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Article

Post-Second World War Reconstruction of Polish Cities: The Interplay Between Politics and Paradigms

Łukasz Bugalski and Piotr Lorens *

Department of Urban Design and Regional Planning, Gdańsk University of Technology, Poland

* Corresponding author (plorens@pg.edu.pl)

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Abstract

By the end of the Second World War, many of the Polish cities—and especially their historic centres—were in ruins. This was caused by both bombings and sieges conducted by the Nazis and Soviets. The particular group of cities is associated with former German lands—now called the "Recovered Territories"—which were incorporated into the borders of Poland as compensation for its Eastern Borderlands lost to the Soviet Union. These cities started to be gradually rebuilt after the end of the war, although one can distinguish certain stages and types of interventions, varying from the restoration and idealisation of the pre-war townscapes (so-called "Polish School of Conservation," which was developed along principles contradictory to the urban conservation theories of these times) to late modern as well as postmodern (called the "retroversion") principles. This process is ongoing, meaning the reconstruction of the historic cities is not yet completed. At the same time, these processes were embedded within the changing political perspectives—varying from "restoration of destroyed heritage" through "providing modern living environments" up to the "theming urban spaces." In some cities, various stages and approaches overlapped, creating unique palimpsests. The article focuses not only on the evolution of both politics and design paradigms but mostly on the interplay between them and, as a result, on the doctrine's evolution. Consequently, these considerations allow presenting the similarities and differences in the evolution of the reconstruction of Polish cities to the cases known from Western Europe and provide the framework for understanding the contemporary urban design paradigms of Central and Eastern Europe.

Keywords

conservation; Polish School of Conservation; Recovered Territories; retroversion; socialist modernism; socialist realism; theming; tourism economy; urban heritage

Issue

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1. Introduction

Between 1939 and 1945, as a consequence of the intense warfare in Europe (Second World War [WWII]), countless cities were heavily damaged. The urban heritage of many historic city centres was destroyed, and their reconstruction became a very important issue for not only architects and planners but also politicians and local communities (Diefendorf, 1989, 1990, 1993). However, in many cases, these processes have been stretched over decades and—very often—are still being continued. These are confronted with changes in urban conservation and regeneration doctrine, political issues and priorities, the economic and social needs of local communities, as well as the evolution of architectural and urban design paradigms.

The reconstruction processes of such "bombed cities" were also conducted differently in particular countries. The main focus of this article is to discuss the case of Poland, a country facing very unique challenges associated with the shift of borders (Figure 1) and the relocation of entire communities (Mazur, 2006). This

resulted in the need to deal with at least three types of situations:

- Pre-war Polish cities that were destroyed by Nazis during the "defence war" of 1939 (when Nazi Germany invaded Poland and—during artillery bombings and air rides—destroyed some of the historic cities and their parts), as well as during and after the Warsaw Uprising (this is limited to the case of Warsaw);
- Pre-war German cities, as well as Gdańsk (constituting before the war the Free City of Gdańsk, then also named as Free City Danzig, and incorporated into Germany on September 1st, 1939, at the moment of the outbreak of WWII in Europe), that were destroyed by the Soviets during the "liberation war" of 1944 and 1945 (when the Soviets intentionally destroyed the centres of these cities, which was considered as an act of revenge for war-time destruction of Russian, Ukrainian, and Belarussian towns) and are located within the zone now called "Recovered Territories";
- Pre-war Polish and German Cities that were partially destroyed due to sieges and war-related activities but were not meant to be purposefully destroyed by either Nazis or Soviets.

As the borders of Central and Eastern Europe were redrawn after the end of WWII, many pre-war communities of towns incorporated into the Soviet Union, as well as coming from destroyed Polish cities, were resettled to the west. This resulted in both the massive relocation of Germans to the west of the Odra River (future East and West Germany) as well as in the relocation of Poles from the "Eastern Borderlands" towards the above-mentioned Recovered Territories (Figure 1). At the same time, the capital of Poland, Warsaw, faced a massive inflow of people from other parts of the country. The same phenomenon could be observed—to a lesser scale—in other Polish cities. Therefore, an entirely new social geography of the country was created, which resulted in breaking the relationship between place, memory, and identity.

