

UKRAINIAN MURALS AS AN APPLIED SOCIAL AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY: A TOOL FOR DECOLONIZATION AND GEOBRANDING

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Summary

The aim of this paper is to identify the specifics of murals as a tool of decolonization and geobranding of Ukraine within the framework of applied social and communication technology. A feature of the study of murals is that the research offers an unconventional approach to this type of street art, which is usually studied within the framework of art and culture. A feature of the study of murals is that the research offers an unconventional view of this type of street art, which is usually studied in the context of art and culture. The methods used in the study are general scientific (analysis of literary sources; method of comparative analysis and description of study results) and specific scientific methods (qualitative content analysis). The mural has been explored as a tool for promoting decolonial discourse, possessing several key characteristics, which make it an effective applied socio-communication technology, including following ones: accessibility and publicity, visualization and symbolism, narrative and reinterpretation of space, dialogism and reactivity, durability and sustainability. Among the main functions of murals in the Ukrainian industrial space the following are identified: creating visual narratives, affirming Ukrainian identity, educating a new representative of a conscious Ukrainian, preserving cultural heritage, etc.

Key words: decolonial discourse, cultural heritage, street art, image of the city, social communications.

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1. Introduction

Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022 became a challenge not only for the modern international community, covering the military and political sphere, but also for Ukraine itself, affecting the informational, cultural, and socio-psychological contexts. However, the state-building of our country has been significantly influenced by external factors throughout

its whole history. With the beginning of Russian's armed aggression in 2014 and until the full-scale invasion in 2022, the issue of Ukrainian identification was a subject to constant attacks at various levels (from the physical destruction of Ukrainian symbols to the erasure of Ukrainian culture and changing the worldview of the population).

The novelty of the topic is beyond doubt, since nowadays theorists and practitioners of various fields (art and culture, economics, the field of social communications, etc.) are acutely faced with the need to fight the colonial narratives and create a powerful arsenal of internal national geobranding. The issue of the effectiveness of imperial strategies and forms of counteraction to them, which were implemented through the resistance movement, educational and emancipatory practices, is considered in the context of the processes of integration and consolidation of Ukrainian national culture, which is a key factor in state formation and acquires particular importance in the context of globalization transformations. Thus, researchers see the urgency of accumulating efforts and using their own field in the fight against the aggressor and manifestations of its imperial influences.

The relevance of scientific solutions lies in the fact that practitioners of socially important institutions are developing strategies and methods of using their own projects and achievements to counter the negative impact of Russian aggression on the Ukrainian consumer of information (art forums, cultural projects, journalistic dictionaries of hate speech, economic strategies for overcoming the economic crisis caused by the war, etc.), and theorists are revealing the potential of these projects in their scientific research.

The aim of the proposed study is to identify the specifics of murals as a tool for decolonization and geobranding of Ukraine within the framework of applied social and communication technology.

To achieve the goal, the following research tasks should be completed:

- to distinguish existing tools of decolonization and outline the concept of geobranding in modern scientific discourse;
- to give a definition of the term “mural” as an applied socio-communication technology based on its artistic origin and analyze its specific characteristics;
- to determine the functions of murals in the urban space of Ukraine;
- to study the murals of Ukrainian cities and the front-line city of Zaporizhia and analyze their content aspects.

The stated aim and objectives can be realized by applying general scientific methods (analysis of literary sources; method of comparative analysis and description of study results) and specific scientific methods (qualitative content analysis). These methods make it possible to explore the theoretical foundations of the chosen topic, starting from the collection and analysis of existing approaches to defining the means of decommunization, the term “mural” and its place in scientific discourse, to studying the issue of the functioning of murals in the real conditions of modern urbanism.

2. Decolonization and geobranding tools

The scientific focus on studying ways to fight colonial narratives within decolonization processes can be found in researches from many fields: philosophy and sociology (*Honcharenko, Kraulna, Atashkade, 2024*), social communications (*Kovpak, Lebid, 2024*), history (*Svynarenko, 2023*), politics (*Riabchuk, 2016*), software engineering (*Klopov, 2024*).

