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The Challenges of Resilient Infrastructures: Introductory Remarks

This book is the result of close cooperation between the Leibniz Institute for East and Southeast European Studies in Regensburg and the Institute for Contemporary History in Belgrade. In 2019, a core group from these institutions developed a research proposal entitled “Resilient Infrastructures? Exploring Continuities throughout the Yugoslav 20th Century”. This cooperation was turned into a project supported by the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD), the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BAMF), and the Serbian Ministry of Education, Science, and Technological Development. From the outset, our goal was to experiment with fairly novel historical approaches inspired by the *spatial turn* in order to shed light on Yugoslav history from a new angle, and to question that history’s entrenched periodization.

Determined primarily by political history, Yugoslav past is typically explored in a seductively repetitive rhythm of prewar, wartime, and postwar periods. Without questioning the importance of war for understanding the Yugoslav experience, we aim to point out that such cycles overshadow a number of *longue durée* phenomena which transcend the realm of politics, and belong also to the domain of social history. These phenomena, however, are often defined solely by the type of prevalent social order, resulting in another cycle – from monarchy through socialism to the transition toward capitalism. This focus on (counter)revolutionary discontinuities also obscures important continuities which impeded Yugoslav developmental concepts during both peacetime and war, besetting Yugoslav capitalists and communists alike, albeit in different ways. Those challenges have been studied, with considerable success too, mostly within the framework of traditional societies wrestling with the challenge of modernity.¹

¹ Well worth reading with a view to the first post-war decades is Dennison Rusinow, *The Yugoslav Experiment 1948–1974* (Berkeley, Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1977); see with focus on Serbia: Marie-Janine Calic, *Sozialgeschichte Serbiens 1815-1941. Der aufhaltsame Fortschritt während der Industrialisierung* (München: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 1994); also a multivolume edition of Latinka Perović et al., *Srbija u modernizacijskim procesima 19. i 20. veka* (Beograd: Institut za noviju istoriju 1998); Predrag Marković, *Beograd i Evropa 1918-1941. Evropski uticaji na proces modernizacije Beograda* (Beograd: Savremena administracija, 1992); Dubravka Stojanović, “Unfinished capital – unfinished state. How the modernization of Belgrade was prevented, 1890–1914”, *Nationalities Papers* 41:1 (2013), 15-34; The Institute for Contemporary History in Belgrade also contributed to this trend in a project “(Un)succesfull integration – (un)finished modernization”, published in *Istorija 20. veka* 2 (2008).

Under such a wide umbrella, recent scholarly production has carved out manageable, if scattered, topics and explored them in depth.² Such a fragmented research landscape has created the preconditions for studying Yugoslavia from a comparative perspective, with increasing attention to its economic and socio-political aspects, as well as the exploration of everyday life.³ Building on all those efforts, the attention in this volume is directed toward specific aspects of modernization challenges which hitherto have not attracted sufficient attention, such as infrastructure.

This familiar term is often used yet insufficiently understood, although it clearly holds huge importance for Yugoslavia. Patterns of weak transportation and communication networks, low institutional capacities, limited industrialization and insufficient education of the workforce indicate that Yugoslav state-building consistently faced infrastructural limitations. These limitations hindered the very spatial integration of Yugoslavia. Features of regional underdevelopment and the lack of economic integration can be traced back to imperial legacies. Their persistence throughout the Yugoslav twentieth century outlives political and ideological clashes, even blurs the distinction between national and international, and certainly raises a number of questions.

Some of those questions might be crucial for understanding the specificities of state- and nation-building in Yugoslavia. To what extent, for example, was the Yugoslav project undermined by weak transport and communication networks? How did untamed geography influence the development of national ideas in Bosnia? Could the lack of transportation infrastructure be an important, if not the main, reason for the failed integration of Montenegrins into the Serbian national project? Or, how did railroads contribute to the successful integration of Dalmatia into Croatia?

