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Looking Forward, Looking Back: Re-Connecting of Urban Planning Education in Lviv

Abstract

The article outlines the development of a new network assembled by the Chair of Urban Planning at the Lviv Polytechnic institute after the collapse of the USSR. It focuses on the actions of individual people who contributed to institutional changes and used various resources to create and maintain a set of connections.

The tradition of urban planning education in Lviv begins with a Chair of Urban Planning created in 1913 at Lviv Polytechnic. However, after WWII and the incorporation of the city into the Soviet state, Lviv Polytechnic went through radical changes. Urban planning was restored as an architectural sub-specialization only in 1966, while a separate department of architecture was organized only in 1971.

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After *perestroika* and the disintegration of the Soviet Union (1985–1991), the Chair of Urban Planning relatively quickly reoriented its activities from Moscow's to Kraków's, Wrocław's, Vienna's or Berlin's perspective. This was primarily due to personal contacts, which step by step became institutionalized, and due to the “imaginary continuity” between contemporary urban planners and the pre-war Lviv architectural school.

Professors who left the city right after WWII gained symbolic importance and helped to establish a common ground between the milieu of Lviv Polytechnic and Polish technical schools in the 1990s. During the time of social and political changes, looking into the past became a quite successful strategy, which helped the institution to gain symbolic capital and survive. The history of Lviv Polytechnic, stripped from all potential conflicts and sharp divisions, helped to build new connections after the old ones no longer provided stable positions. Knowing foreign languages became one of the basic means or resources that people needed to feel connected and to participate in scientific exchanges.

The sources of the article include oral history interviews with academics in the field of architecture, memoirs, and other published materials related to the history of the Chair of Urban Planning at Lviv Polytechnic.

Keywords: *agency, connections, education, Lviv Polytechnic, urban planning*

Patrząc w przyszłość, patrząc wstecz: sposoby na ponowne połączenie edukacji urbanistycznej we Lwowie

Abstrakt

Artykuł przedstawia zarys rozwoju nowej sieci utworzonej przez katedrę urbanistyki Politechniki Lwowskiej po rozpadzie ZSRR. Koncentruje się na sprawczości poszczególnych aktorów, którzy przyczynili się do zmian instytucjonalnych oraz różnych zasobów, które wykorzystali w celu stworzenia i utrzymania zestawu powiązań.

Tradycja edukacji urbanistycznej we Lwowie zaczyna się od katedry powstałej w 1913 roku. Jednak po II wojnie

światowej i włączeniu miasta do sowieckiego państwa Politechnika Lwowska przeszła radykalne zmiany. Urbanistyka została przywrócona jako podspecjalizacja architektoniczna dopiero w 1966 roku, natomiast osobny wydział architektury zorganizowano w 1971 roku.

Po pierestrojce i rozpadzie Związku Radzieckiego (1985–1991) katedra urbanistyki stosunkowo szybko przeorientowała swoje działania z perspektywy moskiewskiej na krakowską, wrocławską, wiedeńską czy berlińską. Wynikało to głównie z kontaktów osobistych, które stopniowo ulegały instytucjonalizacji oraz „wymagowanej ciągłości” między obecnymi urbanistami a przedwojenną lwowską szkołą architektoniczną.

Profesorowie, którzy opuścili miasto zaraz po II wojnie światowej, zyskali symboliczne znaczenie i przyczynili się do nawiązania porozumienia między środowiskiem Politechniki Lwowskiej a polskimi technikami w latach 90. XX wieku. W okresie przemian społeczno-politycznych spojrzenie w przeszłość stało się dość skuteczną strategią, która pomogła instytucji zdobyć kapitał symboliczny i przetrwać. Odarta z wszelkich potencjalnych konfliktów i ostrych podziałów historia Politechniki Lwowskiej pomogła w budowaniu nowych połączeń po tym, jak stare nie zapewniały już stabilnych stanowisk. Znajomość języków obcych stała się jednym z podstawowych zasobów potrzebnych ludziom do poczucia więzi i uczestnictwa w wymianie naukowej.

Podstawą źródłową artykułu są wywiady ustne z naukowcami z dziedziny architektury, pamiętniki i inne publikowane materiały związane z historią katedry urbanistyki Politechniki Lwowskiej.

Słowa kluczowe: *agencja, powiązania, edukacja, Politechnika Lwowska, urbanistyka*

1. Introduction

Like the city of Lviv itself, Lviv Polytechnic went through radical changes during the mid-20th century.¹ This institution, which is considered one of the oldest technical schools in the region,² preserved, and later expanded, its presence in the urban landscape, but also faced radical

¹ More about general context of post-war Lviv see: Amar 2015; Mick 2016.

² Bobalo 2016, pp. 3–8.

social transformation. Lviv architects Natalia Dziadyk and Roman Lypka recalled that the first post-war year in Lviv Polytechnic

was characterized by a thorough reorganization of its structure and almost complete replacement of teaching and student staff, in connection with the ongoing, and continuing after the war, mass movement of resettlement (Dziadyk, Lypka 2002, p. 14).³

Polish-German historian, Henryk Ditchen, named this period “the exodus of academic and technical elites”⁴, since people of Polish origin and from higher social strata were forced to leave the city, after Lviv was incorporated into the Soviet state. They settled within the new borders of Poland and became a driving force in establishing technical schools in Gdańsk, Gliwice, Katowice, and Wrocław. Also, a number of professors came to Lviv from various parts of the USSR in order to fill the void and to incorporate Lviv into the Soviet project. For instance, the entire architectural faculty of the Kharkiv Institute of the Engineers of Communal Economy was moved to Lviv in 1944.⁵ But, the new polytechnic school had to be organized within its old walls.

