

## RESEARCH NETWORK GRANT SCHEME (RN) Event Report Form

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Events and research network reports for Regions eZine- <https://regions.regionalstudies.org/>  
In order to publish your report in Regions eZine, we would request that your report outlines the key discussions occurring during the event and how these discussions contribute to the scholarship and readership of the regional studies community. We would value linkages being made between the take-away messages of the event and the current literature, for instance from open access articles published in one or more [publications of the Regional Studies Association](#).

Alternatively, more general description of the event can be submitted for publication on our website.

PLEASE INDICATE IF YOU ARE SUBMITTING THIS REPORT TO REGIONS OR FOR OUR WEBSITE: This report is for the RSA Website

RESEARCH NETWORK TITLE: **Regional Studies Association Research Network on Infrastructural Regionalism (NOIR)**

EVENT TITLE: **Infrastructuring Regions**

DATE AND PLACE OF EVENT: 24-28 March, Detroit, MI USA – 2025 Annual Meeting of the American Association of Geographers

ORGANISER(S)' NAME(S): Jean-Paul Addie and Michael Glass

### PLEASE PROVIDE US WITH DETAILS OF YOUR EVENT

- **What was the aim of this event?**

The events consisted of three sessions on the theme of 'Infrastructuring Regions' organized at the Annual Meeting of the American Association of Geographers. Taking inspiration from the AAG Meeting's setting in Detroit, NOIR organized a series of paper panels exploring infrastructure's role in co-constituting regional territories, corridors, and networks across borders. In thinking regionally about infrastructure – an approach the network theorizes as 'infrastructural regionalism' – presenters addressed the diverse ways in which infrastructure is governed across or constrained by jurisdictional boundaries, whether at intra-metropolitan, sub-national, or international scales. This included asking who drives the construction of regional infrastructural imaginaries examining the funding, decision-making, and institutional apparatus governing the movement of people and goods at various scales, and engaging how key actors, institutions, and communities understand and experience the infrastructuring of regional space. In sum, the intention of NOIR's AAG sessions was to foster a robust and engaging exploration of regional infrastructuring, engaging questions regarding the impacts of

infrastructure development on economic, social, and environmental sustainability in cross-border regions, the policy frameworks and governance structures that facilitate or hinder cross-border infrastructural projects, and the capacity of a variety of infrastructures to enhance cross-border mobility and regional integration.

- **How many people attended (speakers and delegates) the event? Please add an approximate number of countries.**

The special sessions and NOIR keynote were attended by approximately 35 people in-person across the sessions (speakers and session attendees). Presenters came from 7 countries: United Kingdom, United States, Canada, Italy, Belgium, Taiwan, and Singapore.

- **Please list the speakers of the event and title of their presentations (please give a description of how and why these papers were selected).**

#### ***Session 1: The State of Infrastructural Regions***

- **Dylan Brady**, *National University of Singapore*, "Southeast Asia's digital payment landscape: State engagement and non-symmetrical networks"
- **Yimeng Yang**, *Northeastern University*, "State assetization of waste: a new frontier for infrastructure financing experiments in China's city-regional development"
- **I-Chun Catherine Chang** *Macalester College* (presenting on behalf of her co-authors **Sue-Ching Jou** (National Taiwan University) and **Ming-Kuang Chung** (Academia Sinica) "Smart-state Restructuring: the Re-territorialization of Taipei Smart-city Developments"
- **Ryan Centner**, *London School of Economics*, "In the air, on the ground, over the sea, through an empire: Aviation infrastructure and territorial affect across Micronesia"

#### ***Session 2: Borders, Corridors, and Networks***

- **Alberto Valz Gris**, *Politecnico di Torino*, "Corridor in the making: Contested imaginaries of infrastructural urbanization across the port of Genoa and its extensions"
- **Pilar Delpino Marimon**, *Clark University*, "Unbuilt infrastructures and their effects in the Peruvian-Brazilian borderland" (presenting remotely)
- **Wojciech Keblowski**, *Vrije Universiteit Brussel*, "Localising global infrastructure at the "gateway to Europe": the second life of transshipment ports at the Poland-Belarus border"