Prima facie, such questions may sound far-fetched, preposterous even. But let us travel into the interwar period for a moment, and explore the transit possibilities to which a Montenegrin from Podgorica could avail himself to reach Belgrade in the year 1922. Due to the lack of direct railway or road connection to Serbia, the only possibility of reaching Serbia was on horseback (more likely a donkey) to Kotor. In Kotor, our passenger would be best off boarding a ship to Rijeka. In Rijeka he could embark on a train to Zagreb, and finally on another one to Belgrade. That journey would last for 55 hours, all in all. Twenty years later (1941) the situation was virtually unchanged. At the same time, the journey time from Split and Zagreb was reduced from 27 hours in 1922 to 11 hours in 1941, thanks to the Lika Railway. Not much changed in Montenegro for decades, even after WWII. The Yugoslav Communist Party understood well both the

² This is reflected in the regular international conferences “Socijalizam na klupi” (Pula), “Kliofest” (Zagreb) and “History Fest” (Sarajevo), where different approaches and topics relating to the history of Yugoslavia are discussed.

³ Stimulating contributions on this issue can be found in: John R. Lampe, Ulf Brunnbauer (Eds.), *The Routledge Handbook of Balkan and Southeast European History* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2020); see also Vesna Aleksić, Aleksandar Matković, Marko Miljković (Eds.), *Izazovi izučavanja ekonomske istorije u Srbiji* (Beograd: Centar za ekonomsku istoriju, 2020).

economic and ideological importance of improving communications, expressed in a popular slogan of Youth Working Actions: “Mi gradimo prugu, pruga gradi nas” (We are building the railroad, the railroad is building us). Yet a direct paved road connection between Serbia and Montenegro was built only in 1968, and the railroad connection in 1976. How important those circumstances were for the national (dis)integration of Montenegro and Serbia should be analyzed in the future, but it is apparent that the absence of road and railroad connections made transport and economic integration of Serbia and Montenegro before the 1970s nearly impossible. That changed with the implementation of major communications infrastructure, chiefly Beograd-Bar railways.⁴ However, as nation-building in Europe seems to follow a specific but elusive timetable, it appears that this was one of those trains which came too late.

Our natural starting point was the issue of (dis)integration. A number of explanations have been put forward to explain the failure of the Yugoslav project— from ethnic conflicts, religious diversity, economic underdevelopment, foreign influence, the different historical trajectories of its population, to nationalism and the role of individual leaders.⁵ Not to minimize the importance of these reasons, we aspire to add yet another significant factor to that list. Could it be that the experience of Yugoslav twentieth century, on a more general level, illustrates the failure to overcome the resilience of material as well as institutional infrastructures, and how this failure undercut both political structures and ideological superstructures, trumped both local integrations and global entanglements, stalled ambitious developmental agendas, and frustrated the efforts of individual agency? Acknowledging the discontinuities and ruptures which appeared all too often in this part of the world, we made it our goal to identify particular patterns of resilient infrastructural continuity in the Yugoslav twentieth century. To that end, we have aimed to question the extent of infrastructural dependencies and obstructive continuities in the broadest possible sense, and shed light on the limited ability of Yugoslav state to tame its space and integrate the country economically and institutionally.

Theoretical Approach

The rich tradition of looking beyond political phenomena in order to highlight their important social, economic, and geographic undercurrents, augmented by Fernand Braudel and other representatives of the Annales School, is

⁴ Danijel Kežić, *Bauen für den Einheitsstaat. Die Eisenbahn Belgrad–Bar und die Desintegration des Wirtschaftssystems in Jugoslawien, 1952–1976* (München: De Gruyter, 2017).