Within this article, special attention was paid to the area of the Recovered Territories. Cities located within its borders, being part of the hostile state (from the Red Army perspective), were completely plundered, devastated, and burnt down (Lubocka-Hoffmann, 2004). However, it is still hard to judge whether these activities were carried out as part of a well-thought-out strategy for the eradication of German material culture from these areas or as pure revenge for the Nazi's previous campaign in the East. Regardless, the fact is that, right after the war, among approximately 700 historic cities within the borders of post-war Poland, the average

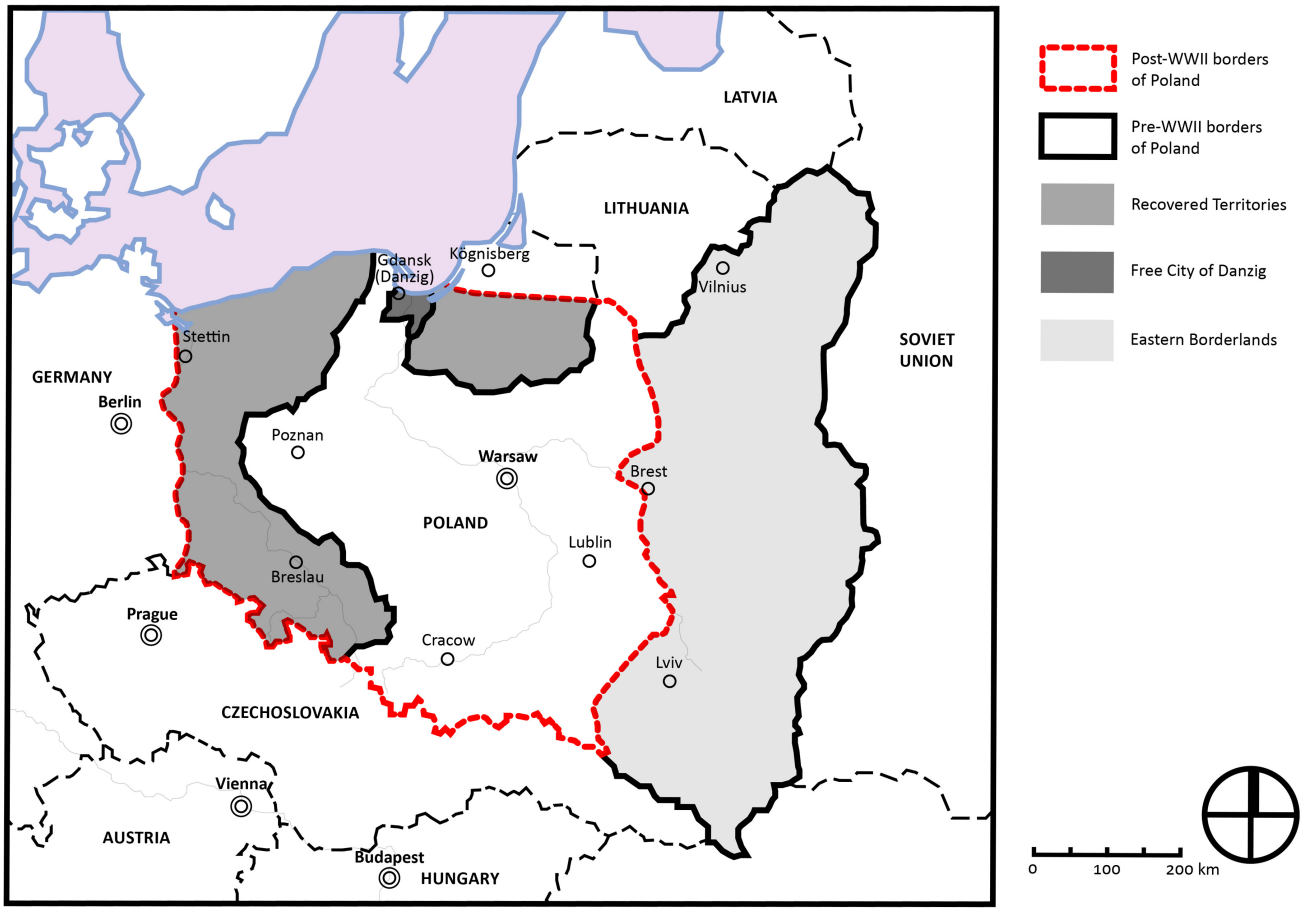

Figure 1. The shift of Polish borders after WWII.