The urban planning at Lviv Polytechnic traces its history back to courses given by architect and urban planner Ignacy Drexler (1878–1930) and a department of city-building established in 1913.⁶ In the Soviet Lviv, specialization in the urban planning was restored as an architectural sub-specialization in 1966, while a separate department of architecture was organized only in 1971⁷, due to efforts of Jan Bagiński (also Ivan Bahenskyi)⁸, one of few professors from a pre-war society, who remained in the city.⁹ The newly established department of urban planning was chaired by Andrii Rudnytskyi (1928–2009) (held office during 1971–1982), who was Bagiński’s student, and Bohdan Posatskyi (1942–2020) (held office during 1982–1993), who was Rudnytskyi’s student. Thus, a link was created between pre-war and post-war architectural tradition.

³ Unless otherwise stated all translations by the author.

⁴ Ditchen 2015, p. 246.

⁵ Dyak 2020.

⁶ Cherkes 2012, p. 118; Petryshyn 2017, p. 150.

⁷ Petryshyn 2013, p. 16.

⁸ Posatsky 2018; 2019.

⁹ Ditchen 2015, pp. 247, 255–256.

In the brief history of the department of urban planning at Lviv Polytechnic the period of 1990–1993 is being described as “a fracture time”.¹⁰ Academics continued to maintain connections with Moscow institutions and defended their dissertations there¹¹. However, the organizational connections with the schools of central planning in Russia weakened during the early 1990s. Associate professor Iryna Rusanova recalled that “ties broke off”.¹² The community of urban planners had to look for new sources of symbolic capital (in Pierre Bourdieu’s terms)¹³, either external ones, or those developed during the last decades of the soviet state socialism.

When discussing the diffusion of ideas in the field of urban planning, Stephen Ward developed a typology based on the “power relations” between actors, who either “borrow” (knowledge is shaped by local agency) or “impose” (knowledge is lent by foreign experts).¹⁴ Other researchers, like Martin Kohlrausch and Helmuth Trischler looked at the network of European technocrats in the scope of the “long” twentieth century, and concluded their work with a thesis about the interconnections between globalization and Europeanization of knowledge production¹⁵. Also, Patsy Healy demonstrated the ways of institutionalizing “Western” expertise in the field of urban planning.¹⁶

While describing Lviv urban planners’ position, I want to avoid placing them between their former metropolis – Moscow – and their new European aspirations. Instead, I show the role of a number of “imaginary continuances”, which helped them to navigate under new circumstances. I focus on the role of international connections that they developed and maintained in order to recreate the field of urban planning education after the collapse of the USSR. The implicit assumption behind this

¹⁰ Petryshyn 2013, p. 103.

¹¹ For instance, the cohort of people who defended PhD dissertations in Moscow between 1985 and 1991 included Bohdan Cherkes, the dean of department (and later institute) of architecture since 1991, Victor Proskuriakov (currently vice-dean), Yuriy Kryvoruchko (chair of urban planning in 1993–2011), Halyna Petryshyn (chair of urban planning since 2012) etc.

¹² Rusanova 2019.

¹³ Bourdieu 1984.

¹⁴ Ward 2010, p. 48.

¹⁵ Kohlrausch, Trischler 2014, pp. 281–295.

¹⁶ Healy 2013, pp. 1521–1522.

writing is the idea of expertise as a relational concept; therefore, the status of an expert is not necessarily fixed, it depends on political, economic, and social circumstances, and can be described as “result of cultural aspirations and communicative negotiations”¹⁷ of people, who have various institutional, national, and international affiliations.

I tell the story of urban planning expertise – the one related to professional education in the field of architecture during the period of political, economic, and social transformation. The majority of works on the subject focused on changes in city planning in the region, either on the level of urban landscapes¹⁸, or developments in planning tools and decision-making processes¹⁹. But, the present paper shows the story from the perspective of a particular professional group striving to keep their positions during the time of uncertainty. It is based on oral interviews (recorded in one or more sessions) with academics and practitioners, memoirs, and other published materials related to the history of the department of urban planning at Lviv Polytechnic.²⁰ The interviews were intended as biographic²¹ and focused on education, professional career, and the community of peers. Closer to the end of each interview, I would ask directly about the development of the international connections in their institution and the role of specific people in this process. As my interviewees were all established professionals, I relied on the practice of interviewing architects²² and the “informed interviewing”²³. I had a possibility to talk to twenty people working in the urban planning field. Within this article, I refer directly to ten conversations: with the dean of the Institute of architecture

¹⁷ Kohlrausch, Steffen, *Wiederkehr* 2010, p. 10.

¹⁸ Andrusz, Harloe, Szelenyi 1996; Benkó, Kissfazekas 2019; Dmitrieva, Kliems 2010.

¹⁹ Hirt, Stanilov 2009; Hirt 2015; Van Assche, Verschraegen, Salukvadze 2010; Tsenkova 2007.

²⁰ The research conducted within the frame of international network “Legacies of Communism? Post-Communist Europe from Stagnation to Reform, between Autocracy and Revolution” (see: <https://legacies-of-communism.eu/>, accessed on 20 April 2021) administrated by the Leibniz Centre for Contemporary History in Potsdam.

²¹ Denzin, Lincoln 2005; Leavy 2011; Yow 2015.

²² Phillips 2013.

²³ Laudel & Gläser 2007.

professor Bohdan Cherkes, the vice-dean professor Viktor Proskuriakov, current head of the department of urban planning professor Halyna Petryshyn and the former chairman, professor Yurii Kryvoruchko, as well as with professor Bohdan Posatskyi, professor Bohdan Gnidets, associate professors Iryna Dyda and Iryna Rusanova, architects Roman Grom and Yurii Stoliarov. The interviews were held in Ukrainian, with quotes in Russian and Polish. They were recorded in one, two, three or four sessions. This fieldwork was part of my cooperation with the interdisciplinary research network funded by a SAW-grant of the Leibniz Association “Legacies of Communism? Post-Communist Europe from Stagnation to Reform, between Autocracy and Revolution” hosted by the ZZF in Potsdam.

