with the significant structural backwardness, low labour productivity, poor use of local assets and of innovative and technological potential, and the relatively low level of communication accessibility, both the Polish and Ukrainian parts of the borderland are classified as less developed regions. The causes of this state of affairs are complex, multidimensional, and largely determined by the course of development processes from the historical perspective. In this context, the consequences of the location of the concerned area near the border should also be taken into account. The emergence and consolidation of the features of peripheral areas in the Polish-Ukrainian borderland has been largely determined by the breaking of pre-war functional ties of the areas located on both sides of the San and Bug Rivers, and by the negative impact of the Polish-Soviet border existing in the years 1945–1991, which was characterised by a significant degree of tightness. Moreover, due to the current location of Polish and Ukrainian border regions on the external frontiers of the European Union, the border area is perceived as peripheral, actually in a dual sense, i.e., from both a geographical and economic perspective. It should also be noted that in the 1990s, Ukraine experienced a multi-layered crisis that caused a significant imbalance in terms of economic development between the Polish and Ukrainian parts of the borderland, which persists to this day [32,41].

The Polish borderland is rural in nature as well. Of the population of 698,500 that inhabited the borderland at the end of 2015, only 38.5% were town and city dwellers. The urbanisation rate was considerably lower for the entire country (60.3%). The urban population was concentrated in 17 cities and towns of which only Chełm, Przemyśl and Jarosław were classified as medium-sized. The other ones were small or very small towns with a population of no more than 5000. The unfavourable state of the urban network in the Polish part of the borderland has a significant effect on the development processes that take place there. The low number of medium-sized towns in the region, combined with the absence of large cities, does not contribute to the socioeconomic development of the region [48].

The Ukrainian borderland is characterised by a higher urbanisation rate; however, these are lower values, both for the whole of Ukraine (69.2%) and for two border oblasts (provinces). In the Ukrainian part of the borderland, there are two towns with a population of more than 50,000, namely, Chervonohorod and Novovolynsk; however, their role in the development of the modern settlement network of the region has significantly decreased. Another large town, Volodymyr-Volynskyi, currently has a population of approximately 39,000 and is characterised by a slight population growth [48].

Due to historical and political factors, including population relocations, migrations, the proximity of a hermetic border, poorly developed economy, and, in certain poviats, the conditions of natural environment, the area of the Polish borderland is characterised by low population density ranging from 19 to 61 people per km². The most sparsely populated areas include the northern part of the borderland, in which the Western Polesie is situated, and the southern, mountainous part of the region. In certain communes, there are from a few to several people per 1 km². These are areas with unfavourable farming conditions, which, at the same time, are valuable in terms of their natural assets and therefore subject to legal protection. In the Ukrainian part of the borderland, the population is unevenly distributed. For the town of Chervonohorod, the population density is nearly 4000 people per km², which is almost double the population density in the cities of Chełm and

Przemyśl, which are situated in the Polish part of the borderland. The differences in the population density among administrative units of the Ukrainian part of the Roztocze range from 22–25 people per km² in the Shatsk and Volodymyr-Volynskyi Raions to 81–85 people per km² for the Yavoriv and Zhovkva Raions. The northern part of the Ukrainian borderland is among the least populated areas. Similar to those on the Polish side, these are areas of natural value [48].

3. Materials and Methods

The Polish-Ukrainian borderland is a characteristic research area situated on both sides of the European Union border. Due to the common history of both countries and the complicated geopolitical conditions, this region has been developing under the conditions of relatively large economic disproportions and difficult relations due to historical events. However, despite numerous differences, these areas have some common features and problems typical of border and cross-border areas [40].

Studies on the impact of cultural heritage on human relations and on the role of cultural heritage in regional development are usually case studies. They usually concern specific objects of cultural heritage or specific regions [50–54]. The studies are frequently carried out in the form of interviews with members of local communities, leaders, or representatives of selected focus groups [54–56]. Moreover, borderlands have been a field of study for many disciplines, including anthropology, archaeology, ethnology, geography, history, law, or sociology. The comprehensive exploration of borderland issues requires an interdisciplinary approach [28].