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destruction in 177 centres was over 50%, and the overwhelming majority of this destruction took place within the most densely built Old Towns of cities located within the Recovered Territories (Lubocka-Hoffmann, 2004). What distinguishes these cities now is the issue of discontinuity, caused primarily by the severance of the relationship between place, memory, and identity as a result of the complete exchange of the population of these urban centres. The above mentioned exchange of population refers to the removal (by the order of the Allies, meaning USA, UK, France, and Soviet Russia) of the pre-war German community which had to leave to the west (to the present Germany) and to reallocation of the remaining urban structures to the refuges coming from the pre-war eastern part of Russia (also expelled from their homes by Soviet Union). This was accompanied by social change, associated with a redefinition of the entire country's social structure (Leder, 2014). The extermination of the Jews and the liquidation of the landed gentry led to the replacement of the social structure based on the estate's division, still functioning in the interwar period, with a modern social model based on the class system. Furthermore, it also must be pointed out that the post-WWII redevelopment processes of the historic urban structures were embedded in the reconstruction efforts undertaken after the destruction caused by military actions during WWI (the Great War). These relate both to Polish cities (like Kalisz) and German ones (the East-Prussian cities; Salm, 2006).

In addition to the social changes, the altering political and socio-economic perspectives must also be pointed out. These vary from "restoration of destroyed heritage" through "providing modern living environments" up to the "theming urban spaces." Furthermore, what must be pointed out is the interplay between the evolution of both politics and design paradigms and—as a result—the evolution of the urban redevelopment doctrine that shaped the post-war reconstruction of destroyed cores of the historic cities in Poland.

Although this study is presented from the Polish perspective on the topic, it also allows presenting the similarities and differences in the evolution of the reconstruction of Polish "bombed cities" to the cases known from Western Europe (Chomątowska, 2016; Tung, 2001; Ward, 2002) and provides the framework for understanding the contemporary urban design paradigms of the central and eastern parts of the continent. This relates not only to the design paradigm and its evolution but also to the complex history of transformations and—in many cases—overlapping of the results of the rebuilding processes (Salm, 2001). Therefore, the results of these considerations may serve as the point of reference to the future redevelopment processes occurring after the conclusion of other conflicts. To make a presentation of the main elements discussed within this article, its content has been presented in the form of a table in Section 4 (Table 1). This table might be considered a useful guideline for the complexity of a whole article as it systematises presented consecutive periods concerning the interplay between political and socio-economic priorities, dominant architectural styles, and redevelopment doctrines and practices.

Finally, it is important to point out that this article focuses on the redevelopment process of historic urban complexes and does not discuss the rebuilding/restoration of the individual buildings and their complexes. Although those undertakings have common theoretical roots with urban redevelopment processes, both should be clearly distinguished from each other. Therefore, the text consists of a limited number of related terms: The term "reconstruction" describes more significant attempts at redevelopment referencing a historical scale and forms of the post-destruction city; the term "rebuilt" is used in a more general context, focusing rather on filling the void of destroyed cities again with a new architectural and urban value. The authors also would like to point out that various terms are used in the literature dealing with this topic, but they decided to consequently use the ones mentioned above.

2. Methods and Literature Review

This article is based on the analysis of the existing literature, which is mostly available only in Polish. In addition, the authors were able to present a specific perspective on the topic based on their personal experience with rebuilt historic centres of Polish cities gained as a result of the numerous study visits and developing case-study-based research. The photo material presented in the article is just a section of wider studies conducted over the years. Also, some of the research conclusions are based on an analysis of the available archival resources. The authors conducted numerous studies in many archives during the past years, especially in Gdańsk and Warsaw (but also in Wrocław and Olsztyn). The most recent study has been conducted as a part of the project "ODBUDOWANE" (which translates to "RECONSTRUCTED") in 2022, financed by the Polish Ministry of Culture and National Heritage. During this study, a query has been made in the archive of the Institute of Art of the Polish Academy of Science in Warsaw, as well as an archive of the Royal Castle in Warsaw and the archive of the Museum of Architecture in Wrocław. However, this article should be seen as an overview rather than basic research.

The research methodology includes the presentation of the evolution of post-war reconstruction of historic city doctrine and practice in the context of the interplay between both evolutions of politics and architectural and urban design paradigms. In addition, the analysis of different types of structures—due to their location within the context of the given city—allowed the definition of the main lines of evolution of the reconstruction doctrine. Although, due to limitations regarding the length of this article, the authors decided to focus only on the structures referred to as old towns—meaning the

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historical hearts of cities—as they are the conveyors of their identity. This allowed the definition of the current paradigm of reconstruction of the structures which are still in need of recreation.

