

## **Reflexions on the Summer School „Post-Carbon Futures: Cities, Industries and Energies in Central Europe“**

**Miloš Đurović**

The one-week experience at the summer school at the Martin-Luther University Halle-Wittenberg was gratifying and exciting both intellectually and socially – from lectures, workshops, and field trips to informal encounters and spontaneous discussions!

In the PhD project that I started last spring, I am focusing on human-environmental relations in a polluted (post)industrial coal-mining town. My interest lies in the question of the local community's agency and the affects and dispositions people deploy; those that Sherry Ortner defines as “dark anthropology” and those that make up “the anthropology of good”. Environmental suffering, waiting, despair, resilience and environmental hope are some of them. As Montenegro is a EU candidate member, thus obliged to limit or suspend the operation of coal-fired thermal power plants, the context of the energy transition is of high importance for my research. It is easy to imagine how the EU energy policies and political discourse might powerfully shape the local narratives and dynamics I encounter in the field.

Therefore, the summer school in Halle on post-carbon futures was productive for my early stage of the doctoral project, especially when it comes to discussions tackling coal-dependency and the post-socialist context. The field trips that included local guides were a great way to directly physically observe, listen about and experience the phenomena we as anthropologists tend to talk about sometimes highly abstractly, even with dematerializing tendencies. Lectures, workshops and discussions on energopolitics and temporalities, and proposed articles for reading, gave me also more inspiration to explore and perhaps create a stronger focus on the transformative and transitional context within my research interest and future fieldwork. I relished discussions and reflections with other colleagues between and after presentations, and sometimes it was thought-provoking, especially as we have been trained in different academic traditions and have various anthropological curiosities. Even though we all were interested in the society-energy nexus, we still had diverse research focus – whether it was human-environment relations, toxicity, industry, tourism or technology, Western Europe, European periphery or spaces outside of Europe.

Sharing thoughts, insights, listening to each other and reflecting in that kind of environment was a dynamic and educative process for me.

Last but not least, participation in the summer school in Halle was a great social experience itself. I am grateful to organizers and lecturers for the quality content and the pleasant and comfortable atmosphere during the summer school. It was fun and exciting to spend time in such a dynamic, (sub)culturally diverse and alternative, and indeed eclectic and changing place!

### **About the Author**

Miloš Đurović is doing a PhD in Social Anthropology at the Graduate School for East and Southeast European Studies at the University of Regensburg. His research is situated in the (post-)industrial coal-mining town in Montenegro where he focuses on the coal consumption and the consequences of (air) pollution.