The present paper outlines a number of ways, in which architects and urban planners have described reconnecting their professional field with other significant spaces and chronologies. I start with the key figures, who are considered to be the linking chain in the history of the department. Later on, I outline the specifics of educational program development, which created common ground for generations of urban planners. Also, I elaborate here on languages as an important skill that helps accessing literature and direct communication with the foreign professionals. Finally, in order to summarize the arguments about Lviv urban planning school being rooted in the European tradition, the paper brings the notion of the “imaginary continuance”. It also shows that history of an institution could be rewritten from a new perspective and emphasizes the agency of local actors in this process.

2. Few who stayed: people as connectors

The agency is the ability of a person to act according to individual goals, interests, or values, and produce an effect either in a symbolic, social, or material form. According to the “transitive methodology”, it could be defined through relations between elements of a heterogeneous network, which develops in time and space and is open to changes²⁴. Therefore, I discuss the agency in the context of links and connections maintained across decades and actualized during political and social transformation. In regard to this concept, I would like to focus on

²⁴ Schäfer 2017, pp. 42–43.

a number of figures, who played the key role in the field of urban planning education in Lviv, and whose actions led to structural changes.

Bohdan Posatskyi in the interview referred to the history of the architectural department, which,

as well as the entire Polytechnic (institute), was Polish [before the WWII]. There was, in my opinion, 3% or, perhaps, 5% of Ukrainians, there was such a rule (Posatskyi 2019 (*interview*)).

He continued,

and here comes the year [19]45. And Poles are told: “You have nothing to do in Lviv, (you should) go to Wroclaw or to Gdansk, or somewhere else”. They... were put on board and left. There was only one professor who remained – Bagiński, an architect. The second professor, Kuryllo, was a civil engineer. And the architectural program existed as one group at the Faculty of Civil Engineering. And so it lasted until [19]55... Professor Bagiński, a Polish professor, was the chair, he spoke good Russian, because he was born somewhere (in the Russian empire), he was connected with Russia before the revolution (Posatskyi 2019 (*interview*)).

The story of few Polish professors who remained at Lviv Polytechnic after the WWII is well-known²⁵ and is often used in order to emphasize the link between the pre- and postwar schools of thought. While Jan Bagiński (1883–1967) and Adam Kuryllo (1889–1980) were important figures in creating the “imaginary continuity” with the inter-war architectural department, the diaspora of professors who left the city in 1945–1946 would become one of the key anchors for re-establishing the connection in the 1990s and location of Lviv Polytechnic on a new map of institutions. My interlocutors described the Soviet period as a rather hostile environment, where preserving the tradition was possible due to the efforts of specific people only.

Architect Roman Grom recalled Bagiński, who taught him during the freshmen year in 1966. At his first lecture Bagiński defined

²⁵ Ditchen 2015; Dziadyk, Lypka 2002; Petryshyn 2013; Posatskyi 2018.

architecture with a help of a simple visualization: two intersecting circles, one represented art, the other – engineering, and architecture was in-between. Grom shared this story with everybody, as he believed it to be the “holy truth.”²⁶ Associate professor Iryna Dyda, when talking about Bagieński, praised his ability to bring together people who were genuinely interested in architecture. She mentioned, however, that the most important thing was that

he still preserved the method of teaching and the values, priorities that were still inherent in the pre-war Lviv Polytechnic... And because of that we can say that our current architectural school dates back to pre-war times, in fact, due to such a direct transfer of information and experience between the older generation and the newer (Dyda 2019 (*interview*)).

She also admitted that his knowledge of the Russian language could be a possible reason that he stayed in the city. The case of Bagieński is illustrative in terms of agency: he, and not the institutional structure developed during postwar decades, is described as the heart of architectural education. When recalling the number of conversations about Bagieński with Andrii Rudnytskyi, Bohdan Cherkes mentioned that Rudnytskyi had considered Bagieński

as a bridge from the past to the present – the pre-war period, then the Soviet period and independent Ukraine (Cherkes, Dyda 2018, p. 119).

His importance became even more visible during the post-socialist period when his connection to the pre-war school was mobilized as an argument for the century-long continuance of tradition.

As for Adam Kuryllo, I talked to his student Bohdan Gnidets. Kuryllo had supervised his candidate dissertation and had consulted on his doctoral dissertation. At present, Gnidets teaches a subject related to design of bridges. Gnidets said:

I have also been working mostly on bridges since 1960. My teacher, Professor Kuryllo, handed me that subject,

²⁶ Grom 2020 (*interview*).

so I still teach it. Only last year, I was given an assistant (Gnidets 2019 *interview*)).

My interviewee also reflected on the reasons Kuryllo had stayed in Lviv after the war – he had a nice house in the city, his son worked at Lviv Polytechnic as well, and he also had confirmed his professor status “when Russians came for the first time”²⁷. Gnidets continued,

it is good that he stayed (in the city), because there would be no one who could lead that specialization on reinforced concrete structures and bridges at the appropriate level. He, in fact, created a postwar school of specialists... All the specialists in the field of reinforced concrete structures who used to work, and still work, are his students or students of his students (Gnidets 2019 *interview*)).

Both Bagieński and Kuryllo are described in the interviews as the founders of the post-war schools in the specific fields of architecture and construction. As for urban planning tradition, it was more related to another man with strong agency – Bagieński’s student: Rudnytskyi. He was the dean of the department of architecture (1977–1991) and an important figure in terms of organization of academic units, as well as scientific research, which determined the further development of the field. According to Natalia Dziadyk and Roman Lypka, during 40 years of work

[he] made a significant contribution to the restoration of the Faculty of Architecture and the organization of educational processes in accordance with modern requirements (Dziadyk, Lypka 2002, p. 21).