The literature on the post-war reconstruction should be divided into three basic categories: (a) those published by people directly involved in the discussed process, (b) those published by people not related to the discussed process but prepared based on information from the first category, and (c) those published from a further research perspective and based on reliable source studies (Friedrich, 2015). The legitimacy of such a division seems to be shared by Andrzej Tomaszewski, admitting that a clear:

> Weakness of the current state of research is its largely dilettante nature. The witnesses and participants are usually architects and art historians, trusting their increasingly faded, scientifically unverified memory and succumbing to nostalgic delusions. The second group, which did not experience the analysed period, relying solely on a random insight into available sources, falls into anachronisms, criticising and condemning from the point of view of the present state of art history and architecture the actions of participants in those events. (Majewski, 2009)

In this context, he appreciates the efforts of a new generation of researchers who support their arguments primarily with an in-depth analysis of the source material.

In this article, the authors are consciously reaching all three categories. At the same time, one must highlight that—at least in the identified literature—there is no publication providing a similar study on the interplay between politics and paradigms of the post-WWII reconstruction of Polish historical cities. Of course, one can find many presentations of single case studies as well as elaborations on the conservation doctrine (including the discussions on Athens' Venice Charters; Kadłuczka, 2019). Regarding the situation in Poland after WWII, there is an interesting body of research attempting to present a more general systematisation of the topic in Polish (Bugalski, 2014; Fiuk, 2017; Kalinowski, 1986; Lewicki, 2017, 2018, 2020; Lubocka-Hoffmann, 2004; Ostrowski, 1980), English (Jeleński, 2018; Johnson, 2000; Karsten, 2017), and other languages (Popiołek-Roßkamp, 2021). However, it seems that only recently have some researchers tried to investigate the controversy around the post-war reconstruction movement more deeply in the context of certain political aspects (Racoń-Leja, 2019; Torbus, 2019). Of course, these works are embedded in the analysis of the evolution of planning systems and urban development practice (Kodym-Kozaczko, 2017; Nowakowski, 2010). Concurrently, it is necessary to take into account a wide body of research associated with the identity of cities and how they are reshaped, with a special focus on changes occurring within recent decades (Bogdanowski, 2002; Fałkowski, 2001; Hajdamowicz, 2020; Kochanowski, 2001; Nyka, 2002; Pawłowski, 2001; Piccinato, 2001; Pluta, 2002).

3. The Interplay Between Politics and Paradigms in the Case of Cities Rebuilt After the Second World War

3.1. The Post-Great War Reconstruction: The Roots of Post-Second World War Efforts

The post-Great War reconstruction of Polish and East-Prussian cities was characterised by early modern architectural forms. It was rather a kind of stylised rebuilding than accurate reconstruction. However, as a result, whole historic city centres have been restored. It is especially worth mentioning here a reconstruction of cities in Eastern Prussia like Allenberg (Druzhba in Russia), Bischofsburg (Biskupiec in Poland), Goldap (Gołdap in Poland), and finally Soldau (Działdowo in Poland, the only one which survived the destruction of WWII; Salm, 2006). Another interesting case study is the rebuilding of the Polish city of Kalisz which should be related to the very beginning of urban planning in Poland (Omilanowska, 2016; Popiołek, 2016; Zarębska, 1981, 1998). Also, some other cases have to be mentioned (i.e., the cities of Ostrołęka, Gorlice, and Kazimierz Dolny), but their scale and character are not similar to Kalisz. These experiences were embedded in the architectural and urban design contexts of the newly reborn Polish state (which gained independence in 1918), albeit—at the same time—based on the neo-classical traditions of the late 19th century (Frycz, 1975).

In the late 1930s—just before the outbreak of WWII—new ideas emerged in the Polish conservation movement. A good example of urban practice, the extension of which was to be the post-WWII "Polish School of Conservation," was the works commenced in 1936 to uncover and partially reconstruct the section of the old city walls in Warsaw (Kuzma, 1947; Zachwatowicz, 1937). The official commissioning of the first part of this work took place on October 10, 1938, and was widely echoed in pre-war Poland. It can therefore be presumed that the experience gained from this undertaking became the starting point for reconstruction projects in historical forms, not only of the Old Town in Warsaw (Popiołek-Roßkamp, 2021) but also of the border areas of the historic old town complexes of other cities.

It also has to be noted that pre-war architectural and urban design practices (embedded in the modern movement) have become a point of reference for the immediate post-war rebuilding initiatives. However, this practice lasted for only a few years and did not have much influence on the mode of reconstructing destroyed cities.