M. Honcharenko, N. Kraulna, R. Atashkade consider Ukrainian social mythology (its features are the creation of national heroic myths and the demonization of the enemy) as a

means of opposing destructive narratives, which is used as a source of strength, unity and resistance, and is also important both for understanding the nature of modern conflicts and for developing information security strategies (*Honcharenko, Kraulna, Atashkade, 2024: 38*). A similar opinion was expressed by N. Rybka. The researcher emphasizes that a system of myths is being formed in Ukrainian society, which influences collective perceptions and interpretation of events. Social mythology can perform a constructive function as a specific form of social consciousness through which the nation comprehends the surrounding reality. Thus, during the full-scale Russian invasion, there was a profound rethinking of stereotypes about the “fraternal people” and other ideologies that had been imposed on Ukrainians for decades by Russian propaganda (*Rybka, 2023: 100*).

In the process of studying socio-communication means of eliminating imperial narratives in wartime there were previously analyzed examples of Ukrainian analytical documentary (DocudaysUA projects, M. Barchuk’s author’s documentary series “The Last War” and the documentary series “The Big Russian Lie” on “Social. Culture”). In the research it was found that documentary film can be conditionally divided into two directions: the first focuses on people, events and war crimes, emphasizing emotionality, involvement and empathy; the second is analytical in nature and is aimed at stimulating reflection, understanding of worldview and historical and political transformations, which allows us to reproduce events and phenomena in the format of cause-and-effect relationships (*Kovpak, Lebid, 2024: 164*).

The causal relationship between the Ukrainian consumer’s dependence on Russian narratives is traced in the field of history by N. Svyrenko. The scientist recognizes the fact that in the digital age, Russian propaganda narratives significantly affect public consciousness. In order to combat this situation, to resist it, it is necessary to comprehensively analyze historical theories about the origin of the three East Slavic peoples, the essence of the concept of “Russki Mir” (“Russian World”) and the ideas of O. Duhin, taking into account their media interpretation and influence on modern Ukrainian society (*Svyrenko, 2023*).

As M. Riabchuk aptly noted, the Russian aggression revealed precisely those aspects of Ukrainian collective memory that are related to the ideas of national solidarity, self-sacrifice, patriotism, and armed resistance to the invader, which need to be protected at the level of the formation of the state apparatus, adopting relevant laws that the author called “decommunization” ones (*Riabchuk, 2016:111*). Among these laws, the researcher highlights “On the legal status and commemoration of the fighters for the independence of Ukraine in the 20th century”, “On the perpetuation of the victory over Nazism in the Second World War 1939–1945”, “On access to the archives of the repressive bodies of the communist totalitarian regime of 1917–1991”, “On the condemnation of the communist and national socialist (Nazi) totalitarian regimes and their prohibition”. Thanks to the adoption of these laws, the activities of the two bloodiest political regimes in the history of Ukraine – Stalin’s and Hitler’s – were condemned at the level of Ukrainian legislation, and as a result, a ban was imposed on the propaganda of their symbols and justification of the crimes of Nazism and Bolshevism. Legislative acts became a means of a legal mechanism for cleansing the Ukrainian symbolic space from the communist legacy.

No less important are information technologies that create conditions for revising colonial models of thinking and power, as well as for changing cultural paradigms. The use of digital platforms and data protection in the process of decolonization provides nations with tools to preserve identity and strengthen information security. Thus, I. Klopov explores cyberdefense and information security that form digital sovereignty, which can be guaranteed by using such

key elements in the Ukrainian decolonization process as the involvement of initiatives (projects, flash mobs) in social networks, online education, decentralized services and digital heritage (Klopov, 2024: 151).