Upon continuing the work of Bagieński, Rudnytskyi focused on the development of the structure of the institution. Posatskyi recalled that Rudnytskyi invited him for postgraduate studies in 1967:

He rightly thought that we should somehow develop the chair further, because then there was no (architecture) department, there was only a chair... there was a chair, and he was the only candidate of architecture there, that’s

²⁷ Gnidets 2019 *interview*). He means the period between 1939 and 1941, when the city was incorporated into the Soviet Union.

it. There was nobody else; all (staff) were without degrees. He understood that this couldn't last forever (Posatsky 2019 (*interview*)).

The individual agency needed support from the institution; therefore, Rudnytskyi invested in building of the program and recruiting young specialists. According to Bohdan Cherkes and Iryna Dyda, due to the efforts of Bagiński and Rudnytskyi, architectural education at Lviv Polytechnic

not only survived in the conditions of the totalitarian Soviet 'equalization' but also managed to preserve its unique tradition (Cherkes, Dyda 2018, p. 118).

The way that Cherkes and Dyda put it, clearly shows that Soviet decades in the history of the institution are perceived as a deviation from a "regular" development. Also, it illustrates essentialist approach, as the whole period of state socialism – either the 1950s or 1980s – is perceived as being the same.

These three figures – Bagiński, Kuryllo, and Rudnytskyi – are similar in a number of ways. They transformed their individual agency into institutional changes, they invested a lot into young professionals, and they were also structurally limited. As Heather DeHaan put it in her work on Soviet urbanists, "planners, engineers, and architects tended to be hybridized figures, both within the state and outside of it".²⁸ Furthermore, Bagiński, Kuryllo, and Rudnytskyi are represented now (both in published sources and oral testimonies) as connectors to the interwar school of thought, who managed to preserve certain academic practices under state socialism. This way of thinking transforms the Soviet period into one big gap, with progress occurring either before or after. At the same time, it was exactly during the Soviet period, when the institutional structure of the department was established and when certain ideas of urban planning (i.e. thinking in terms of micro-districts and functional zoning) were imprinted into the program²⁹ and remained dominant in the decades after the collapse of the USSR. Bohdan Cherkes and Iryna Dyda acknowledged that

²⁸ DeHaan 2013, p. 10.

²⁹ Stoliarov 2020 (*interview*).

despite all the dark sides of Soviet reality in the 1970s and 80s, for Lviv architecture it was a kind of a ‘golden period’ (Cherkes, Dyda 2018, p. 124).

Such ambivalence in the attitude towards the state socialism marks both the discursive distancing from the condemned political system, and, at the same time, recognition of the developments which happened under those conditions.

The story of the education is often told from the perspective of continuity – the transfer of knowledge from one generation to another. Specific persons who act as connecting links usually are those, who embody certain traditions and values that are important at the given moment. The emphasize on those persons, who are perceived as connectors to the pre-war school, indicates both the discursive break with the Soviet past, and a desire to build a new chronology and geography of the important reference points. It also puts Lviv Polytechnic on the map of Europe, while appealing to common roots.

3. On the same ground: connections through program

The curriculum of architectural and urban planning in Lviv went through the same transformation as the structure of the institution. Due to the liquidation of the architectural department in the 1950s, the chair’s libraries and archives of students’ works were eliminated, and some foreign professional literature was removed for ideological reasons and recycled.³⁰ At the same time, Bohdan Posatskyi in his memoirs mentioned that associate professor Lutsyk taught descriptive geometry based on Kazimierz Bartel’s textbook “*Perspektywa malarska*” [Painting perspective] (1928), which was republished in Poland in 1958, and which could be purchased only at one bookstore. Meanwhile, the former dean used a textbook from 1936:

However, he did not mention this, did not recommend any literature and demanded to use only the notes of his lectures (Posatskyi 2018, p. 204).

Later on, Halyna Petryshyn, current head of the urban planning chair since 2012, recalled that during her visits to Poland in the 1990s

³⁰ Petryshyn 2013, p. 14.

she was surprised seeing at the exhibition the same methodic materials that had been part of her student curriculum during the Soviet period. Petryshyn believed that these materials were preserved somewhere in the archives. And, for her it was a proof of a “common base” for Polish and Ukrainian architectural traditions.³¹

Even when the curriculum during the years of the state socialism was centrally approved in Moscow, a number of lecturers of technical disciplines used pre-war publications. A similar situation happened during the 1990s when the educational program had to be reinvented. Petryshyn’s brief history of the urban planning (which was also used as a promotional material) said that the concepts of architectural education were

based on the best examples of curricula of architectural faculties in Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Sweden, France (Petryshyn 2013, p. 117).

This statement names a number of important locations that function as certain quality markers and “significant others”. It also puts Lviv Polytechnic on the map of the European architectural schools and creates the common ground for the technical schools.

The years 1990 and 1991 are remembered as the time of uncertainty when old connections became unstable. Halyna Petryshyn recalled that before her thesis defense her Moscow colleagues had recommended her to work for one more year and defend not a “candidate” but a “doctoral” dissertation – the highest possible level in the hierarchy of academic degrees. However, she described her feeling in the following way:

But it was already cracking, everything was already cracking, and I told myself “No. Run, (go defend) what you have” [laughs]... I didn’t want to play with it, because it was already moving away, and I say that there was a feeling of agony, and it was scary to make any far-reaching plans (Petryshyn 2019 *(interview)*).