#### ***Session 3: Reimagining Regional Infrastructure***

- **Michael Glass**, *University of Pittsburgh* (and **Jean-Paul Addie**, *Georgia State University*), "Bridging 'Infrastructural Solutions' and 'Infrastructures as Solution': Regional Promises and Urban Pragmatism"
- **Katherin Rankin**, *University of Toronto* and **Dinesh Paudel**, *Appalachian State University*, "A Himalayan conjuncture for infrastructural regionalism?"
- **John Stehlin**, *University of North Carolina – Greensboro*, "Transborder Infrastructures, Local Burdens: Interscalar Interdependencies and the Shaping of Urban Highway Mitigation in Madrid and Bilbao"
- **Keith Harris**, *University of Washington*, "From transportation infrastructure to éco-tiers-lieux"

The papers were selected from a pool of submissions to the open call given their focus on, and engagement with, questions of regional infrastructure and infrastructural regionalism. We paid particular attention to issues of disciplinary and topic diversity, as well as looking to include presentations from early career researchers.

- **Please send us the program and outline of your event.**

See the attached session information from the conference program.

- **Please describe any social activities organised as part of the event.**

Informal drinks and conversation were held following the day's paper sessions.

- **Please provide us with conclusions of the event (how it contributed to the overall aim of the network and an outline of the key discussions occurring during the event).**

Across three well-attended panels, this event provided a rich exploration of how infrastructure shapes regional development and governance across diverse global contexts. A key theme that emerged was the central role of state influence in infrastructure development, whether through digital payment systems in Southeast Asia or waste-to-energy projects in China. In Malaysia, digital payment platforms such as DuitNow and Touch'nGo illustrate strong state involvement in expanding financial networks beyond national borders. Similarly, China's approach to waste management has increasingly relied on financial instruments to fund infrastructure, though often at the expense of socio-ecological goals. These examples underscore how governments leverage infrastructure to drive economic and technological integration, reinforcing their regulatory power while navigating complex trade-offs.

Another critical topic was the governance tensions inherent in smart city development, particularly in Taipei, where urban technology policies reshape territorial relationships. The implementation of smart city strategies has ignited conflicts among various stakeholders, including national and local governments, private entities, and civic groups. While the central government envisions smart cities as a national strategy, Taipei utilizes them for political autonomy, highlighting mismatched interests between different actors. These struggles over funding, regulation, and data management illustrate the intricate politics of infrastructural transformation, where competing agendas drive re-territorialization processes and shape governance frameworks.

Infrastructure functions as a tool for regional connectivity, whether through built or unbuilt corridors. In the Amazon, for example, the stalled Pucallpa-Cruzeiro do Sul transboundary project demonstrates how even unbuilt infrastructure can wield significant influence on governance and territorial speculation. Such projects do not merely exist in physical form but also serve as powerful symbolic artifacts that shape policy, land use, and transnational relationships. Similarly, transshipment hubs along the Poland-Belarus border expose how historical trade patterns intersect with contemporary geopolitical strategies. These ports, once tied to Soviet-era commerce, now play a pivotal role in the Belt and Road Initiative, reflecting a layered relationship between imagined prosperity, structural inequalities, and infrastructural transformation.

Retrofitting existing infrastructure emerged as a promising yet complex strategy for future development. Whether through regional transportation planning in the United States or highway removal efforts in Spain, these projects seek to reconcile environmental sustainability with economic and logistical necessities. In the U.S., fragmented decision-making has impeded cohesive regional planning, complicating efforts to integrate equitable urban development solutions. Meanwhile, Spain's attempts to modify Franco-era highways reveal contradictions between urban quality-of-life improvements and the enduring demands of transport infrastructure. These cases demonstrate that infrastructural change is often fraught with competing priorities, requiring careful negotiation between localized concerns and broader mobility needs.