3.2. The So-Called "Polish School of Conservation"

The post-WWII reconstruction of Warsaw was used as an opportunity to carry out a careful architectural restoration combined with sanitation of the entire

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historic Old Town complex together with New Town (north-northwest) and Krakowskie Przedmieście (south-southeast; Tatarczuk-Gliniańska, 1982). This contrasted with the redevelopment plans defined for the remaining part of the city (Fudala, 2016; Getka-Kenig, 2021; Guranowska-Gruszecka, 2013; Perlińska-Kobierzyńska, 2016), which was supposed to be recreated in the socialist realism style (Bierut, 1950; Majewski, 2009). The concern for authentic historical tissue (restoration) has been linked with architectural creativity (creation) to design a consistent urban landscape with an idealised image that could be inspired based on countless sources. Indeed, the Old Town was recreated with great reverence—A huge source material was used for this purpose, containing primarily inventory and measurement materials of Warsaw's monuments made before the war at the Department of Polish Architecture of the Warsaw University of Technology on the initiative of Oskar Sosnowski (Majewski, 2009). Thanks to this, it was possible to implement one of the basic assumptions of the Polish School of Conservation: The entire area of the Old Town complex was treated as one great monument—an object of conservation—the matter of which was to be a combination of two basic functions that were included in the programme assumptions, namely the functions of a residential district and the function of a cultural centre (Biegański, 1956; Zachwatowicz, 1956).

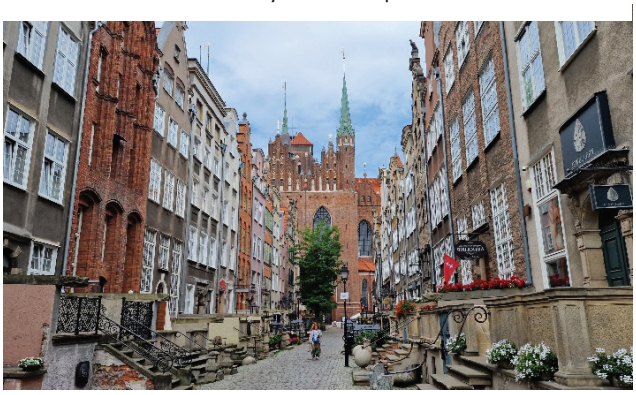
In fact, as Wacław Ostrowski emphasised later, not everyone realises that the complex of streets, squares, and buildings they admire nowadays is much more beautiful today than it was before the war damages (Ostrowski, 1980). Interestingly, years later, on September 2, 1980, this project was inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List as an example of a "successful, faithful reconstruction" (Majewski, 2009, p. 27) of a city destroyed by the war. The reconstruction of the Old Town in Warsaw can be regarded as the most important and only realisation fully in line with the spirit of the Polish School of Conservation, which is also often referred to as the "Warsaw School." In fact, the main figure related to this phenomenon, Jan Zachwatowicz, the author of its theoretical approach and the highest monument protection officer between 1945–1951 (Generalny Konserwator Zabytków), refuses to distinct conducted actions on the basis of the mainstream conservation theory, specifying them as the accepted exception within them (Zachwatowicz, 1981).

Although, paradoxically, this specific concept of post-war reconstruction—defined as a means of restoration of the centre of national identity, the Old Town of the Polish capital—was also used to recreate the centres of former German cities such as Wrocław (Czerner, 1976; Małachowicz, 1985) and many others, including Gdańsk (Massalski & Stankiewicz, 1969; Stankiewicz & Szermer, 1959; Szermer, 1971; Figure 2), it was applied to very

(a) Warszawa: Old Town Market

(b) Warszawa: View of the Old Town and Royal Castle Square

(c) Gdańsk: Piwna Street



(d) Gdańsk: Mariacka Street

Figure 2. Selected examples of the structures rebuilt according to the rules of the Polish School of Conservation.

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few large cities. In these cases, the political reasons were slightly different—It was expected that the reconstruction process would lead to the de-Germanisation (Gruszkowski, 2002; Makała, 2002; Omilanowska, 2009) of these cities and the creation of the idealised urban landscapes of some elusive Polish heritage. In addition, the urban and architectural forms refer to the pre-19th century typologies, which were justified by the need to recreate the pre-capitalist city (Torbus, 2019).

3.3. Socialist Modernism

Since the mid-1950s, social and political interest in the reconstruction of historic Polish old towns gradually decreased. This was accompanied by the decrease in the dominance of socialist realism as the prevailing artistic style. The post-Stalinist era (starting in 1956) introduced new architectural forms, building on the modern movement and mass production of housing. This was spurred by the great housing shortage and attempts toward rapid industrialisation of the country. In addition, the immediate post-WWII traumas and the drive to recover the "lost identities" were diminished. But still, more than 100 historic city centres, including medium-sized ones like Słupsk or Elbląg, were in ruins (Rymaszewski, 1984). To finally solve the problem of ruined cities, Resolution No. 666 of the Presidium of the Government of August 20, 1955, was adopted on the planned action to remove the remains of war damage in cities and settlements (Gierlasiński, 2011). The main purpose of this act was to accelerate and complete the process of removing rubble from the areas destroyed during the war that ended 10 years earlier. In this way, secondary destruction was carried out, supported by the belief that there was no real prospect of reconstruction according to the principles of the Polish School of Conservation.