Historian Maria Rogacheva, who studied the community of physicists, chemists, and biologists in the former science city Chernogolovka close to Moscow, concluded that

³¹ Petryshyn 2019 *(interview)*.

[f]or most of my interviewees, the degradation of Soviet science in the 1990s became the most challenging – even depressing – part of their careers. ... An equally painful transition for the scientific intelligentsia was the loss of their privileged status (Rogacheva 2017, p. 179).

Under these circumstances Lviv Polytechnic was perceived as an oasis of stability. The associate professor Iryna Rusanova put it like this:

Everyone began to look at the institute as a more or less stable place of work, where the wages were paid. As everything collapsed – the institute persisted (Rusanova 2019 (*interview*)).

Thus, the structural stability of the educational institution helped it to survive during the time of uncertainty – and it remained an important place of knowledge transfer.

For Halyna Petryshyn, the possibility to act according to her vision and change the curriculum and format of urban planning education was connected with the defense of her dissertation. She said that her defense “changed a lot” and emphasized her personal efficiency that would ensure her position.³² Acting as deputy head of the chair allowed her for changing everything that she had hated during her student years – for instance, the “brigade approach”, when the same three persons tutored one group throughout years, or the long inflexible projects, when over the course of one year a student had to work in one technique. Yurii Kryvoruchko, who was a chair of urban planning between 1993 and 2011, recalled that his peers had become the chairs during the 1990s and started to modify educational programs according to German, Austrian and Swiss models.³³ He stressed the role of institutional positions, which helped people to reinforce their personal agency. It also located the curriculum of Lviv Polytechnic closer to German-speaking countries.

The architect and urban planner Yurii Stoliarov described his student years at Lviv Polytechnic during the 1990s. He spoke with pleasure about the two first international workshops with Austrian colleagues, in which he participated. He called them one of the most remarkable experiences

³² Petryshyn 2019 (*interview*).

³³ Kryvoruchko 2020 (*interview*).

from his student years that had long-lasting effects on his thinking about the city. He also emphasized the role of specific professors who acted more informally within the educational system; therefore, he brought up the issue of individual agency:

We participated in European architectural competitions, and it was credited as a course project. I pay great respect to those professors. I do not know if they were allowed to do it or not, I believe they were not, because we have sent the original project to Europe, but they still credited some photocopy [as a course project] (Stoliarov 2020 (*interview*)).

This small episode illustrates the agency of a few professors who used the gaps in the system in order to promote new educational practices. Stoliarov mentioned the first international workshops held in collaboration with Vienna University of Technology that took place in 1997–2004. These initiatives were described as the ones that had been extremely important for the introduction of a modern European school of urban planning into the didactics of the chair of urban planning (Petryshyn 2013, p. 119).

These short-term educational initiatives, which started in the 1990s helped to develop a new network of institutional connections when the previous one was no longer in operation. However, such a type of collaboration would not be possible without one important resource – the language.

4. Understanding each other: connection through language

Language proficiency is one of the tools that people need in order to feel connected and participate in communication – to read the works of others and share one's ideas. Russian was the *lingua franca* in the Soviet Union; it was used in the academic field and teaching in the universities was mainly held in Russian. Yuriï Kryvoruchko remembered writing his dissertation in Russian (which presupposed intense reading), and a need to speak this language perfectly.³⁴ Ukrainian was the language of everyday communication and it has become the language of higher

³⁴ Kryvoruchko 2020 (*interview*).

education only since the 1990s. My narrators recalled what a challenge it was to translate the terminology and develop professional discourse outside the influence of Russian and Soviet traditions.³⁵

The interviewees from the older generations had a basic knowledge of Polish from their childhood – Bohdan Gnidets learned Polish at school,³⁶ while Bohdan Posatskyi’s family used to live in present-day Poland before WWII.³⁷ In general, my interviewees’ family histories were strongly linked to the languages, which were commonly used decades ago. Iryna Dyda told the story of her father, Andrii Rudnytskyi with an emphasis on the meaning of languages that he had studied at school, during pre-war years in Lviv, and a period (several months), when his family had lived in Vienna:

He did not have a language barrier in communication with representatives from abroad... Thanks to him, the cooperation was very well established, and is still going very well... In fact, everything started with a letter he wrote³⁸, some professors came, and so it spun. With Vienna University of Technology, and with Krakow, and with Warsaw. This is to the point that, *on the one hand, we understand that one person is a drop in the ocean, nothing. On the other hand, very often certain traits, or abilities of a person can give a decent impetus to the fact that some events will at least develop faster than they could if someone, for example, did not speak a certain language.* Like, for example, if everyone would sit here in Lviv being capable of speaking only Ukrainian and Russian. It would be harder for them, they would have to get some translators, it would not be such a direct contact (Dyda 2019 *(interview)*; italic – author).

This quote from Dyda’s testimony sheds light on a number of aspects. It involves both a family history and a broader local historical context.

³⁵ Dyda 2019 *(interview)*; Kryvoruchko 2020 *(interview)*; Rusanova 2019 *(interview)*.

³⁶ Gnidets 2019 *(interview)*.

³⁷ Posatskyi 2018; 2019 *(interview)*.

³⁸ Cherkes also mentions this letter during the interview: “Andrii Markovych wrote such a letter to Vienna, because, of course, he knew the whole historical component about the resumption of cooperation and contacts” (Cherkes 2020 *(interview)*).

It gives some insights into a process of communication within a frame of a certain power relations (when the local professionals need to speak the language of their colleagues, not vice versa). Rudnytskyi's educational experience in pre-war Lviv (when Lviv, according to Cherkes and Dyda, was still a "European" city) is considered here as a condition allowing him to avoid "cultural or language barriers in communicating with the Poles, Austrians, Germans".³⁹ Finally, this story brings the agency back to the table – my interviewee reflected on the role of a person who can act and make certain things possible or easier to handle.