The questionnaire survey and field inspection were carried out in 2019 in selected cities of Eastern Galicia, namely Zhovkva, Mostyska, Horodok, and Rava-Ruska, which are located in Lviv Oblast (province) of Ukraine.

Zhovkva (Ukrainian: ЖОВКВА, in the years 1951–1991 Нестеров[Nesterow]) is a city in Ukraine located in Lviv Oblast and the administrative centre of Zhovkva Raion. Zhovkva is located on the Eastern Roztocze, on the Świna River, approximately 35 km away from the Polish border. Mostyska (Ukrainian: Мостиська, formerly Mostyszczka, Mostycze) is a city situated in Lviv Oblast, and the centre of Mostyska Raion. Horodok (Ukrainian: Городок, in the years 1906–1945 Gródek Jagielloński) is a city located in Lviv Oblast, approximately 33 km southwest of Lviv. Finally, Rava-Ruska (Ukrainian: Рава-Руська) is a city situated on the Rata River, near the Polish border.

3.1. Questionnaire Survey

The questionnaire of the survey entitled “Memory and Heritage” (paper-and-pencil (PAP) survey) [57] included questions concerning the knowledge of Polish cultural heritage in the Polish-Ukrainian borderland. The questionnaire comprised 41 questions and 175 various answers to choose from. The questions were grouped into seven blocks: (1) general characteristics of the respondent; (2) connections with the place of residence, and the attitude towards the place of residence (permanent/temporary); (3) knowledge of Polish language; (4) current connections with Poland (family/work/tourism); (5) recollections and knowledge of Polish material culture; (6) recollections and knowledge of Polish non-material culture; (7) knowledge of Polish cultural monuments, including local natural and landscape formations (complexes) being part/an achievement of Polish culture (Figure 1).

The research was of a qualitative nature. The study used the diagnostic survey method and applied the structured direct interview technique [54]. The size of a sample used for a qualitative project is influenced by both theoretical and practical considerations. The practical reality of research is that most studies require a provisional decision on sample size at the initial design stage [58] (p. 25). In each city, 30 interviews were carried out. A total of 120 randomly selected persons participated in the study. The respondents were divided into three age groups according to the four-point approach to sampling in qualitative interview-based research [58]: persons under 30 years of age, persons aged 30 to 50 years, and persons over 50 years of age. The survey questions concerned the attitudes

of the inhabitants of the cities of Horodok, Zhovkva, Mostyska, and Rava-Ruska towards Polish objects of historical, cultural, artistic, architectural, and natural value as well as traditional musical and culinary culture.

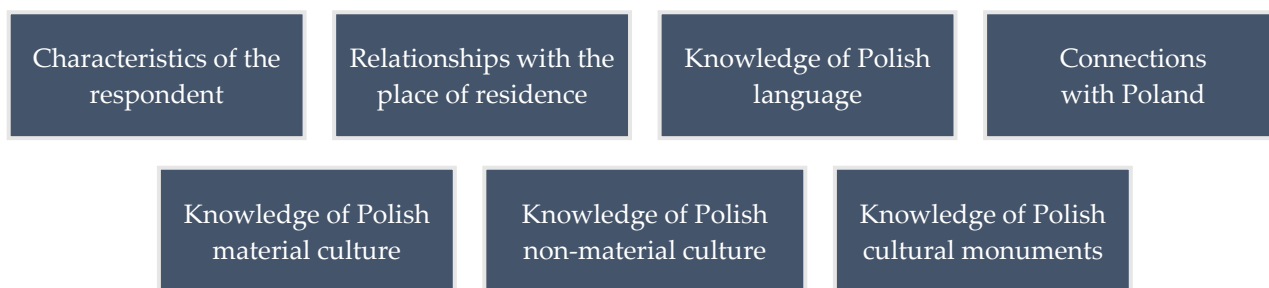


Figure 1. Thematic blocks in which the survey questionnaires were grouped. Source: Own research.