According to I. Kolesnyk, one of the key consequences of the war was the affirmation of Ukraine's geopolitical subjectivity and awareness of its role in interaction with other countries. Military support from Western countries and world partners, along with the heroism of the Ukrainian military, the resilience of the people, and the results of diplomacy, significantly influenced the international agenda, the global security system, and the course of world history (Kolesnyk, 2024). All these achievements could not have been reached without the painstaking work of specialists in geobranding, which functions as a tool for social and communication self-identification of regions in the global market, ensuring the formation of their image and reputation in new economic and political conditions. V. Voronova focuses on the geobranding advantage in popularizing a territory as a way of broadcasting information about it, tracing the specifics of communications that have geobranding significance (chronicles, advertising) (Voronova, 2018). M. Chernets holds the same opinion, arguing that the emergence of geobranding and efforts to implement its techniques by leading countries of the world indicate an increasing relevance of the problem of constructing a unique image of territories by appealing to culture, unique features of the city, and its individuality. All this is expressed in cultural heritage and can become the main advantage and key factor in the development of both the state in general and the territory of a separate city in particular (Chernets, 2017: 70).

The development of cities and the disclosure of their cultural significance in the geobranding of the country becomes possible thanks to the building of the city's image. O. Moroz, V. Herasymchuk, etc. note that usually the image of a city consists of a system of indicators, which includes the quality of life, business climate, the presence and size of its own and attracted capital on this territory, and infrastructure. The authors of the study include emotional impressions of the city as an irrational part of its image. In particular, this may include geographical features, architecture, and aesthetic appearance of the city (Moroz, Herasymchuk, 2020: 110).

So, having studied the means of decolonization and the specifics of the country's geobranding, it was determined that geobranding affects the creation of the image of cities, which is formed using the existing infrastructure and its design. Therefore, it is possible to claim that one of the ways to design infrastructure facilities is not only symbols (flag, coat of arms, etc.), but also street art (part of which is the mural, which is widespread today).

3. Theoretical foundations of studying the concept of "mural"

The study of the mural as a modern urban artistic phenomenon and a tool of social communications, taking into account international experience in the field of communicative practices, currently raises a number of debatable questions regarding its functionality and field of study (urban studies, cultural studies, history, social communications, art history).

The problem of defining the term "mural" is revealed in a number of scientific investigations. Today, murals are part of street art and a component of the organization of the urban environment. According to I. Havrylash, murals are a means of communication for different social strata, and therefore an effective tool for creating a dialogue, since certain examples of murals draw the attention of the urban community to important issues and problems that require urgent solutions (Havrylash, 2018: 137).

According to H. Bitaeva, the art of murals (monumental wall-paintings) is an inseparable part of urban space. Having a deep historical significance in the Ukrainian realities of the post-Maidan and war period, the phenomenon of mural art has become widespread in recent decades, when, in connection with socio-political changes, hundreds of new murals have appeared in many cities (*Bitaeva, 2025: 243*).

Murals are considered as part of social communications by O. Kolisnyk and N. Ponomarova. Scientists argue that as a form of art, a mural performs an aesthetic function, since it complements the architectural landscape of the city and provides a certain bright and colorful accent on buildings (*Kolisnyk, Ponomarova, 2019: 65*). At the same time, they do not diminish the socio-communicational significance of murals, since such images introduce symbolic signs with certain meanings into the area, conveying certain narratives of society.

Taking into account all approaches to interpreting the definition “mural” and attributing this concept to a certain sphere, in this study it is necessary to define the mural itself as the result of the creative process of creating street art, which acts as graphic indicators of important social narratives.