Some of the foreign languages were included in a high school curriculum. For instance, Iryna Rusanova and Halyna Petryshyn learned French as a foreign language.⁴⁰ Bohdan Gnidets learned German at the high school and English at the university – both helped him to work on his dissertation.⁴¹ Proficiency in Polish was useful for Bohdan Posatskyi during his studies. He learned the history of architecture from the Polish textbook by Tadeusz Broniewski, the same, which was used by his professor, Roman Lypka (1921–99). "We were on the same wavelength", laughs Posatskyi.⁴²

Knowledge of foreign languages became extremely beneficial during the 1990s. Bohdan Gnidets participated in a number of conferences in Poland ("During the first time I could not speak Polish yet, I made a report in English, and then I started to learn Polish" – he said); later he had a three-month scholarship and finally worked as a part-time professor at the Lublin Polytechnic⁴³ for seven years. For Halyna Petryshyn, one of the first experiences of international collaboration was giving lectures in Poland as part of a program "Ukrainian University" in Warsaw in 1991. She could speak Polish because of the Polish media:

(Radio) gave access to freedom. There was 'Lato z radiem' [Summer with Radio] and a bunch of films, and then everyone had an antenna directed to Poland... The Poles, on the other hand, knew no Ukrainian. For them it was

³⁹ Cherkes, Dyda 2018, p. 122.

⁴⁰ Petryshyn 2019 (*interview*); Rusanova 2019.

⁴¹ Gnidets 2019 (*interview*).

⁴² Posatskyi 2019 (*interview*).

⁴³ Gnidets 2019 (*interview*).

mostly ‘Związek Radziecki’ [Soviet Union], they focused on the Russian language, Ukrainian was not familiar to them (Petryshyn 2019 *interview*).

Viktor Proskuriakov had the same motivation and also learned Polish via Polish media during the Soviet period.⁴⁴ Yurii Kryvoruchko familiarized himself with Polish by reading books and later mastered it during teaching at Polish universities.⁴⁵ Halyna Petryshyn also learned German in order to get a scholarship in Vienna:

I knew there would be an interview. I immediately started going to [German language] classes... plus tutoring, and so on. In short, when I came to Austria, they said that there was a lady from Ukraine who spoke bad German with a very strong French accent (Petryshyn 2019 *interview*).

In 1993 Yurii Kryvoruchko became the head of the chair of urban planning. Iryna Rusanova, when talking about this period, remembered that it was precisely Kryvoruchko, who had started to promote conferences in Poland, and this tradition has been continued by Halyna Petryshyn, the current chair:

During the first years when she headed the chair we went mainly to Poland, because she taught there, and she still has some connections there. And we have seen a lot (Rusanova 2019 *interview*).

The interviewee mentioned the role of contacts developed by Petryshyn during her work in Poland (she was also a professor at the chair of landscape design in West Pomeranian University of Technology in Szczecin between 2003 and 2014, holding both positions there and in Lviv). During the 1990s and early 2000s, these personal relations that developed during the conferences started to be institutionalized. The brief history of the chair of urban planning lists a number of Polish Polytechnics, which became their partners⁴⁶ – and those are the ones mentioned as the conference locations in my interviews.

⁴⁴ Proskuriakov 2021 *interview*.

⁴⁵ Kryvoruchko 2020 *interview*.

⁴⁶ Petryshyn 2013, p. 112.

Bohdan Posatskyi regretted, that he could not speak German. He called it a reason for not having academic contacts with institutions from the German-speaking countries:

They [visitors from Vienna] needed to know something about the Polytechnic School, so they were looking for some translators... But then there was a language barrier, and I saw that communicating with a translator was not the case at all (Posatskyi 2019 (*interview*)).

Posatskyi emphasized the role of direct interaction and named a key person of the communication network – the current head of the institute of architecture in Lviv Polytechnic, Bohdan Cherkes, who cooperates regularly with Austrian and German institutions.⁴⁷ During the interview I asked Cherkes when and why he started to learn German language. He recalled that first it was during the school years, later at the university; however, the real inspiration was his meeting with Viennese professor Martin Kubelik, who came to Lviv and praised his pronunciation.⁴⁸ As a researcher, Cherkes had scholarships in Austria and established a collaboration with the Vienna University of Technology in 1995, after a conference dedicated to 150th anniversary of Lviv Polytechnic, held in 1994:

It then became clear that the Polytechnic was not something that was created 22 years ago, but that it was an institution of 150 years of tradition (Cherkes 2020 (*interview*)).

The link to the past became an important resource during the 1990s – it helped the School to join a new network.

A vivid example of individual research involving both international connections and the historical context is the study on German colonies in Ukrainian Galicia by Halyna Petryshyn, which she started in the 1990s. She mentioned the role of a community, who descended from these German colonies and whom she met during her field trips:

Thanks to this community, I have been on such educational trips, for example, at educational institutions in Bavaria...

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸ Cherkes 2020 (*interview*).

Then a specifically professional cooperation was established with the Berlin design bureaus, with the ones in Munich, whatever. And the beginnings (of such visits) were so completely spontaneous (Petryshyn 2019 (*interview*)).

Later on, this research on German colonies helped her to establish contacts with the Austrian Cooperation Office, whose head was interested in this topic. Due to these contacts, Petryshyn managed to get a scholarship in the Academy of Sciences in Vienna. Her first visit there happened to be in 1994, and roughly in the same period Bohdan Cherkes started a collaboration with the Technical University, which resulted in a long-lasting partnership.