3.2. Desk Research

Empirical research was supplemented by a review of selected source materials [59–61]. This enabled the analysis of demographic and ethnic situation in the cities under study in the years 1914 and 2017. The demographic and ethnic analysis was necessary to understand the situation prevailing in the cities of Eastern Galicia after many tragic events that took place in the 20th century. In particular, the Holocaust resulted in the Jewish population of pre-war Galicia being displaced or murdered by German Nazis; moreover, after 1945, almost the entire Polish population was displaced.

4. Results

The current total population of the cities under study (Horodok, Zhovkva, Mostyska, and Rava-Ruska) does not differ significantly from that before the Second World War, and ranges from 5000 (Mostyska, year 1914) to 16,000 (Horodok, year 2017) (Figure 2). On the other hand, the national structure of these cities, which has undergone radical changes, is different.

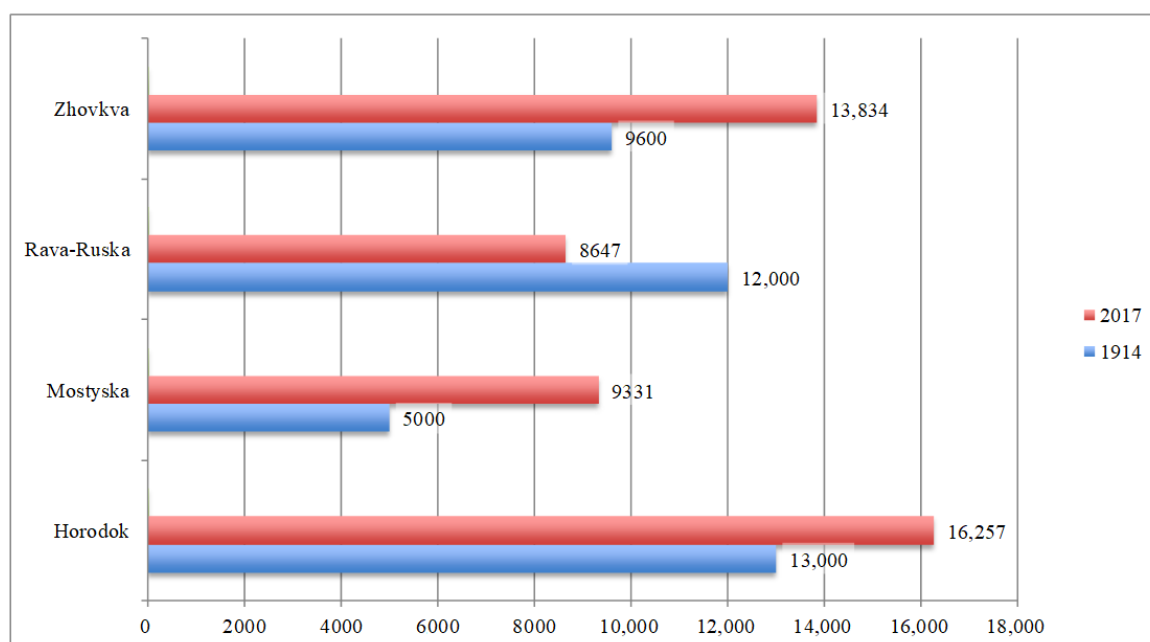


Figure 2. The population of Eastern Galicia towns in 1914 and 2017. Source: Own research.

At the beginning of the 21st century in all the cities under study, the ethnic group of Jews, which before the war accounted for approximately 46.3% of the population, i.e., nearly half, eventually disappeared (Figure 3). The ethnic group of Poles, which before the war accounted for approximately 32% of the urban population in this region, has currently decreased to approximately 5%. At the same time, a significant increase in the Ukrainian population can be observed in the cities under survey, in which, before the war, this ethnic group was the smallest and accounted for approximately 23.4% of the population. Currently, the proportion of Ukrainians in the national population structure amounts to 92.2%. In the 20th century, the Eastern Galicia localities transformed from multinational to mononational ones. Therefore, the issue of the attitude of this dominant urban population towards the cultural heritage of the nations that, over the centuries, lived there as well as built and formed their identity, is nowadays of particular importance.