⁵ Dejan Jović, “The Disintegration of Yugoslavia: A Critical Review of Explanatory Approaches”, *European Journal of Social Theory* 4:1 (2001), 101–120; With regard to the economic (dis)integration of Yugoslavia see Danijel Kežić, “Političke posledice ekonomskih reformi 60-ih godina u SFRJ: Od dezintegracije ekonomskog sistema do konfederalizacije Jugoslavije (1961-1971)”, *Tokovi istorije* 2 (2017), 11-37. On the transition from disintegration to war see Vladimir Petrović, “Becoming Inevitable: Yugoslav Descent to War Revisited”, in Predrag Marković, Bojan B. Dimitrijević (Eds.), *Repeating History 1941-1991?* (Belgrade: Institute for Contemporary History, 2022), 103-127.

refreshed in this work by highlighting the importance of the spatial dimension.⁶ Approaching the spatial turn critically has given us a strong impetus to rethink the nature and range of human infrastructural interventions and their limitations.⁷ To fill this void, the *history of infrastructure* has evolved as a new interdisciplinary research field, and it is this terrain that is central to our research.⁸

Two other theoretical approaches are important for our research — *path dependencies* (historical institutionalism)⁹ and the *concept of historical heritage*.¹⁰ Their cross-fertilization offers a solid theoretical background to challenge the official periodization and to analyze the continuities and discontinuities regarding the infrastructures in Yugoslavia, adding to existing efforts to understand the facets of Yugoslav economic history and reaching well beyond.¹¹

The term “infrastructure” is very popular in contemporary scholarship, not only with economic and political scientists but also with sociologists, literary scholars, cultural scientists, and historians. Accordingly, different definitions of infrastructure have found their way into circulation. The standard, strict definition is offered by Dirk van Laak, currently among the most important infrastructure historians in Germany: infrastructure is everything stable that is necessary to make possible the mobility and exchange of people, goods, and ideas.¹² Paul N. Edwards describes infrastructure as “all those systems which a modern society needs to be able to function.”¹³ According to Simonis the most important areas of infrastructure are transportation (railway transport, road transport, shipping, and post) and communication, energy supply, water supply, and environmental

⁶ Angelo Torre, “A ‘Spatial Turn’ in History? Landscapes, Visions, Resources”, *Annales. Histoire, Sciences Sociales* 63:5 (2008), 1127-1144.

⁷ See relating to the discussion of the term Frithjof Benjamin Schenk, “Der spatial turn und die Osteuropäische Geschichte”, in Themenportal Europäische Geschichte (2006), <https://www.europa.clio-online.de/essay/id/fdae-1374>

⁸ See with special regard to Southeastern Europe Danijel Kežić, “Die Bedeutung einer Infrastrukturgeschichte Südosteuropas. Tendenzen und Desiderata in der aktuellen Ost-und Südosteuropaforschung”, *Südost-Forschungen* 78 (2019), 289-303.

⁹ Paul Pierson, “Increasing Returns, Path Dependence, and the Study of Politics”, *American Political Science Review* 94:2 (2000), 251-267; Ian Greener, “The Potential of Path Dependence in Political Studies”, *Politics* 25:1 (2005), 62-72.

¹⁰ Maria Todorova, “Der Balkan als Analyse-kategorie: Grenzen, Raum, Zeit”, *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 28 (2002), 470-492; Maria Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 3-21.

¹¹ Among more economically minded histories of Yugoslavia are John R. Lampe, *Yugoslavia as History: Twice There Was a Country* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996); Marie-Janine Calic, *A History of Yugoslavia* (West Lafayette, IN: Purdue University Press, 2019). Scholarly production in the ex-Yugo space is also picking up the pace in this respect: Vesna Aleksić, “Ekonomska istorija Srbije u domaćoj istoriografiji 2010–2017: metodološki izazovi u kontekstu interdisciplinarnih istraživanja”, *Ekonomska i ekohistorija: časopis za gospodarsku povijest i povijest okoliša* 14:1 (2018), 212-224.

¹² Dirk van Laak, *Alles im Fluss. Die Lebensadern unserer Gesellschaft – Geschichte und Zukunft der Infrastruktur* (Frankfurt/Main: Fischer Verlag GmbH, 2018), 13.