Presentations also highlighted emerging regionalisms in infrastructure planning in a variety of geographic and temporal contexts. For example, as Nepal responds to seismic and political transformations, its approach to infrastructure has evolved from social empowerment strategies to a more calculated engagement with regional development, strategically repositioning the country within shifting geopolitical frameworks. Competing infrastructural influences from China, India, and the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor illustrate how smaller states navigate global power dynamics, leveraging infrastructure investments to assert agency in an increasingly multipolar world.

Finally, infrastructure can serve as cultural and ecological spaces, transcending its traditional function as a conduit for transportation and economic activity. In Paris and Île-de-France, transportation infrastructure is being reimagined as third places that foster cultural engagement and sustainability. By integrating ecological principles into municipal governance, these evolving spaces reflect a growing emphasis on bioclimatic urbanism and nonprofit-driven initiatives. This shift signals a broader reconsideration of infrastructure's role in shaping urban experiences, demonstrating how transport networks can become vital hubs for environmental consciousness and community interaction.

Overall, this event illuminated the deep interconnections between infrastructure, governance, and global economic systems. It showcased infrastructure's transformative potential while also revealing the tensions embedded in its development and management. The discussions underscored how infrastructure is not merely physical but deeply entwined with political, economic, and social narratives, shaping regional and global landscapes in profound ways.

- **Please outline any future actions (planned events, outputs, follow-up of the event, publications).**

We will continue the conversation at the next RSA conference in Porto in May 2025, where we will turn our attention to issues of inclusive infrastructures and the dynamics of regional transformation.

- **Please outline below how you promoted the Association at your event and whether any follow up actions are planned.**

At the outset of the special paper sessions, NOIR's co-ordinators acknowledged the financial and logistical support provided by the RSA and encourage those attending the sessions to consider applying for RSA Research Network grants in future rounds. The RSA logo was featured on PowerPoint slides from the NOIR team. We have sent a follow-up email to the session presenters, which included the below information regarding the RSA e-bulletin.

- **Please include a short biography from/on behalf of the author of this report (author's title, institutional affiliation, and research interests, max 40 words) and attach an ID picture (this may be published in *Regions*) in Jpeg format.**

Jean-Paul Addie is Associate Professor at the Urban Studies Institute at Georgia State University. He is a critical urban geographer working on urban and regional governance, urban political economy, and socio-spatial theory, with a focus on the politics of infrastructure.

- **Please send an email addressed to [researchnetwork@regionalstudies.org](mailto:researchnetwork@regionalstudies.org) attaching any photographs of the event the RSA may use.**
- **Please send an email addressed to [researchnetwork@regionalstudies.org](mailto:researchnetwork@regionalstudies.org) attaching any presentation or additional material that you have permission to display on the Association's website.**
- **Please confirm that you have either provided the RSA with a list of delegates' emails or that you have sent an email to the delegates containing a paragraph on the RSA and the link to sign up to the e-Bulletin as follows:**
  - The Regional Studies Association (RSA) is a learned society concerned with the analysis of regions and regional issues. It is the multidisciplinary global community for regional and urban research, development and policy. An RSA membership gives you access to publications, funding opportunities, conferences and events, networking opportunities, discounts and much more. The RSA sends out news on its activities and deadlines via its monthly newsletter, so if you have not yet signed up to the monthly e-Bulletin, please do so [here](#).



A view of Detroit's Fordist infrastructural regionalism.

## **Towards Equitable Infrastructural Futures?**

- Foregrounding the regional scale shows the challenges that must be addressed to reduce infrastructural gaps
- What are the decision-making processes that can best account for intra-regional diversity?
- How can regional planning envelopes encourage the convergence of local rationalities?
- What unrealized infrastructural alliances can shift debates toward transformative, equitable outcomes?

BRIDGING 'INFRASTRUCTURAL SOLUTIONS' AND 'INFRASTRUCTURES AS SOLUTION'

Michael Glass's provocations for future research on equitable infrastructural regionalism.