5. Imaginary continuity through decades

Three aspects mentioned above: persons who acted and were perceived by their peers as connectors; a possibility to have the same theoretical and methodological reference points in the urban planning education; and proficiency in foreign languages – made it possible to build a bridge between Lviv and European urban planning educators during the 1990s. This link was established mainly through the mediation of Polish institutions as they could relate to each other in terms of their past. The common history at that moment became a crucial reference point.

In a note to his memoirs about a conference held in Lviv in 1991, Bohdan Posatskyi quotes a conversation with his colleagues from other Ukrainian cities. He recalls that during a coffee break one person from Kyiv asked him a question: “How do you live without contact with Moscow?” To this Posatskyi replied that there were other contacts being established and that “the history of Lviv and Lviv Polytechnic helped us with this”.⁴⁹ During the interview, Posatskyi elaborated on the continuity with the prewar architectural school that became the important resource for establishing new connections after the collapse of the USSR:

In [19]91 people came to us, from the West, from Poland, yes, they were mostly from Poland. And these people were those, who graduated from Lviv Polytechnic and had some

⁴⁹ Posatskyi 2018, p. 330.

emotional attachments, something like that (Posatskyi 2019 (*interview*)).

The location of the institution, material things and the space also played an important role:

the first Polish professors and architects to come here were people who had studied here at the Faculty of Architecture before [19]39. They left in [19]46, and they came to see what was being done here. What does their alma mater look like? *Is the table where a former professor was sitting until [19]39 still there, where is that table? Is it still standing in a room or not?* I witnessed a scene that did not relate to the architectural professors, but to electrical engineers. A man arrived; in my opinion it was a son of a former professor of electrical engineering. And apparently, he clearly knew that there was a photo of his father, what the table at which his father used to sit looked like. And he saw that table... he just couldn't believe that this was the table his father had been telling him about since [19]39. That is, these people, if we talk about architects, first, they were very interested in what the Polytechnic itself looked like. And second, because they were architects, they were interested in what was going on here in architecture... It was very moving for them, of course, to return to Lviv, and they expressed a huge interest in development of Lviv as an industrial city after [19]45 (Posatskyi 2019 (*interview*); italic – author).

This quote shows that the continuity of material things becomes crucial when it comes to building a connection between the institution and the people. It also demonstrates the emotional dimension of such interactions. Something that started as a personal quest of a family history often resulted in professional collaborations. Posatskyi recalled that the architects had an academic interest in the main building of Lviv Polytechnic itself:

Everyone liked the fact that the paintings known from Matejko's sketches⁵⁰ in the assembly hall were also in good

⁵⁰ Jan Matejko (1838–1893) – one of the most celebrated Polish painters.

condition. In short, it brought about a lot of positive emotions, and on the basis of those positive emotions our academic contacts developed (Posatskyi 2019 (*interview*)).

The first wave of people – and architects among them – who came to Lviv in the early 1990s was rather a nostalgic group. What Robert Pyrah called a “shadow presence of Lwów in modern Poland”⁵¹ echoed during the interviews, like in the one with Yurii Kryvoruchko:

Poles have a strong sentiment, there is a devotion to Lviv. And these are the people who were born, lived, or studied here, or even their parents were somewhere here. Many families... were lingering to their homeland, to their native lands, well, of course, especially to Lviv. It was such a big wave, and through this wave, therefore, we established, we began to establish connections (Kryvoruchko 2020 (*interview*)).

The institutional links often started as personal contacts and even friendships. Like the one developed between the rector of the Lviv Polytechnics, Yurii Rudavskiy (held his office in 1991–2007), and his colleague, Andrzej Wiszniewski, rector of Wrocław Polytechnics between 1991 and 1996.⁵² Lviv-Wrocław connection, which, according to the Oxford specialist in Central Europe, Jan Fellerer, has (to some extent) already become “a myth”⁵³, was reflected in many of my interviews. A lot of pre-WWII Lvivians of Polish origin were forced to leave the city and ended up in Wrocław. Bohdan Cherkes recalled the story of Tadeusz Zipser (born in 1930 in Lviv, presently – an architect and urban planner, professor of Wrocław Polytechnics), which impressed him very much:

as they [Zipser family] had already been told that they had to leave [the city], the mother had gathered them, two brothers; the father, in my opinion, had already left... Then their mother took them to the present Church of the Intercession, the church of Matki Bożej Ostrobramskiej,

⁵¹ Pyrah 2020, p. 13.

⁵² Narvselius, Pietraszewski 2020, p. 155.

⁵³ Fellerer 2020, p. 4.

situated on the top of Lychakiv, [and] told them: “Look at that city and take that image with you forever”. This is phenomenal, it makes you cry. And he [Tadeusz Zipser] said: “The moment I saw Lviv from that height, I realized that I would be an architect” (Cherkes 2020 (*interview*)).

While the first wave of contacts was rooted in family trajectories, the second one, according to Yuriy Kryvoruchko, was rather based on solidarity between people, who had similar experiences under the state socialism.⁵⁴ He describes a warm and family-like atmosphere during the first conferences in the 1990s, when resources were scarce but people showed a lot of support to each other:

It was like [people] from two different barracks came out, and stood, and hugged as if they were finally free. It is roughly an image of that time Ukraine and Poland (Kryvoruchko 2020 (*interview*)).

Such an idealized picture was stripped from all potential conflicts and smoothed out all the sharp edges, that became more visible later.⁵⁵

The work on personal biographies led to re-discovery of the institutional ones. The inter-war architectural and urban planning school in Lviv was the milestone for both Ukrainian and Polish institutions. This common heritage helped to build new connections. During the interview Bohdan Cherkes mentioned the exhibition entitled “Praojcowie i ojcowie” [Forefathers and Fathers]⁵⁶ launched by Olgierd Czerner, director of the Architecture Museum in Wrocław in 1994:

‘Praojcowie i ojcowie’ is a good name, well, it’s their forefathers and fathers, obviously, and ours... There was some kind of nostalgia in the [19]90s, from the Polish side, because ojcowie [fathers] almost no longer lived, no dzieci jeszcze żyli [but children were still living] (Cherkes 2020 (*interview*)).