¹³ Paul N. Edwards, “Infrastructure and Modernity: Force, Time, and Social Organization in the History of Sociotechnical Systems”, in Thomas J. Misa, Philip Brey, Andrew Feenberg (Eds.), *Modernity and Technology* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2003), 185-225, here 187.

protection.¹⁴ Since the 1960s economists have defined infrastructure as a requisite foundation of every national economy. Infrastructure is seen as a prerequisite for economic growth, spatial integration, and supply.¹⁵ Therefore, developed infrastructure is perceived as politically neutral and good *per se*. In political economy and political science such a point of view is still present, despite the well-known fact that some of the best Autobahns were built in Hitler's Germany, and the recognition that the excellent integration of the European railway systems facilitated the implementation of the Holocaust.

The historization of infrastructure poses a challenge to this instinctively positive evaluation. New research shows the ambivalence of infrastructure: it could integrate or disintegrate the society or its parts, depending on the spatial level and the modes of its implementation.¹⁶ Whereas some regions and some segments of society benefit from infrastructure, others could be hampered by the very same development.¹⁷ Yet, beyond the issue of the allocation of resources, one important dynamic remains underexplored: due to the importance of infrastructure for the spatial integration of society, and necessity of extensive long-term investments,¹⁸ infrastructure accumulates power for decades and sometimes for centuries.¹⁹ Once constructed, railways or roads redefine the social space anew, and often for good. It is extremely difficult and costly to alter this new spatial reality retroactively. An awareness of this characteristic paves the way toward exploring path dependencies, continuities, and the resilience of infrastructure.

Regarding the first Yugoslavia, it was repeatedly observed that the country suffered from a lack of integration of the economic, political, and legal systems inherited from Austria-Hungary, the Ottoman Empire, and the Kingdoms of Serbia and Montenegro. Below the radar, yet no less important, was the inheritance of imperial transportation and institutional infrastructure, which impacted the constitution and economic integration of the new state. The long-term effects of the challenges that originated in the resilience of infrastructure persisted, despite the centralization efforts advanced by royal dictatorship, various wartime authorities, and the early socialist state. However, in the absence of thorough historiographical research on Yugoslav infrastructure, the thesis concerning the dependence of Yugoslav society upon inherited old infrastructure and its limited ability to create new functional infrastructure remains just a theory in need of

¹⁴ Udo Ernst Simonis, "Zur inhaltlich-systematischen Deutung des Begriffes Infrastruktur", *Zeitschrift für Ganzheitsforschung* 27:3 (1983), 120.

¹⁵ Van Laak, *Alles im Fluss*, 23.

¹⁶ Cf. Jens Ivo Engels, "Machtfragen. Aktuelle Entwicklungen und Perspektiven der Infrastrukturge-schichte", *Neue Politische Literatur* 55 (2010), 51-70.

¹⁷ Cf. Frithjof Benjamin Schenk, *Russlands Fahrt in die Moderne. Mobilität und sozialer Raum im Eisenbahnzeitalter* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2014), 17-19, 271; Walter Sperling, *Der Aufbruch der Provinz. Die Eisenbahn und die Neuordnung der Räume im Zarenreich* (Frankfurt/Main: Campus Verlag, 2011). Jens Ivo Engels underlines this aspect as important for future historian research about infrastructure. Engels, "Machtfragen", 61-69.

¹⁸ Cf. Steffen Richter, *Infrastruktur. Ein Schlüsselkonzept der Moderne und die deutsche Literatur 1848-1914* (Berlin: Matthes & Seitz, 2018), 40f.

¹⁹ *Ibid.* 64-66; Van Laak, *Alles im Fluss*, 15-20, 23-25, 27.

factual grounding. This leads to the question – to what extent were Yugoslavs trapped by the inability to overcome the infrastructural challenge?