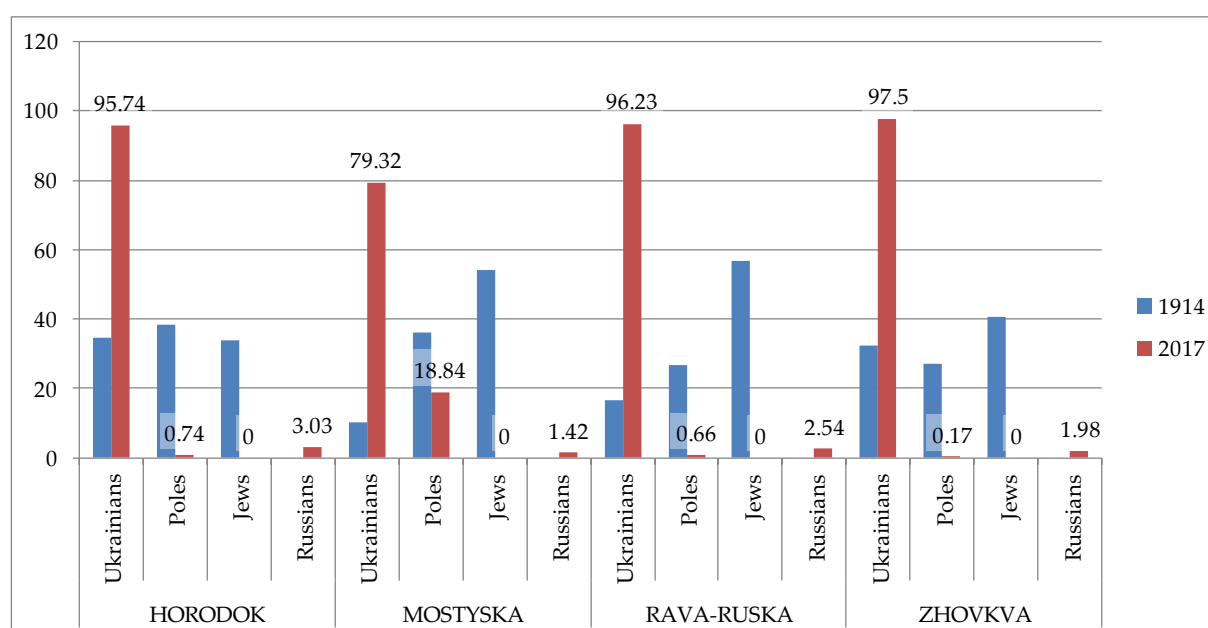


Figure 3. The ethnic structure of Eastern Galicia towns in 1914 and 2017 (%). Source: Original work based on [59–61].

The questionnaire survey showed that, in the third block of questions, which concerned knowledge of the Polish language, of the four possible answers: (a) I have completed my education in a school with Polish as the language of instruction, (b) I speak Polish that is characteristic of the particular locality (a dialect), (c) I communicate in Polish only at home, and (d) I do not know Polish, most respondents (approximately 70%) chose the answer “I speak Polish that is characteristic of the particular locality (a dialect)”.

In the fourth block, entitled “Current connections with Poland”, the respondents had five possible answers to choose from, namely: (a) family bonds, (b) tourism, (c) economic activity/business, (d) work, and (e) studies. Inhabitants of the cities under study declared that they visited Poland most frequently for touristic reasons. This answer was provided by 46.5% of respondents. Professional/business/commercial activity was the reason for trips to Poland for approximately 35% of respondents. At the same time, the study revealed that in the border cities of Galicia, despite the pause in relations that lasted for almost half a century, family bonds have maintained their significance and value. For this reason, Poland was visited by 32.5% of respondents. A small percentage of respondents declared a permanent job or studies in Poland.