Since the late-1950s, on many such sites, new districts have been erected in the style of *socialist modernism*, increasingly departing from the traditional model of the European city. What also made this period different from the Stalinist era was the fact that rebuilding processes were undertaken in the case of many cities, including numerous small and medium-sized ones. In these cases, new housing districts have been developed with the usage of industrialised technology on a large scale (Skolimowska, 2013). One such realisation is Malbork's Old Town—as well as Braniewo, Kwidzyn, Kołobrzeg, Nysa, Legnica, Lwówek Śląski, and secondary old towns in larger cities, such as Stare Przedmieście in Gdańsk or Nowe Miasto in Wrocław (Bugalski, 2014; Figure 3). The author of the rebuilding concept for Malbork, Szczepan Baum, argued that there can be no compromise or intermediate phases between a strict historical reconstruction and the contemporary shaping of space (Baum, 1961). Indeed, although Malbork's Old Town layer loosely refers to the historical city plan, it is almost impossible to identify former public spaces of the city with its main compositional axis of the elongated

(a) Malbork: Old Town Hall within the rebuilt structures of the Old Town

(b) Braniewo: Kościuszki Street

(c) Słupsk: Old Town as seen from Jagiełły Street

(d) Gdańsk: Rzeźnicka Street

Figure 3. Selected examples of the structures rebuilt according to the rules of "socialist modernism."

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square running through the entire estate (Massalski, 1966). Therefore, this project has been extensively criticised shortly after its completion, especially from the conservation point of view. Because of the weak relationship between new and old architecture, Malbork's Old Town became a simply modern housing estate that is only well suited to the few relics of the past (Massalski, 1966).

3.4. The Postmodern "Retroversion"

The third major stage in rebuilding historic urban centres started in the 1980s when the ideas of postmodernism based on the negation of modernist assumptions also reached communist Poland. As a result, it became possible to return to the abandoned ideas of urban reconstruction (Skolimowska, 2013). The new concept of *postmodern* "*retroversion*" was forged in Elbląg (Lorens, 2012; Lubocka-Hoffmann, 1998). Its principles strongly oppose reconstruction, ordering tenement houses to be designed in modernised forms but retaining the atmosphere and character of the historic city (Lorens, 2012). It adopted the principle of building a new, completely modern form inspired by the spirit of the past of these places, which, according to the architects of the Elbląg redevelopment plan, was "the only correct method" (Baum, 2002, p. 157). This concept was also based on the fundamental criterion of postmodern architecture—the formula of "double coding," which requires "using at least two languages simultaneously, for example, to combine traditional and modern, elite and popular, international and regional codes" (Welsh, 1998, pp. 28–29).

This idea clearly indicates the need to return to the foundations of the European city model in its scale and structure. The concept of "retroversion"—conceptualised by Maria Lubocka-Hoffman—was developed in parallel to the European discussion on reinstating the urban identities of historic cities through the creation of neo-traditional urban and architectural forms (Lubocka-Hoffmann, 2008). Leon Krier, one of the main proponents of this approach, noted that the manner in which German cities were built after the war led to the destruction of their regional identity to a much greater extent (leaving only 15% of the historic tissue) than the "bombs during the war" (after which it was supposed to survive up to 60% of the historic fabric; Krier, 1984). In this context, also in Poland, instead of building new cities on a human scale, architects and city planners once again faced the problem of recreating historic cities. Following the Elbląg experience, other cities also started to play with this concept, i.e., Głogów and Szczecin (Figure 4; Fiuk, 2017). And unlike the case of the two preceding periods, there were no strong political or economic reasons associated with introducing this mode of rebuilding old towns (Skolimowska, 2013). The main driver of this wave of reconstruction was, therefore, twofold: The local communities wanted the hearts of their cities restored, and, at the same time, local authorities realised the absurdity

(a) Elbląg: Old Town as seen from the Granary Island

(b) Elbląg: Stary Rynek Street

(c) Głogów: Słodowa Street

(d) Głogów: Grodzka Street

Figure 4. Selected examples of the structures rebuilt according to the rules of retroversion.