In order to approach this problem, we have based our research on a wide definition of infrastructure. Richter rightfully observed in his book that “in the 21st century, the time of the implementation of classical infrastructure is probably over, but infrastructure discourse is currently experiencing a boom.”²⁰ At the same time, he points out the lack of an “interdisciplinary, credible term of infrastructure.” According to Richter, this vagueness of the term could be also an opportunity: various scientific disciplines could find their own definition of the term.²¹ Thus there are various perspectives with regard to which actual segments of society could be counted as infrastructure.

According to the economist Tuchtfield, all public investment in the integration and development of the domestic economy could be defined as infrastructure.²² Following this definition, facilities in the educational, academic, cultural, sport, and medical sectors are also part of infrastructure. Public administration as well as the housing sector could be also seen as a part of infrastructure in a wider sense.²³ But the economic aspect of infrastructure is not the only one: Briegleb characterized in 2013 infrastructure as a “diffuse general image for nearly all kinds of systems.”²⁴ Infrastructure can be seen as a precondition not only for the technical, but also for the social and cultural processes in a society.²⁵ Accordingly, Richter offers his own wider definition, specifying the following infrastructure areas: a) transportation, b) communication, c) resource governance, d) social care, e) education, f) general security, and g) free time and consumer infrastructure.²⁶

Our project builds upon and continues to this trend by reaching toward an even wider definition of infrastructure: we view all projects and institutions oriented toward long-term operation as infrastructure. Furthermore, our analysis is driven by the study of path dependencies and continuities emerging from the accumulated power of infrastructure. The concept of governance makes such a link possible. Originally an approach from economic science, this concept has evolved in political science since the 1960s.²⁷ Institutions are the focus of *governance-analysis* (historical institutionalism): not their plans and norms but “the causal links between structures (institutions and division of power), their interests and interactions.”²⁸ Thus it is important to emphasize that governance is not a theory *per se* but a special perspective of reality: the focus of this perspective is

²⁰ Cf. Richter, *Infrastruktur*, 32.

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² Simonis, *Zur inhaltlich-systematischen Deutung*, 120.

²³ *Ibid.* 120f.

²⁴ Van Laak, *Alles im Fluss*, 16.

²⁵ *Ibid.* 16.

²⁶ Richter, *Infrastruktur*, 39f.

²⁷ Cf. Schenk, *Russlands Fahrt in die Moderne*, 17-19, 271; Walter Sperling, *Der Aufbruch der Provinz. Die Eisenbahn und die Neuordnung der Räume im Zarenreich* (Frankfurt/Main: Campus Verlag, 2011). Jens Ivo Engels underlines this aspect as important for future historian research about infrastructure; Engels, “Machtfragen”, 61-69.

²⁸ Cf. *ibid.* 14.

the interdependence of actors within the context of institutions and parts of the social system.²⁹ This concept is important for the analysis of institutions and the “human side” of infrastructure, whose relational aspect was noticed some time ago.³⁰ Indeed, dividing the material from the immaterial aspects in this field is more complicated than it seems. For example, human collectives are composed of individuals, but individuals’ connections are shaped by institutions. There is a reason why the expression “political landscape” finds use. Such a landscape exists, consisting of institutional infrastructures which also have the capacity to generate and accumulate power.

The concept of *path dependencies* evolved from a merger of infrastructural research and the governance-analysis of institutions. This concept was originally developed in the domain of economic geography, and it defined the allocation of production in concrete territory. Douglas North successfully expanded this approach to show how institutional paths are interdependent, and difficult to change.³¹ Paul Pierson developed North’s concept further, and integrated it into the discourse of historical institutionalism. He claimed that path dependencies in the economy are strong because of its complex institutional system.³² Kathleen Thelen argued similarly: the institutions are path dependent and difficult to change, because of the long-term reservoir of value concepts within them. According to Thelen, the institutions can be altered, but only as a result of radical changes to the concepts of value held within a society.³³

In the case of Yugoslavia, measuring the extent of this change is indeed crucial. Can we speak about a breakthrough from path dependencies toward an entirely new society after 1918 or after 1945? How radical were those changes, and how strong were path dependencies? Could infrastructural resilience explain the phenomenon of “running in place” (trčanje u mestu), so frequently observed in the Yugoslav history of failed reforms?