The fifth and sixth block provided questions that concerned knowledge of the Polish cultural heritage, both material and non-material. The questionnaire included questions about the knowledge of objects divided into 15 types (Figure 4). The study showed that in the collective memory of the current residents, mostly Ukrainians, 75 years after the

forced relocation of Poles, religious objects, i.e., churches (93.3%) and cemeteries (80%) were dominant. It can therefore be concluded that despite the deliberate destruction of these objects under the communist rule (1945–1991), the memory of them was still alive, perhaps due to their visual domination.

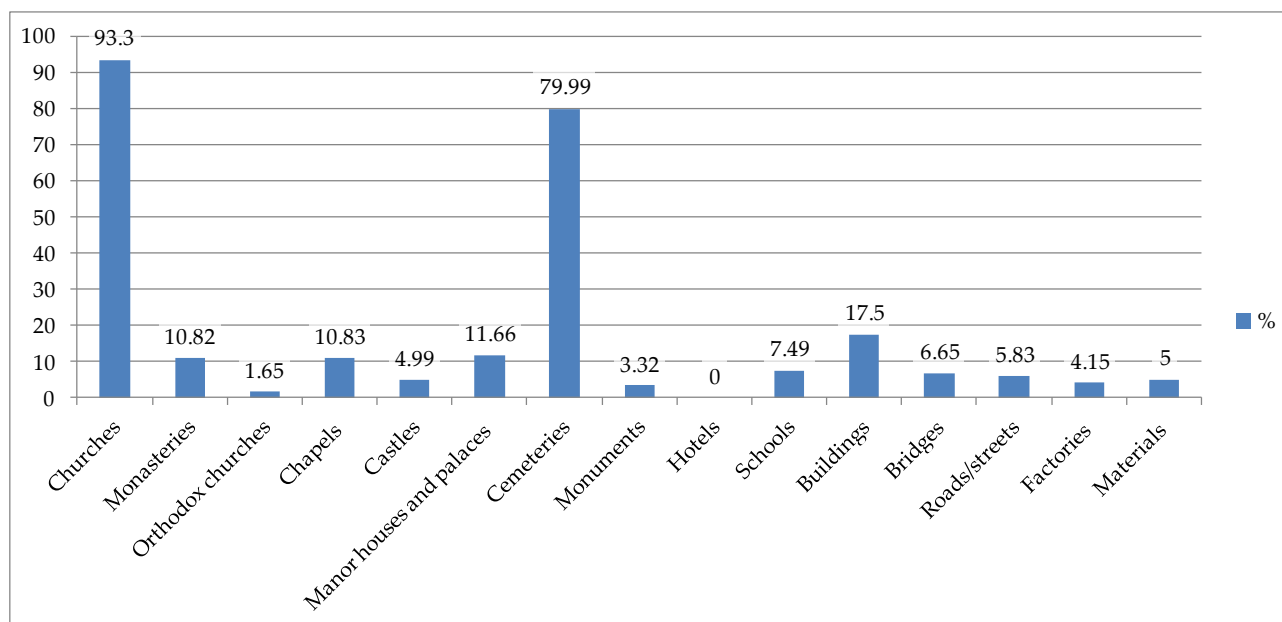


Figure 4. Knowledge of Polish cultural heritage objects. Source: Own research.

This cannot be said about the questions that concerned “knowledge of Polish cultural and natural monuments”. For the purposes of the survey, Polish cultural and natural monuments included landscape parks, ponds, and lakes with paths for daily and recreational use (components of environmental heritage), often in ruin and forgotten. It can be concluded that such awareness is almost non-existent in the respondents’ collective memory. In Zhovkva, Mostyska, and Rava-Ruska, the respondents provided no answers to questions in that block at all, despite the fact that, e.g., in Zhovkva, there are parks, avenues, and natural monuments that have been funded by Hetman Stanisław Żółkiewski and John III Sobieski. On the other hand, approximately 47% of respondents from Horodok remembered to this day that the municipal park was established by Poles.