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Infrastructuring Regions I: The State of Infrastructural Regions

**Date:** 3/27/2025  
**Time:** 12:50 PM - 2:10 PM  
**Room:** 313B, Level 3, Huntington Place  
**Type:** Paper

**Sponsor Group(s):**  
No Sponsor Group Associated with this Session

**Organizer(s):**  
Jean-Paul Addie *Georgia State University*  
Michael Glass *University of Pittsburgh*

**Chair(s):**  
Jean-Paul Addie, *Georgia State University*

**Description:**

Infrastructures, whether physical, digital, or institutional, play a crucial role in shaping regional space, connectivity, and mobility. Taking inspiration from the AAG Meeting’s setting in Detroit, these sessions explore infrastructure’s role in co-constituting regional territories, corridors, and networks across borders. Thinking regionally about infrastructure – an approach we term ‘infrastructural regionalism’ – involves addressing how infrastructure is governed across or constrained by jurisdictional boundaries, whether at intra-metropolitan, sub-national, or international scales. Infrastructuring Regions brings together new and original research that examines the complex interactions between infrastructure development, regional integration, and mobility across borders. This includes asking who drives the construction of regional infrastructural imaginaries examining the funding, decision-making, and institutional apparatus governing the movement of people and goods at various scales, and engaging how key actors, institutions, and communities understand and experience the infrastructuring of regional space. These sessions are supported by the Regional Studies Association Research Network on Infrastructural Regionalisms (NOIR).

Presentations (if applicable) and Session Agenda:

Welcome to the RSA Network on Infrastructural Regionalism (NOIR)	
Dylan Brady, <i>National University of Singapore</i>	<a href="#">Southeast Asia’s digital payment landscape: State engagement and non-symmetrical networks</a>
Yimeng Yang	<a href="#">State assetization of waste: a new frontier for infrastructure financing experiments in China’s city-regional development</a>
I-Chun Catherine Chang, <i>Macalester College</i>	<a href="#">Smart-state Restructuring: the Re-territorialization of Taipei Smart-city Developments</a>
Ryan Centner, <i>London School of Economics</i>	<a href="#">In the air, on the ground, over the sea, through an empire: Aviation infrastructure and territorial affect across Micronesia</a>
Q&A Discussion	

Non-Presenting Participants

Role	Participant
Panelist	Dylan Brady <i>National University of Singapore</i>
Panelist	I-Chun Catherine Chang <i>Macalester College</i>
Panelist	Yimeng Yang

Panelist

Ryan Centner  
*London School of Economics*

**Type:** Paper

**Date:** 3/27/2025

**Time:** 12:50 PM - 2:10 PM

**Room:** 313B, Level 3, Huntington Place

**Contact the Primary Organizer**

Jean-Paul Addie *Georgia State University*

[jaddie@gsu.edu](mailto:jaddie@gsu.edu)





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Infrastructuring Regions 2: Borders, Corridors, Networks

**Date:** 3/27/2025  
**Time:** 2:30 PM - 3:50 PM  
**Room:** 313B, Level 3, Huntington Place  
**Type:** Paper - Hybrid/Streamed

**Sponsor Group(s):**  
No Sponsor Group Associated with this Session

**Organizer(s):**  
Jean-Paul Addie *Georgia State University*  
Michael Glass *University of Pittsburgh*

**Chair(s):**  
Michael Glass, *University of Pittsburgh*

**Description:**

Infrastructures, whether physical, digital, or institutional, play a crucial role in shaping regional space, connectivity, and mobility. Taking inspiration from the AAG Meeting’s setting in Detroit, these sessions explore infrastructure’s role in co-constituting regional territories, corridors, and networks across borders. Thinking regionally about infrastructure – an approach we term ‘infrastructural regionalism’ – involves addressing how infrastructure is governed across or constrained by jurisdictional boundaries, whether at intra-metropolitan, sub-national, or international scales. Infrastructuring Regions brings together new and original research that examines the complex interactions between infrastructure development, regional integration, and mobility across borders. This includes asking who drives the construction of regional infrastructural imaginaries examining the funding, decision-making, and institutional apparatus governing the movement of people and goods at various scales, and engaging how key actors, institutions, and communities understand and experience the infrastructuring of regional space. These sessions are supported by the Regional Studies Association Research Network on Infrastructural Regionalisms (NOIR).