The specific characteristics of murals are based on such criteria as the subject of coverage, genre palette, style of creation and size of the canvas. The first criterion for the typology of murals was taken in the work of Yu. Shemenova, where three models of murals in Ukraine between 2010 and 2020 were identified: national – with the representation of works of ethnoculture; authorial – with the coverage of the artist’s individual vision of the surrounding world; adaptive – with artists’ appeal to artistic traditions and artistic images of other countries of the world (murals are usually performed by foreigners or in collaboration with Ukrainian artists within the framework of international street art festivals) (*Shemenova, 2021: 225–226*). H. Pysanka and S. Davydova, having studied murals in contemporary art and social life, divided them into such classes as: graphic, pictorial, decorative (by style of creation) and mini-murals – from 1 to 7 meters in height, made on small buildings; middle-murals (medium size) – from 8 to 19 meters (by size of the canvas), animalistic, everyday, historical, portrait, landscape, religious (by genre) (*Pysanka, Davydova, 2018: 192*). Among the common styles of murals, realism, geometric stylization, surrealism, as well as elements of mythological and fairy-tale motives are also distinguished (*Mnozhynska, 2025: 127*).

In addition to determining the place of the mural and the types of this kind of street art in the field of theoretical explorations, it is also important to study their functions. Having studied the works of H. Bitaeva, O. Kolisnyk and N. Ponomarov, the conclusion was reached that today one of the basic purposes of murals is to decorate and enliven the urban landscape. However, with the requirements of modernity, mural painting is also perceived as a form of non-verbal communication. Performing the function of protest, murals draw attention to social and political problems, support and express collective solidarity through visual symbols. The educational function is also no less important, since with the help of murals in the urban environment, historical and cultural figures are honored, local folklore and ethnic diversity are demonstrated. In times of oppression of culture and national values, murals depict prominent figures of national history and the liberation movement, performing an educational and informative function.

The final function was revealed in Ukraine during 2014–2016 under the influence of the Euromaidan agitation art. Similar works against the backdrop of the Revolution of Dignity and the armed conflict in the East of the country (2014 – present) broadcast the consequences of the aforementioned events, glorify national heroes, and visualize the distorted fates of people in the Donbass (*Shemenova, 2021: 3*).

4. The social and communicative significance of murals in Ukraine

The main agents of Ukrainian murals in wartime are memory, generations, and symbols that manifest important cultural meanings and senses – socio-cultural, political, and national identity. For example, the material of Veronika Masenko's article "Murals as a Reaction to War appear in Ukraine and abroad. How does this affect urban space?" raises the question of the impact of patriotic street art on urban space, symbols of resistance to Russian aggression (for example, in Kyiv, murals with "Saint Javelin", the dog Patron, rescuers of the State Emergency Service, "Ghosts of Kyiv", etc.). This study also tells about the cultural project The Wall, which was implemented by the Port agency and the Ukrainian Institute with the support of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and thanks to which monumental works dedicated to Ukraine appeared in five cities: Vienna, Berlin, Marseille, Brussels and Nairobi (*Masenko, 2023*). According to art critic and founder of the agency, Katia Teilor, the concept of The Wall was to create collaborative works by Ukrainian and foreign artists about common values – freedom, democracy and unity: "Yes, an unplanned 'encounter' with a mural that tells about the common future of Ukraine and Europe can leave a mark in the viewer's memory and in the future influence their decisions and political choices. Not depicting military aggression or weapons on buildings was a rule that was followed by default. In some cases, it was necessary to work especially carefully with the local context" (*Masenko, 2023*). Here, the artist aptly mentions the successfully chosen narrative strategy of the mural "Grain of Culture" in Nairobi by two artists – from Kenya and Ukraine: a message about Ukraine supplying grain to Africa despite the war (Fig. 1). Due to the low awareness of Kenyans about the situation in Ukraine, the authors strategically used their shared experience: a key element of the strategy was to establish a connection between Ukraine and Kenya based on a common colonial past, which allowed to create an emotional connection and solidarity, since the topic of the struggle for sovereignty and against colonialism is close to many African countries. Instead of focusing solely on the destruction and war, the mural focused on the fact that Ukraine, despite everything, continues to help the world by supplying grain to Africa: this message positions Ukraine not as a victim, but as a reliable partner that fulfills its obligations even in the most difficult times. The mural in Kenya not only informs, but also creates a narrative bridge between different parts of the world: it transforms the Ukrainian war from a local conflict to a global problem, showing how Russian aggression affects the world, in particular the food security of the countries of the Global South. Thus, the mural in Kenya uses a strategy of direct, emotionally resonant communication, built on common historical connections and current problems, which allows it to effectively convey the Ukrainian message to a wide international audience.

