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Personal research plans and project co-ordination commitments

1) Research plans:

I will carry out a comparative analysis of the three former Yugoslav cases. The outcome will be a monograph, which is intended also as a synthesis of results won by the research project. The comparisons will therefore, on the one hand, be achieved by collaboration with the country research teams. On the other hand, I will conduct also my own empirical research, in which I will focus mainly on the following aspects:

- an explanation of the variations in the nationality policies in the three studied socialist Yugoslav republics,
- a reconstruction of the different courses and outcomes of promoting a Yugoslav “meta-identity” in these republics.

The nationality policies in the different republics of socialist Yugoslavia were in many respects “specific”. In the early socialist period the most important reasons for these differences were closely connected with the World War II history of the respective republic, region, social or national group. Different strategies were pursued to include or exclude certain national or ethnic groups in/from power as a consequence of which side they had taken during the war. Later, these policies underwent a variety of transformations. In my research I will have a close look at these transformations. I will particularly investigate the decision making processes within the ruling communist party with regard to nation-building activities. How much was there a general ideological position towards nation-building, or do we have to understand nation-building in Yugoslavia much more as a series of pragmatic decisions? How was the communication and interaction process with this regard between the federal, the republic and lower levels of power? Was there any inter-relation between nation-building policies in the three Yugoslav republics under investigation (i.e. counter-effects from one context to the other)? How, generally, did the authorities perceive the identities of their citizens? Some of the information for this research questions can be reconstructed through the available secondary literature, but it will also be essential to consult archives in Belgrade and in the capitals of the three republics.

The second aspect of my research aims to connect the above mentioned political problems to the sphere of every-day life. This will be done by focusing on a specific aspect of identity policy: the Yugoslav “meta-identity”. Research has shown that, especially in the early socialist time, the efforts to create a common Yugoslav identity led to different results according to regional, social and age-group differences. Rejection or acceptance of a distinctive Yugoslav identity was closely connected to the position of the particular group, or population, in the power matrix and the degree of its integration into the socialist system. In later socialist periods Yugoslav identity policy more and more gave way to increasingly nationally coded symbols, which reflected also an increasing devolution of power to the republics. I plan to explore the pragmatics of people in their relation with “Yugoslavness” until the end of the common state. Here I will make use of the materials and results from my own long-term fieldwork in Bosnia-Herzegovina in 2000/2001. The “Halpern Collection” in Graz will form another corpus of sources for this purpose. But of crucial importance for the whole comparison will be a consequent integration of results from the work in our three “project modules” on: “Mobility patterns in nation-state building after 1945”, “Appropriation of public symbols in private spaces after 1945”, and “Institutionalization of folklore “culture” and official representation of folklore after 1945”. Research will be complemented by a selective media-analysis.

2) Co-ordination commitments:

Drawing on my experience in carrying out historical-anthropological research, I am organising methodological training for researchers in the project. I will participate in the elaboration and implementation of methodological standards and will act as permanent advisor with respect to methodology, in this way providing methodological support especially for the young researchers in the country teams – also by visiting their fieldwork. I will also participate in the elaboration of strategies for the comparative research, and will help to evaluate the applicability of chosen approaches.