The memories of non-material culture have remained in the collective consciousness of the deported nations for an unexpectedly long time (Figure 5).

The questionnaire survey demonstrated that the memories of the gastronomic culture of relocated nations have remained in the respondents’ consciousness for the longest time. Approximately 78.5% of the respondents declared that they knew, e.g., traditional Polish dishes, which are prepared to this day in border cities of the Eastern Galicia. More than 64% of the respondents were also very familiar with Polish Catholic and traditional feasts as well as folk songs and Christmas carols. Slightly fewer people (approximately 13%) remembered traditional folk clothes.

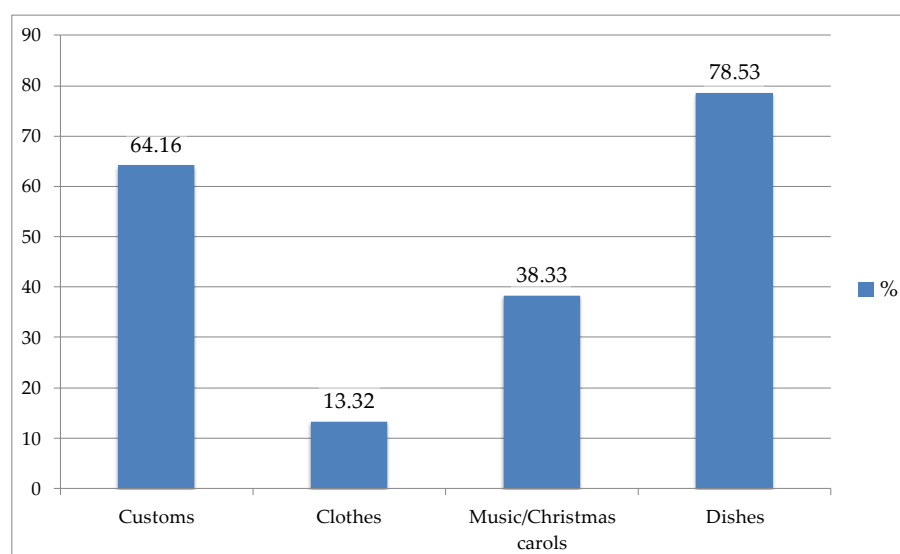


Figure 5. Polish non-material cultural objects present in the respondents' memories. Source: Own research.

5. Discussion

Due to the interdisciplinarity of many research projects carried out in borderlands as well as other causes, the research results have so far been characterised by a varied scientific value, and it is difficult to put them together into a coherent whole. Sadowski [62] distinguished three categories specific to sociological studies of the borderland, or specific to borderland sociology: (1) social area of the borderland—as a research field for borderland sociology, (2) a borderland, possibly with “social” or “social and cultural” added, as a basic research category of borderland sociology, and (3) a territorial bond as a binder connecting the research field with the social and cultural issues of the borderland.

Kiiskinen [5] (p. 25) noted that “Sustainability is a condition of local development and change. Local project centres emerge even in remote villages, for example in order to support local children so that ‘they can create their own future’”. Heritage as criterion for cultural sustainability is not to be disregarded, but at the external EU borders a shift of focus, from studying ‘heritage’ to ‘imagination’, as well as a multi-sited and comparative approach is required, because heritage, and especially its materiality, becomes engaged as a strategy of bordering”.

In regional development policies, culture and identity tend to be perceived as something manageable. Culture is not seen as a dynamic process of meaning making that can safeguard the possibility of individuals to define the meanings of their nearby environment, such as “heritage” [5] (p. 27). In the case of heritage and traditions, sustainability has become an issue of noting what is actually “handed on” [63].