⁵⁴ Kryvoruchko 2020 (*interview*).

⁵⁵ The memory cultures of Poland and Ukraine in more details are discussed in the report: Konieczna-Salamatin, Stryjek, Otrishchenko 2018. The results of surveys in both countries show the main lines of division when it comes to historical memory.

⁵⁶ Juskiewicz, Czerner 1995.

The above narrative sheds some light on the generational issues and shows the transfer of both communicative memory (from parents to children and from teachers to students) and cultural memory⁵⁷ through the exhibition. According to Eleonora Narvselius and Igor Pietraszewski, the exhibition “Praojcowie i ojcowie”

made it clear that academic milieus of the two cities were not only inscribed into the same historical narrative, but also shared a remarkable institutional and personal ancestry (Narvselius, Pietraszewski 2020, p. 155).

The next year, 1995, Wrocław hosted a conference entitled “Lviv Polytechnic, the Mother of Polish Polytechnics”.⁵⁸ This ancestry helped to tell the story of the institution from a perspective of continuity and its constant presence on the European map.

The history of the institution became an important resource for establishing a new reference system after connections with Moscow shattered. Professors, who left the city right after WWII, gained a symbolic capital and helped to establish a common ground with the current milieu of Lviv Polytechnic. Halyna Petryshyn reflected on this topic when she recalled her conference experiences and internships:

in [19]45, when the Poles left, this teaching staff, they were parceled out into various Polytechnics in those “Ziemie Odzyskane”⁵⁹, mainly. Few people settled in Krakow, but [the most part] in Gliwice, Opole, Wrocław, Gdansk, Szczecin, and so on. Former teachers and professors from Lviv Polytechnic worked all around... They were simply tasked to organize these faculties... *We continue to use that heritage.* They were here only parts of the department, but there everyone became a personality and everyone developed their field. That is, when we came to Poland, we were perceived as these professors were our teachers; although *we are completely separated in time and space.* But we

⁵⁷ Assmann 2008.

⁵⁸ Petryshyn 2017, pp. 149, 157.

⁵⁹ Literally “Recovered territories”; it was a term used to describe the former Free City of Danzig and the parts of pre-war Germany that became territory of Poland after WWII.

were perceived as if somewhere here the spirit of Lviv Polytechnic hovered around and we all came influenced by it (Petryshyn 2019 (*interview*); italic – author).

Even though, as Petryshyn put it, the present urban planning professors in Lviv, and the ones who were affiliated to this institution before the war are “completely separated in time and space”, they have become a part of one solid mind-landscape due to the imaginary continuity. There, the Soviet period was almost omitted and building one continuity created a new gap. However, during the time of social and political changes looking back into the past became quite a successful strategy, which helped the institution to gain the symbolic capital and survive. It was possible, because this past was “safe” – there was no place for remembering ethnic conflicts, violence, and suffering. It was perceived rather as a golden age and, therefore, people could easily relate with it.

6. Concluding remarks

When I asked Bohdan Posatskyi about his professional practice during the 1990s and the general feeling of possible changes, he answered that he somehow did not feel much of a difference. He clarified his position:

In Lviv, people knew a few foreign languages, more or less... In the Soviet era, we had the opportunity to receive professional literature from the socialist democratic countries by mail and were aware of all the new developments in architecture and urban planning ... We knew about certain trends, we were aware of these trends, there was no drastic change (Posatskyi 2019 (*interview*)).

He saw the development of urban planning education as an ongoing process, which was not particularly affected by the political change. He also emphasized the abilities of specific people – their possession of languages – that allowed them to be, at least partially, involved in the professional discussion.

The history of the chair of urban planning at Lviv Polytechnic shows that the discourse of historical continuity could be used in order to build new connections, both in space and time. The imaginary continuity arises thanks to many factors: through material objects, space, and common

reference points, but mainly thanks to the people, who act as liaisons and who can use various narratives in order to create a new network. Due to the pre-WWII scholars who remained in the city after the war, namely Bagieński, Kuryllo, and Rudnytskyi, the “architectural education in Lviv Polytechnic was not started from scratch”.⁶⁰ They organized the group of peers, and therefore became agents of the structural changes during different periods. The Lviv architectural community preserved the chair in the 1950s and 1960s, developed the department in the 1970s and 1980s, and weaved it into a new European network in the 1990s and 2000s. On the other side of the border, the people who had personal connections to the city and the region, helped to join Lviv Polytechnic to the network via their institutions.

In order to build bridges to the future, those people constantly looked into their idealized past, preserved from all potential conflicts and sharp edges. Such selective appropriation of institutional history helped to build a new reference system – European – after the old one – Soviet – had disappeared.

Now, the common past also strengthens the Lviv position in the network: being a “founding institution” and using joint heritage provides a better position for collaboration. The 1990s were the period when the chair of urban planning at Lviv Polytechnic did not simply institutionalize the “Western” expertise in educational programs. It also aimed to participate in the exchange of knowledge as an equal party due to its long-lasting tradition.

As any story, this one is limited in a number of ways. It covers mainly the perspective of the professors from Lviv Polytechnic and further research has to include other voices. It describes mainly the cooperation with Polish and Austrian professional milieus and leaves the way open for exploration in other directions. However, its main purpose was to show the personal angle in the institutional history, and challenge the “top-down” and “West-East” approaches in the studies of knowledge transfers. Again, I want to emphasize the role of the historical context in positioning the organization, especially during the times of political and social transformations.

⁶⁰ Cherkes, Dyda 2018, p. 119.

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