According to the article, the original idea for the mural in Kenya was to depict colonialism in the form of a giant spider with the crown of the Russian Empire, but this idea was rejected due to the aggressive reaction of local residents, which confirms the importance of ethical and tolerance filters. Ultimately, the team abandoned the idea with the spider out of respect for the local residents who would have to live next to this image, and they did it to ensure that the main messages of the project were heard and understood.

The murals mentioned in this study use symbols to convey deep sociocultural and political ideas that oppose imperial narratives. The mural "St. Javelin" (Fig. 2) in Kyiv and other cities transforms a weapon (an anti-tank missile system) into a sacred symbol, a manifesto of resistance and national identification, emphasizing the divine protection of Ukraine from the enemy. The art object reinterprets weapons as instruments of the struggle for freedom, not aggression. "Ghosts of Kyiv" (Fig. 2) serves not only to boost morale, but also to



Мурал «Зерна культури» в Найробі створили художник із Кенії Еліамін Інк разом з українцем Андрієм Ковтуном і Нікітою Кравцовим. ФОТО: Port

Fig. 1. The mural “Seeds of Culture” in Nairobi. Source: (Masenko, 2023)

mythologize the modern struggle. This creates a national heroic pantheon and affirms its own, non-Soviet, identity. The resilience and heroism of not only the military, but also civilians, which is an important element in the formation of the socio-cultural unity of the nation in war conditions, is encoded in the images of the State Emergency Service rescuers and the dog Patron. All these examples demonstrate how murals transform urban space, filling it with new decolonial meanings, create visual narratives that counter Russian propaganda and affirm the Ukrainian identity as strong, independent and capable of separate cultural creation.



Fig. 2. Mural “Holy Javelin” by Kailas-V on Antonov Aircraft Designer Street in Kyiv (left); mural “Ghost of Kyiv” by Andriy Kovtun on Mezhyhirska Street in Kyiv. Source: (Masenko, 2023)

The murals of the series “Time of Changes” by the Kyiv duo *Interesni Kazki* by Volodymyr Manzhos (Waone *Interesni Kazki*) and Oleksiy Bordusov (Aec *Interesni Kazki*) interpret the temporary occupation of Crimea and the beginning of the war in Donbas (Fig. 3). “The art object symbolizes the eternal struggle of good against evil. The struggle is taking place both

on a universal scale, where a snake encircles the entire earth, and a zombie-TV turns a rational person into a primate. And on earth, where a six-armed Cossack fights back evil. The artists added many interesting “Easter egg” (reference) symbols to the picture: a monkey with a machine gun and a grenade; a burning tank with the sign “To Kyiv”; burning tires in one of the Cossack’s hands; paving slabs from the Maidan; “The Lutsk castle, to which the stork instead of flying away returns, not like on the 200-hryvnia banknote, well, that snake face reminds me of someone” (Mural “Time of Changes”). Volodymyr Manzhos’s work about Ukraine’s victory over the Soviet and Russian empires in Podil opened the Ukraine The Best cultural tour, within which murals dedicated to Ukraine were created in European cities. The content is a textbook decolonizing one: a Ukrainian Cossack in “pixel” pantaloons under the cover of an amulet towel against the backdrop of historical fortresses destroys an evil spirit in the form of a bear in red pants, armed with a sickle and a hammer.