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of locating all new investments on the outskirts of the city while its hearts were becoming "a desert area among vibrant city organisms" (Pawłowski, 1986, p. 61).

Just as the reconstruction related to the Polish School of Conservation bore the hallmarks of a stylised space, the new design principles of retroversion can be described as "thematisation," intended to recreate the character of the lost space of a medieval city (Lorens, 2012). Despite the clear distortion of authenticity on the scale of the place and the threat of its loss in the entire urban structure, the recreation of the city centre contributes to the continuity of the tradition of the place and thus strengthens the local identity of its inhabitants, who find it easier to take root in the reconstructed material culture of the city, different from the historical one. The danger of reconstruction concerns the erection of pastiches or the so-called "fasadism," falsifying the historic old town complexes and often signifying their domination over authentic monuments (Zarębska, 2002).

3.5. The Contemporary Projects: Theming

After the collapse of the Iron Curtain and the consequent changing of political and socio-economic conditions, the reconstruction of the Polish cities—and especially those of Recovered Territories—have continued for the last three decades. It is crucial to firmly highlight that still—after more than 75 years—the majority of cities destroyed during WWII are still awaiting smaller or greater intervention. Sometimes it is just a matter of small supplementation, sometimes it is even a case of redevelopment of the whole area of the historic city. This comes from the fact that within the realities of the centrally planned economy—during the communist period—the authorities did not care about the land value, and it was much easier to erect new districts than recreate old ones. At the same time, the communist authorities assumed that the reconstruction of destroyed cities might succeed one day, which also contributed to the decision to leave destroyed urban quarters vacant. As a result, the concept of retroversion is still in place, although it evolves and leads to developments that are more chaotic and devoid of original principles. And as such, it has become a new, universal language of contemporary architecture introduced to many of the nearly 300 historic old towns in Western and Northern Poland. However, this slightly altered approach is rather the answer to the need of the market to create a commercial area of themed character than to society's needs related to local identity and heritage management issues. There is still a need to wait for a more comprehensive study of this phenomenon. Without it, only the limited and fragmented character of those enterprises that, in general, are deprived of a coherent spatial plan covering the entire Old Town's complexes is noticeable. In addition to new creations, within this period, it is possible

(a) Gdańsk: Granary Island

(b) Gdańsk: Long embankment

(c) Malbork: New complex in the forefront of the Old Town

(d) Braniewo: New complex in the vicinity of the Cathedral Church

Figure 5. Selected examples of the structures rebuilt according to the concept of "theming."

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to identify also transformations of the housing structures created within previous periods (i.e., Old Towns in Polkowice, Słupsk, and Chojnice).

Aside from this lack of a comprehensive approach, these new developments are characterised by two major features: a focus on rapidly ongoing touristification (Bugalski, 2020) and the utilisation of historic architectural templates (Januszajtis, 2002). This leads to the *theming of the urban landscapes* and the creation of new urban structures (see Figure 5). This contributes to the creation and/or reinforcement of the local identities but—at the same time—leads to the falsification of the architectural authenticity of the given site (Cielątkowska, 2001; Fałkowski, 2001; Gruszkowski, 2001; Lorens, 2012).

4. Discussion

The interplay between politics and paradigms in the case of the post-war reconstruction of historic towns in Poland led to constant change in the redevelopment paradigm. This was a result of ongoing changes in

Table 1. The interplay between political and socio-economic priorities, dominant architectural styles, and redevelopment doctrines and practices.

Years (approximate)	Political and socio-economic priorities	Dominant architectural style	Redevelopment doctrine and practice concerning the hearts of the historic cities; cases mentioned in this article	Redevelopment doctrine and practice concerning other destroyed parts of historic cities; cases mentioned in this article
1945–1956	**Reinstating the national identity and de-Germanisation of the Recovered Territories** Focus on shaping the landscape of cities proving the Polish origin and their identity	**Socialist realism** Stalinist origin focused on shaping structures monumental in character	**Polish School of Conservation** (based on pre-WWII attempts) Warszawa (Old Town) and Gdańsk (Main Town)	**Socialist realism** Warszawa (Marszałkowska Dzielnica Mieszkaniowa [Marszałkowska Housing District] and Plac Konstytucji)
1956–1980	**Providing housing for the working class** Focus on mass production of housing	**Socialist modernism** Late modernism, simplified and adapted to the needs of mass production	**Socialist modernism** Malbork (Old Town), Słupsk (Old Town), and Braniewo (Old Town)	**Socialist modernism** Gdańsk (Old Town, Old Suburb) and Wrocław (New Town)
1980–2004	**Providing higher-quality housing** Focus on shaping the complete urban structures	**Early postmodernism** A simplified version of the postmodern approach focused on reinstating the traditional architectural forms	**Retroversion** Elbląg (Old Town) and Głogów (Old Town)	**Late modern and early postmodern structures** Szczecin (Podzamcze)
From 2004 onwards	**Shaping the local identities and reinforcing the economies** Focus on the creation of touristically attractive and community-reinforcing undertakings	**Late postmodernism** Theming, adoption, and modernisation of historic templates	**Theming** Malbork (Old Town) and Braniewo (Old Town)	**Late postmodern** Gdańsk (Granary Island)

