

Dissertation Title:

Auto-Transport Infrastructure and its Role for Social Cohesion and Personal Emancipation in Socialist Bulgaria and Yugoslavia

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The PHD project relates to the transport infrastructural organization of space in two socialist states and its impact upon social relations and identifications in those countries. The focus of the research is on the official ideological legitimization of the construction of auto transport infrastructure in People's Republic of Bulgaria and SFR of Yugoslavia, the realized scope of the built infrastructure and its impact upon social cohesion (or fragmentation and personal autonomization) of Bulgarian and Yugoslavian societies. The basic methodological presumption of the study is that the transport infrastructure is an incarnation of power politics (L. Winner thesis, developed in Science and Technology Studies). The objective of the research is to explore the relationship between the explicated politics towards national unification, hidden politics in transport infrastructure, and its final results.

Why Yugoslavia and Bulgaria? The first aspect is the transnational spatial one. Yugoslavia was a symbol of openness towards the "Western" world and this should lead to developing modern transport infrastructure, connecting "East" and "West". Bulgaria, as a loyal satellite of the Soviet Union, adopted its ideological hostility towards the "Western world, and this should influence the (non)construction of transport infrastructure. The other aspect is related to politics of identity. One of the main tasks of the Yugoslavian Communist Party was building a common Yugoslavian identity. It found its ground in the construction of the highway "Brotherhood and Unity", connecting Zagreb, Belgrade, Skopje, Ljubljana. Bulgaria preferred tough ideological control and "symbolic violence" for the building of "united socialist nation", which found its culmination in the renaming of the ethnic Turks, Bulgarian citizens, and displacing those who resisted this process. Developing transport infrastructure would have hindered the processes of tough ideological control. My hypothesis is that the ideology of Tito of "brotherhood and unity" through infrastructure did not achieve its goal, but created prerequisites for autonomous development of every federation unit. In Bulgaria, on the contrary: the lack of developed auto

transport infrastructure contributed to a strong political and ideological control, and prevented developing of local ideologies, insisting on autonomy.

The research is interdisciplinary, applying sociological, historical and anthropological approaches, combining qualitative and quantitative methods. It will follow three investigation perspectives: discourse analysis of the official Communist Party documents, related to auto transport infrastructure and its ideological impact; analysis of the development of auto transport infrastructure as documented in the national statistical yearbooks and in memories (Bruno Latour's actor – network approach could be applied); analysis of everyday perceptions and assessments of the auto transport functions, as settled in people's memory.

The study will follow the implications of the specific “constructions” of transport infrastructure for the contemporary development of Bulgaria and countries, “born” from ex SFR of Yugoslavia.