The post-war relations between Poland and Ukraine, two communist “fraternal states” were indeed “fraternal”. However, they were burdened by a certain conflict. This conflict is still alive in the memory of inhabitants on both sides of the border. The change in Poland’s borders involved the massive and forced exchange of population, which affected approximately 810,415 Poles and 482,880 Ukrainians. Not only did this represent the end of Poland’s centuries-old presence in Ukraine but also was the origin of the dispute over Galicia [2].

After the break-up of state communism and the dissolution of the USSR, Ukraine was the first “country in the East” with which Poland concluded a treaty on mutual cooperation (in May 1992). This treaty governed the common approach to politics, economy, and culture. Both parties recognised the existing Polish-Ukrainian border and noted that neither party has compensated the other party’s territorial claims [2,64]. Wojakowski [65] (p. 515) noted that “local authorities in Poland use multiculturalism as a local brand. This leads to the

appearance of an ‘industry of multiculturalism’, which is the form of the marketisation of culture. In Ukraine, multiculturalism is the bottom-up idea developed by local non-governmental organisations. Multiculturalism at the local level in Poland and Ukraine is basically an adaptive resource. In recent years, the multicultural traditions have been used as a component of policies of resilience, which positively reshapes local communities and is tied into the democratic movements.”

The actual existence of a border area is not only determined by the potential of border regions presented as a set of various features. These areas exist because of many links other than borders whose intensity and nature are determined by this potential. Polish-Ukrainian cross-border cooperation takes place on many levels, namely, environmental protection, the development of border infrastructure and transport accessibility, social relations and border traffic, migration of workers and students, economic relations including trade, tourism traffic, and institutional cooperation between regional and local authorities, including on a cross-border basis [66].

The Polish-Ukrainian borderland forms an area that is unique and interesting in many respects. Its stormy history, shifting state borders, complex ethnic and religious structure, and location at the crossroads of Western and Eastern cultures have shaped the present face of this region, giving it an exceptional character. Meanwhile, the peripheral location of the present borderland area has lent it features of peripherality, in both geographical and socioeconomic terms [67] (p. 80). Border areas are characterised by a lower level of socioeconomic development and lower competitiveness, compared to the centrally located areas, which confirms the thesis that peripherality in geographical terms translates into peripherality in socioeconomic terms. The geographical location affects the accessibility of regions, the degree of economic cooperation and connection networks, and the development of transport and communications infrastructure. However, for the development processes taking place in border areas, the nature of the border near which they are located and its permeability level are crucial [41]. The value of the gross domestic product (GDP) produced on the Polish-Ukrainian borderland in 2014 amounted to EUR 37.4 billion. More than 86.1% of this value was produced in Podkarpackie and Lublin Provinces, 10.4% in Lviv Oblast, while only 3.5% in Volyn Oblast. These values show the disparity between the Polish and Ukrainian parts of the borderland in terms of their economic potential [32].

The location near the border offers many possibilities and may stimulate local development; however, the economic strength of the neighbouring countries is of importance. Economically strong countries with the established tradition of cross-border cooperation, such as Sweden, Finland, France, Spain, or Portugal, reap tangible benefits from border exchange. It is different for countries whose external border is, at the same time, the European Union border. In such a situation, institutional and political conditions play an important role, since completely different legal, social, and economic systems become a factor impeding the development and restricting the increase in regions’ competitiveness [41].

One of the best-known measures of social development is the Human Development Index (HDI) developed by the UNDP (United Nations Development Programme). This is a synthetic and aggregated metric based on an analysis of three basic spheres of life: (1) health (assessed by means of the average life expectancy index), (2) education (the number of years of schooling), and (3) GDP per capita. The index design determines the extreme target values of each of the zones mentioned [68]. Therefore, HDI is a metric used as a criterion when creating the hierarchy of countries based on the level of their overall social and economic development at a particular moment. Kowerski and Matkowski [69] made an attempt to apply the HDI methodology in order to compare the level of social development of the regions of Polish-Ukrainian cross-border area comprised of Lubelskie and Podkarpackie Voivodeships and Lviv, Volyn and Zakarpattia Oblasts. They obtained the following results: a modified social development index in 2003 for Poland amounted to 0.66, which indicates that Poland was a moderately developed country. The index value for Ukraine amounted to 0.42, which meant that Ukraine was an underdeveloped country. On the other hand, the calculations carried out by Jakubowski [70] in 2013 of the social