Lastly, the concept of historical heritage put forward by Maria Todorova plays an important role in our project. Todorova used the concept of *mental maps* to analyze the perception of the Balkans in the Western World. According to Todorova, the Balkans are widely perceived as being somewhere between Occident and Orient.³⁴ According to her, for a successful analysis of this problem it is vital to analyze more than just the geographical dimension: it is necessary to combine the spatial and the temporal dimensions.³⁵ In this process, Todorova

²⁹ Cf. *ibid.* 15.

³⁰ Susan Leigh Star, “The Ethnography of Infrastructure”, *American Behavioral Scientist* 43:3 (1999), 377-391.

³¹ Cf. Paul Pierson, “Increasing Returns, Path Dependence, and the Study of Politics”, *American Political Science Review* 94:2 (2000), 254f.

³² Cf. *ibid.* 264.

³³ Cf. Arthur Benz et al., “Einleitung”, in Arthur Benz et al. (Eds.), *Handbuch Governance. Theoretische Grundlagen und empirische Anwendungsfelder* (Wiesbaden: Springer, 2007), 9-25, here 10-13.

³⁴ Cf. Maria Todorova, “Der Balkan als Analysekatgorie: Grenzen, Raum, Zeit”, *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 28 (2002), 471-473.

³⁵ Cf. *ibid.* 475f.

developed a concept of “historical heritage for the Balkans”. She distinguished between “Ottoman heritage as continuity” and “Ottoman heritage as perception”. Inherited infrastructure in the Balkans is crucial for the understanding of “Ottoman heritage as continuity”. This directly interlocking phase of continuity had come to an end in the Balkans by the end of the First World War at the latest, but was still present in the form of “Ottoman heritage as perception”, which outlasted the actual Ottoman rule.³⁶

This concept of the Ottoman heritage in the Balkans could be widened and successfully used in our analysis of continuities in Yugoslavia. To the “Ottoman heritage in the Balkans”, we can add “Austro-Hungarian heritage in Yugoslavia”, and distinguish between “Austro-Hungarian heritage as continuity” and “Austro-Hungarian heritage as perception”. Similarly, it is possible to analyze the heritage of the kingdoms of Serbia and Montenegro in the first and second Yugoslavia. Because of inherited infrastructure and institutions, “Austro-Hungarian and Serbian heritage as continuity” was certainly at work until 1941, although its scope and manifestations should be determined through sectoral research.

With this book, we are taking a first step in that direction, hoping that many more will follow. This seems to us to be all the more relevant for understanding the present moment, in which Yugoslav heritage, both as continuity and a perception, plays a huge role in its successor countries and their struggle with economic and political transition.

Method and Concepts, Cases and Themes

In order to highlight the centrality of infrastructural challenge for the Yugoslav experience, we have purposefully opted for a thematic approach which does not necessarily follow a chronological pattern. Indeed, we feel that the temporal framing of Yugoslav history emphasizes, and indeed overemphasizes, its political history (prewar/postwar) and the transformation of its social order (kingdom/socialism). Alternative benchmarks, such as the patterns of electrification in the country, the introduction of basic sanitary conditions, and the integration of railway networks sound perhaps less flashy, but they are by no means less important turning points for Yugoslav society. They actually reveal a stunning continuity of certain patterns. In order to highlight these patterns, we have explored the persistence of infrastructural challenges in the period of the most robust interventions (roughly post-1929), as well as the two postwar decades (roughly until the political and economic reforms of the 1960s). However, we do at times cover a much wider timespan depending upon the topic, occasionally going back to the Ottoman and Austro-Hungarian period, and even stretching forward to contemporary times if need be.