Fig. 3. Mural “Time of Change” by the Kyiv duo Interesni Kazki by Volodymyr Manzhos and Oleksiy Bordusov (left); work by Volodymyr Manzhos, a former member of the duo Interesni Kazki, from the series “Time of Change”.

Source: (Graffiti “Time of Change”) (left) and (Masenko, 2023) (right)

Tetiana Hundorova writes in her book “Traditional Culture and Postcolonial Trauma”: “All the above-mentioned codes: Cossack, apocalyptic, carnival – were largely based on performativity... The Cossack code was one of the most influential on the Maidan” (Hundorova, 2024: 20, 24). Therefore, street art declares and cultivates the Cossack myth in a generational perspective: from a Cossack in harem pants to the uniform of the Armed Forces of Ukraine.

The patriotic education of representatives of the new Ukrainian is also formed through murals. Analyzing the mural in Rivne dedicated to the memory of the fallen defenders of Azovstal, T. Savchenko and O. Turcheva note that the artist A. Shostak immortalized the faces of Rivne residents Kostiantyn Druz (with the call sign “Ace”) and Vitalii Semchuk (with the call sign “Rut”). The authors analyze the mural, which combines several elements: a trident, portraits of the defenders of Mariupol on the background with the contours of Azovstal, and the image of a girl hugging Ukraine. It symbolizes all children who suffered or died during the war (Savchenko, Turcheva, 2025: 52).

No less interesting to study are the murals of front-line city Zaporizhzhia and identifying of the features of their functioning in the region, which suffers from daily enemy shelling. An important task performed by street art in Zaporizhzhia among all those mentioned above is also the preservation of cultural heritage and support for historical figures who are directly



Fig. 4. Mural to the fallen defenders of Azovstal, Rivne.

Source: (Savchenko, Turcheva, 2025)

related to the liberation movement and the formation of Ukrainian statehood. Thus, an example of such a mural is an art-object depicting Bohdan Khmelnytskyi, which an artist Oleksandr Korban worked on. This mural became the first in a series of works of the project “Each of Us is a Hero” (Fig. 5). It should be noted that the mural itself contains a monochrome insert at Bohdan Khmelnytskyi’s eye level, which illustrates the connection of the hero of the mural to historical events. Another example of this function is the mural depicting Nestor Makhno, which was made by Davyd Chychkan and Kateryna Pikarska. It should be mentioned that in addition to the relevant symbolism and portrait of the revolutionary, the location of its placement is also important. The mural was created on the building of the Hulyaipil Hub in the city of Zaporizhia.



Fig. 5. Mural depicting Bohdan Khmelnytskyi by Oleksandr Korban, Zaporizhia (left), portrait of Nestor Makhno, Zaporizhia (right).

Source: (local media Sypilne. Zaporizhzhia)

Gameness and resistance to the occupation troops are also conveyed in a number of murals, which are built on symbols that are close to every Ukrainian (blue and yellow colors, a flag, a wheat field, the famous cargo aircraft Mriya) (Fig. 6). The author of the street art “Mriya” Denis Antyukhov comments on his own work “For us, “Mriya” is our victory. We know that our

dream can be destroyed, but it cannot be broken.” The image of this symbol and support for the idea of promoting the great achievements of Ukraine among the local population of Zaporizhia only confirms the efforts of the front-line city, which was considered an admirer of Russian culture, to resist Russian influences.



Fig. 6. Patriotic murals in Zaporizhia with symbols of invincibility of spirit.
Source: (local media Syspilne. Zaporizhzhia)

Zaporizhzhia became the first major city in Ukraine where murals from the “Resistance Mural” project appear, in which artists use art-objects as a signal to compatriots and a warning to enemies about the danger that awaits them in a free Ukrainian city. One example of such murals is a mural depicting a reinterpreted figure of the Cossack Mamai, symbolizing the Ukrainian resistance, created by an artist Yarema Stetsyk (Fig. 7). The selection of symbolic signs is also special, namely drones, a Molotov cocktail and a laptop, as well as a logo denoting the resistance movement. These signs are very close to Zaporizhia, as the city is actively purchasing drones to support the front, and at the beginning of the full-scale invasion, there were courses organized in the city to teach citizens how to prepare and throw Molotov cocktails so that residents could repel the occupiers if they entered the city.