Presentations (if applicable) and Session Agenda:

Alberto Valz Gris, <i>Politecnico di Torino</i>	<a href="#">Corridor in the making: Contested imaginaries of infrastructural urbanization across the port of Genoa and its extensions</a>
Pilar Delpino Marimon, <i>Clark University</i>	<a href="#">Unbuilt infrastructures and their effects in the Peruvian-Brazilian borderland</a>
Wojciech Koblowski	<a href="#">Localising global infrastructure at the "gateway to Europe": the second life of transhipment ports at the Poland-Belarus border</a>
James Sidaway: Corridorization: the spatial logics of coloniality and state capitalism	

Non-Presenting Participants

Role	Participant
Panelist	Alberto Valz Gris <i>Politecnico di Torino</i>
Panelist	Pilar Delpino Marimon <i>Clark University</i>
Panelist	Wojciech Koblowski

Meeting is Over

**Description**  
**Type:** Paper - Hybrid/Streamed



**Date:** 3/27/2025

**Time:** 2:30 PM - 3:50 PM

**Room:** 313B, Level 3, Huntington Place

**Contact the Primary Organizer**

Jean-Paul Addie *Georgia State University*

[jaddie@gsu.edu](mailto:jaddie@gsu.edu)



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### Infrastructuring Regions 3: Reimagining Infrastructural Regionalism

**Date:** 3/27/2025  
**Time:** 4:10 PM - 5:30 PM  
**Room:** 313B, Level 3, Huntington Place  
**Type:** Paper

**Sponsor Group(s):**  
No Sponsor Group Associated with this Session

**Organizer(s):**  
Jean-Paul Addie *Georgia State University*  
Michael Glass *University of Pittsburgh*

**Chair(s):**  
Jean-Paul Addie, *Georgia State University*

**Description:**

Infrastructures, whether physical, digital, or institutional, play a crucial role in shaping regional space, connectivity, and mobility. Taking inspiration from the AAG Meeting’s setting in Detroit, these sessions explore infrastructure’s role in co-constituting regional territories, corridors, and networks across borders. Thinking regionally about infrastructure – an approach we term ‘infrastructural regionalism’ – involves addressing how infrastructure is governed across or constrained by jurisdictional boundaries, whether at intra-metropolitan, sub-national, or international scales. Infrastructuring Regions brings together new and original research that examines the complex interactions between infrastructure development, regional integration, and mobility across borders. This includes asking who drives the construction of regional infrastructural imaginaries examining the funding, decision-making, and institutional apparatus governing the movement of people and goods at various scales, and engaging how key actors, institutions, and communities understand and experience the infrastructuring of regional space. These sessions are supported by the Regional Studies Association Research Network on Infrastructural Regionalisms (NOIR).

**Presentations (if applicable) and Session Agenda:**

Michael Glass, <i>University of Pittsburgh</i>	<a href="#">Bridging ‘Infrastructural Solutions’ and ‘Infrastructures as Solution’: Regional Promises and Urban Pragmatism</a>
Dinesh Paudel, <i>Appalachian State University</i>	<a href="#">A Himalayan conjuncture for infrastructural regionalism?</a>
John Stehlin, <i>University of North Carolina - Greensboro</i>	<a href="#">Transborder Infrastructures, Local Burdens: Interscalar Interdependencies and the Shaping of Urban Highway Mitigation in Madrid and Bilbao</a>
Keith Harris, <i>University of Washington</i>	<a href="#">From transportation infrastructure to éco-tiers-lieux</a>
Q&A Discussion	

**Non-Presenting Participants**

Role	Participant
Panelist	Michael Glass <i>University of Pittsburgh</i>
Panelist	Dinesh Paudel <i>Appalachian State University</i>
Panelist	Katharine Rankin
Panelist	John Stehlin <i>University of North Carolina - Greensboro</i>
Panelist	Keith Harris

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**Type:** Paper

**Date:** 3/27/2025

**Time:** 4:10 PM - 5:30 PM

**Room:** 313B, Level 3, Huntington Place

**Contact the Primary Organizer**

Jean-Paul Addie *Georgia State University*

[jaddie@gsu.edu](mailto:jaddie@gsu.edu)