³⁶ Ibid. 476f. See relating to that the Festschrift dedicated to her: Augusta Dimou, Theodora Dragostinova, Veneta Ivanova (Eds.), *Re-Imagining the Balkans. How to Think and Teach a Region. Festschrift in Honor of Maria N. Todorova* (Berlin, Boston: De Gruyter Oldenbourg, 2023).

Interactions between infrastructure and society are at the heart of our project. Its contributions are therefore divided into two segments. The first one focuses on *material infrastructure*, exploring how people influence infrastructure and vice versa, whereas the second one aims mainly to illustrate how *institutional infrastructure* influences society. Both material and institutional infrastructure are researched on two distinct levels, as they are subjected to macro-, as well as microanalysis.

Important macro aspects of Yugoslav infrastructural development are especially explored in the areas of transportation, electrification, and housing. Danijel Kežić's contribution, "The Bosnian and Serbian Narrow-Gauge Railways and Construction of the Yugoslav Transport and Economic Space" analyzes the attempts at integrating different railway networks across the Yugoslav space. He specifically emphasizes the long-term effects of inherited networks and identifies the bottlenecks which hindered railway system development, pointing out the challenges posed to the spatial integration of the country and the societal consequences that flowed from this lack of spatial integration. Ilija Kukobat complements this analysis in many ways. His contribution, "Continuities and Discontinuities in Modernizations of Yugoslav Air Transport 1927–1992" offers a panoramic view of the development of a mode of transportation which was new, and therefore seemingly unburdened by path dependencies. Yet he discovers a number of challenges related to perpetual modernization and allocation of resources. The transportation lines described by our authors are more than lines on a map, they represent the vital arteries of a complex system that has moved great quantities of goods and multitudes of people daily. With regard to this, Kežić emphasizes the far-reaching consequences of seemingly technical decisions concerning railway routes and corridors, which held huge implications for integration of the Yugoslav space. Unfortunately, we were unable to commission a work related to the roads and highways or to naval transport, but it should be pointed out that in the future that type of a study would allow for integrated research into the strategic planning of the spatial integration of the Yugoslav space as an elusive precondition of its unity.

Another important element for infrastructural intervention was certainly energy, analyzed by Christian Heitmann's chapter "The Electrification of Yugoslavia 1919-1952. Ideas, Plans, Realities". By studying the efforts made toward electrification, he discovers important continuities and discontinuities in its planning and implementation in the interwar and postwar periods, pointing out both the intended and unintended consequences of various strategies. Evidence pointing towards the prioritization of self-reliance in energy production after the Second World War is a most striking finding. We indicate that further work on the development of hydroelectric potentials and nuclear energy would give a more complete picture of the overcoming of infrastructural challenges in this realm. Another very important domain is opened up in Ivana Dobrivojević's chapter "Affordable Homes for Everyone? Housing in Socialist Yugoslavia (1945–1965)". It deals with another prioritized segment of socialist policies which was never

fully materialized and examines the problems, especially with regard to existing limitations of communal infrastructure, in its implementation. In the future, it would be interesting to see which of these problems were inherited from interwar Yugoslavia and which were induced by the destruction of wartime.

In the realm of microhistorical analysis, Ranka Gašić's contribution "Belgrade Railway Junction: The Tale of Two Railway Stations" can be seen as both testing the implications of Kežić's work on the national railway network using the example of Belgrade, and closely examining the efforts to transform the capital city into a national railway junction. Further regarding Belgrade, Rade Ristanović in his work "The Struggle for Water: Political and Social Dimensions of Water Supply Construction in Belgrade 1868-1941" analyzes the development of water supply in the capital, from its difficult beginnings until the end of the interwar period. It specifically highlights the importance of both real and perceived Ottoman heritage in this domain. Elvira Ibragimova looks at efforts undertaken in Belgrade to create an entirely new infrastructure intended for the practice of cremation in her article "Unrealised Crematoria: Clash of Ideas and Administrative Dysfunctionality in Belgrade (1904-1964)". The interdependence of these systems becomes apparent in an aggregate context— there is no junction without an extensive railway network, just as there are no crematoria without electrification. Granted, there are very many aspects of these linkages which might spring to mind, but the limitations posed by a two-year research period forced us to leave a number of such research venues open.