Fig. 7. Examples of murals within the framework of the “Resistance Murals” project, Zaporizhia. Source: (local media Zprz.City)

The second example of a mural from the “Resistance Murals” project was a mural dedicated to the resistance forces during the occupation by Lviv artist Mykhailo Skop. This mural is rich in symbolism and serves as a call to resistance to the Russian occupier (Fig. 7). Among the key images stands out a masked figure with a knife, symbolizing the “shadow” that acts behind enemy lines thanks to determination and resourcefulness. A kitchen knife represents a household item that can become a weapon in the hands of a person with the will to resist, emphasizing the role of ordinary citizens in the struggle. The two-headed red rooster is a satirical reinterpretation of the Russian coat of arms, demonstrating the falsehood and decline of imperial ambitions. The sunflower, a traditional Ukrainian symbol, in this context embodies popular support and reminds of the constant readiness of the “shadow” to act.

Since the full-scale invasion of 2022, murals in Ukraine have taken on a new meaning, becoming a means of artistic expression, visual resistance, preservation of memory, solidarity, and national unity. In cities under fire, as well as in relatively calm regions, artists create works on the themes of war, loss, struggle, heroism, internal displacement, and recovery. The frontline city of Zaporizhzhia uses murals not only as a means of promoting socially important topics and patriotic education, but also as a reminder to its citizens that the enemy is very close, as evidenced by the presence of murals from the “Resistance Mural” project.

5. Conclusions

Thus, in scientific study, the mural was not explored in its traditional cultural and artistic aspects, but rather considered as a tool for promoting decolonial discourse, which has several key characteristics that make it an effective applied socio-communication technology.

1. Accessibility and publicity

The mural is placed in a public space (on the walls of buildings, fences), which makes it accessible to a wide audience. Unlike art in galleries or museums, it does not require special access or payment. This accessibility allows decolonial ideas to be brought directly to people, integrating these thoughts into everyday life of the city, while simultaneously forming a certain image of the city within the framework of general geobranding.

2. Visualization and symbolism

A mural uses visual images and symbols to convey complex ideas. This makes emotional and intuitive communication possible. For example, a mural can visualize heroic figures, symbols of resistance, or shared historical traumas (colonial past), which evokes a stronger response than purely textual information.

3. Narrativeness and Reinterpretation of Space

A mural creates new narratives in urban space. It transforms a wall that was previously neutral or had a different context into a platform for expression. This allows to decolonize a space, to fill it with new, nationally-identical meanings that oppose imperial or Soviet narratives. Also, by using a particular location to place images on murals, these art-object create a connection with geography and are remembered in a clear association with the area.

4. Dialog and Reactivity

The creation of a mural is often a dialogue between the artist, the idea, and the community. As it was shown in the Kenyan example, a mural can be changed in response to the reactions of local residents. This characteristic makes it a flexible tool, which is able to adapt to the context, avoiding conflict and ensuring the effective reception of the message.

5. Durability and Sustainability

Unlike temporary forms of street art, a mural is long-term and can last for years. This allows the ideas it manifests to become embedded in the collective memory and serve as a constant reminder of important values. This makes it a powerful tool for shaping and strengthening national identity.

There is the opportunity for future researchers to look into murals as part of geobranding, drawing a map of Ukraine in a symbolic palette, as was analyzed in this study using the example of Zaporizhia, the image of which is formed using individual symbols that are closely intertwined with the image of a front-line city that resists both on the battlefield and in occupation (more than 70% of the Zaporizhia region is occupied), and in the mental sense, destroying stereotypes about this city as part of the Russian cultural space.

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