8th Annual Conference of the
Leibniz Institute for East and Southeast European Studies (IOS), Regensburg

Infrastructure in East and Southeast Europe in Comparative Perspective: Past, Present and Future

Regensburg, June 25–27, 2020

CALL FOR PAPERS

Infrastructure has emerged as a key site for understanding such projects and processes as modernization, state- and empire-building, globalization, and other forms of integration. While several scholarly projects have focused attention on the role of infrastructure in integrating Western Europe, there has been no such focus on the Eastern half of the continent, partly because it has been seen as an economic backwater. Yet, research has shown that projects of social engineering were often tried out in so-called peripheries. Moreover, looking forward to the Cold War, as Kimberly Elman Zarecor has recently argued, state-socialism was characterized by "infrastructural thinking," that is, decision-making that was driven by the "requirements and scale" of infrastructure.

Existing research on infrastructure in the Western European context has opened up a number of questions on the history of infrastructure in East Central Europe: What were the imperial and national infrastructure building projects from the 18th century to the end of Empire? Which were realized, and which were not, and for what reasons? What did infrastructures connect, and what did they bypass? What impact did the two World Wars have on the developing of infrastructure? To what extent did the Iron Curtain create a rupture in existing infrastructure predating the Cold War? To what extent was infrastructure used to integrate the Eastern Bloc? And to what extent, on the contrary, did pre-existing infrastructural systems impose their own, "outdated" logic on a changed continent? How did infrastructural projects transform the societies in which they were embedded, and which they connected? At the same time, how did populations in contact with infrastructure appropriate them to their own needs? And what happens when infrastructure malfunctions? How has European integration impacted infrastructure? What new infrastructure projects promise to transform East and Southeast Europe?

The conference intends to facilitate an interdisciplinary dialogue. We also encourage comparative and transnational perspectives. We invite scholars in the humanities and social sciences who want to contribute to the following broad themes:

1. *Projects and fantasies*
   In this subsection we are looking for contributions that address the long history of infrastructural projects, the visions and meanings attached to them, including "failed" projects and the alternatives that never materialized. How did technological and social utopias relate to infrastructure?

2. *Infrastructure and state- and empire-building*
   Here we are interested in contributions that place specific state-led projects in a broader comparative setting in order to tease out common features and differences to similar projects. How did infrastructure enhance, or complicate the functioning of empires and national states, how is it related to borders?

3. *Legacies and path-dependencies*
   How did existing infrastructure systems influence the building of new ones, how did they impact later societal development? Another theme that interests us are the visions and concepts that passed from one generation of statesmen and experts to the other, and how these changed in the process.

4. *Infrastructure-society interactions*
   How do users adapt and appropriate infrastructural systems and their technology? We also want to shed light on how building or failing to build new infrastructure help foster or eradicate social inequalities, and how social and political organization affect infrastructure development.

5. *Funding and impact on trade*
   National and international infrastructure building projects are inter alia funded to promote trade. What was the role of infrastructure for trade and welfare, how did infrastructure politics and trade politics relate to each other?

The **deadline** for paper proposals is **November 30, 2019** (see below).

Keynote speakers:

Dr. Per HÖGSELIUS, Professor, KTH Royal Institute of Technology, Stockholm
N.N.

Important dates:

November 30, 2019   Deadline for paper proposal submissions
mid-January, 2020   Notification of acceptance
June 7, 2020   Deadline for full paper submissions

Applications should be send to AnnualConference@ios-regensburg.de in one PDF document. The file name should include the name of the author. The application must include:

- an abstract (max. 300 words)
- a short CV including your institutional affiliation and contact details.

The conference language is English. IOS Regensburg will cover accommodation costs and support travel costs of presenters.

Conveners: Luminita GATEJEL, Stephan HUBER, Brigitte LE NORMAND (University of British Columbia, Kelowna)

In Cooperation with

Leibniz ScienceCampus Regensburg
EUROPE AND AMERICA
IN THE MODERN WORLD
Transformations and Frictions
of Globality in Past and Present