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political and socio-economic priorities and preferences. Therefore, based on the evolution of the doctrine and practice presented in the previous chapter of this article, it is possible to discuss the influence of these on the redevelopment paradigm and practice. Such an attempt was presented in Table 1. Within this study, a further analysis was presented of the interrelations between political and socio-economic priorities, dominant architectural style, and redevelopment doctrine in relation both to old towns perceived as hearts of the historic cities and to other destroyed areas.

Of course, the momentum of transition from one paradigm to another cannot be clearly defined. However, it is possible to easily reason the differences in circumstances that occurred in its relation. Consequently, the difference can be observed due to the outcome of diverse paradigms behind the specific post-war reconstruction of a historic city.

As can be derived from the table above, the evolution of the redevelopment doctrine was heavily dependent on the changes in political and socio-economic priorities as well as on the evolution of the dominant architectural style. In addition, this doctrine was not applied to all urban areas. In fact, two parallel tracks of its evolution can be indicated. These tracks are associated with the specific location of the redevelopment sites.

Another interesting conclusion is that the reconstruction of "bombed cities" is still being continued (Deurer, 2002). After the political changes of 1989 and joining the European Union in 2004, the reconstruction processes of destroyed urban structures in Poland resemble similar practices in other parts of the continent—especially Germany, which is the most similar example. New projects are mostly deprived of political meaning; nowadays, economic issues prevail. Urban heritage and identity are more likely to be understood as a resource that could bring income than as a need of inhabitants. Therefore, nowadays, it is possible to witness the commercialised version of the post-war reconstruction of our cities.

5. Conclusions

Based on the presented cases, it is possible to conclude that the redevelopment of "bombed cities" can be regarded as similar to any other type of urban development process. What makes them unique is the strong focus on the restoration of historic landscapes. At the same time, it is possible to state that these processes occurring in Poland were under the very strong influence of political and socio-economic issues as well as reflecting the changes in architectural styles. This process continues, as nowadays, many of the local communities and authorities are still struggling with reinstating the Old Towns. Such projects can be presented both in cases of large cities and very small towns. In addition, in many cases, the structures built in the post-war times are now being redeveloped (or sometimes just redecorated) to resemble the "historic landscape." What is interesting is that this process can be also observed in other post-communist countries like Russia (i.e., Kaliningrad) or Kazakhstan (Almaty).

Also, this constant evolution led to the creation of a new phenomenon, "theming urban spaces" (Lorens, 2012). In recent years, its negative impact on the development of the uncontrolled touristification process can be observed (Bugalski, 2020; Nasser, 2003). At the same time, this "delayed reconstruction" shall be regarded as closer to the "disneylandisation" of the city (Sorkin, 1992) and making cities—and especially their Old Towns—the "economic engines" of the communities. Therefore, these creations have gone very far from the initial ideas and concepts that were created by architects, planners, conservators, and historians shortly after the end of WWII.

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Conflict of Interests

The authors declare no conflict of interests.

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About the Authors

Łukasz Bugalski graduated as an architect and urban planner (2013) and holds a PhD (2018) in the same discipline (Gdańsk University of Technology). He has been a Marie Skłodowska-Curie Fellow (2017–2020) trained in critical heritage studies as part of the CHEurope project (MSCA Innovative Training Network) conducted at Istituto per I Beni Artistici, Culturali e Naturali Della Regione Emilia-Romagna in Bologna. Since 2020, he is a lecturer at the Gdańsk University of Technology.

Piotr Lorens (PhD, DSc) is an urban planner, Gdańsk City Architect (since 2021), full professor in urban design and development (since 2016), and head of the Department of Urban Design and Regional Planning at the Faculty of Architecture of the Gdańsk University of Technology (since 2007). His research interests include urban planning and regeneration processes, with a special focus on waterfront areas and public spaces.

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