On a less conventional level, we opted to experiment with the concept of institutional infrastructure in a fashion that emphasizes its social aspects and even its political importance. Ljubinka Škodrić in her offering "War, Occupation, and Infrastructure Planning: The Serbian Civil Plan 1941-1944" analyzes wartime plans for the reconstruction of Serbian society in order to discern to what extent they were grounded in institutional realities, and to what extent they reflected the wishful thinking of their creators. It would have been amazing to compare this type of emergency wartime planning with the postwar Five-Year Plans, but that also remains a subject for another volume. Instead, Edvin Pezo provides us with "Infrastructures of Political and Institutional Power in Yugoslavia: Organizing Communist Rule and the Organizational-Political Secretariat, 1940-1964/66", which highlights aspects of the challenges and ruptures in organizing political power within the political elite from the prewar period until the 1960s. In "Role Models and Renegades: Yugoslav Communism and the Roots of the Tito-Stalin Split, 1938–1948" Stefan Gužvica looks into the power relations of the Yugoslav Party leadership before, during, and after the war, discovering interesting ideological continuities which were at the core of the coherent behavior of Tito's team. These elements constituted the actual infrastructure which enabled the preconditions for stable policymaking and the cohesion of the Yugoslav system, even when Yugoslavia was expelled from the Soviet bloc.

On an institutional level too, micro studies help to ground and test these general overviews. To that end, Danilo Šarenac in his contribution "The Serbian

War Dead and Matters of Ideology. Path Dependence, Commemorative Infrastructure and the Case of the Vido Ossuary” raises an interesting question– what are the infrastructural preconditions for collective memory? Another panoramic localization of infrastructural interventions into social surroundings is provided by Nikola Mijatov, who writes about construction of three stadiums in different historical periods, one in interwar Belgrade, one in postwar Belgrade, and yet another one in Vršac. His “Different Ideologies, Same Infrastructures: The Case of the Yugoslav Stadiums” shows that those powerful buildings are nothing but heaps of bricks if they are stripped of their historical and social contexts. Lastly, Miloš Lecić explores “Institutional Resilience of ‘Soft Infrastructure’: A Micro-historical Analysis of Path Dependence at the Municipality of Kragujevac (1930s-1950s)”, demonstrating how microanalytical research challenges the established periodization.

The volume closes with a thoughtful afterword by Iva Lučić, who kindly agreed to discuss the implications of our findings for theoretical understanding of the importance of infrastructure for the history of Yugoslavia, putting it into comparative perspective as well.

Although we are thrilled to convey our research results to a wider audience, we are also very aware of its shortcomings. Only a few authors in this volume are specialists in the area of the history of infrastructure in the narrow sense. Yet we were all intuitively aware of its importance, as well as of the enormous power of the inertia and the hiccups in reforms which hindered the processes of integration and modernization of this region. However, through protracted exposure to theoretical literature we were able to look into our own areas of research through different lenses. Accustomed to pointing fingers to exterior factors, corrupt elites, wrong decisions, catastrophic events, social problems, and underdeveloped human resources of different kinds, we were challenged to look into the Braudelian *longue durée* processes and assess their infrastructural underpinnings. It remains to be seen to what extent we have succeeded in highlighting the importance and implications of those processes. We hope that other studies will build upon this one, branching out toward other important elements of “Continuities and Discontinuities in Coping with the Infrastructural Challenges of the 20th Century”, but especially linking it to similar probings into Balkan, European, and global history.