development index of the regions of the Polish-Ukrainian cross-border area demonstrated that Lubelskie Voivodeship and Lviv Oblast can be classified as highly developed regions, and Podkarpackie Voivodeship and Volyn Oblast as moderately developed ones.

The identification of the state, determinants, and prospects of the development of the Polish-Ukrainian borderland is a current research problem [48,71,72]. The eastern border areas of Poland, including those neighbouring with Ukraine, are regarded as peripheral areas with the lowest, on the national scale, level of development and intensity of social and economic life [73–75]. The numerous manifestations of the poor borderland condition include inter alia the unfavourable demographic situation. On the other hand, Ukrainian border areas, in comparison with other regions of Ukraine, are characterised by a favourable demographic situation, with a relatively high natural growth rate as compared to other administrative units of the country, and a lower demographic burden of population at the pre- and post-productive age. At the same time, it is a region with a high level of international migration outflow of the population, to which military actions related to the war in Ukraine have contributed considerably [48,72].

6. Conclusions

It can be concluded that even 75 years after the forced relocation of the Polish population after the Second World War, Polish cultural heritage is still alive and has an effect on the development of border towns and cities of Eastern Galicia. In the collective memories of inhabitants of the cities under study, the non-material culture of the Polish people and the visual and functional dominants, including churches and cemeteries, are dominant memories. Regarding the non-material culture, the knowledge of gastronomic and religious cultures as well as of the musical culture of the Polish nation is predominant.

Most respondents from the cities under study declared that they used the Polish language characteristic of a particular city. Despite the relocation of the Polish population from the areas of Eastern Galicia, the memory of the Polish language has been preserved in the form of a dialect that still exists, is used by people on a daily basis, and continues to develop. This phenomenon remains completely unexplored in either linguistic or culture-related terms.

The conclusions of the questionnaire study may be helpful in determining the trends and ways to protect and promote Polish cultural monuments in the areas that used to be inhabited by Poles. They may also be helpful in creating programmes to inform and educate local communities about the role and significance of Polish cultural heritage in the development of both the local and regional identity of the Polish-Ukrainian borderland.

The questionnaire survey demonstrated that it is the elements of non-material culture, including the gastronomic culture of relocated nations, that have been preserved the best. The Ukrainian population also demonstrated a good knowledge of Polish traditions and Catholic feasts as well as folk songs and Christmas carols. These are cultural heritage bridges that may serve as both a forum for mutual understanding and a space for a dialogue and cooperation.

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Informed Consent Statement: Informed consent was obtained from all subjects involved in the study.

Data Availability Statement: The data presented in this study are available on request from the corresponding author.

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Appendix A

An example of progressing cooperation between the University of Agriculture in Kraków and Ukraine is the partnership with universities in Bila Tserkva and Kamianets-Podilskyi (Ukraine). The contract with the Bila Tserkva National Agrarian University was signed in the second half of 2018. It provides for research and educational cooperation. In early 2019, an application was filed with the Foundation for the Development of the Education System to fund a joint academic exchange scheme. A delegation from Kraków joined in momentous celebrations in Kamianets-Podilskyi, the 100th anniversary of the Kamianets-Podilskyi State Ukrainian University. The collaboration yielded joint publications among other effects, such as: Kuryltsiv, R.; Sankowski, E.; Kryshenyk, N.; Rutkowska, A.; Noszczyk, T.; Hernik, J. "Integration of surface water protection into land management in Ukraine." *Acta Sci. Pol. Formatio Circumietus* **2020**, *19*, 101–115, doi:10.15576/ASP.FC/2020.19.2.101.

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