**Regional Infrastructure and Infrastructural Regionalism: Contexts, Concepts, and Cases** – Special Sessions and NOIR Keynote organized at the  2023 RSA Annual Conference "Transforming Regions: Policies and Planning for People and Places" - Ljubljana, Slovenia - 14 June 2023

The events consisted of two special paper sessions on ‘Regional Infrastructure and Infrastructural Regionalism: Contexts, Concepts, and Cases’, and a keynote plenary by Jon Silver (University of Sheffield) organized at the Regional Studies Association’s 2023 conference in Ljubljana. The purpose of these special sessions was to assess work at the intersection of infrastructure and regional studies and help chart future directions for research on ‘infrastructural regionalism’, which is the central conceptual contribution of the NOIR research network, developed over its first phase. The sessions were intended to: (1) present and review of work conducted as part of NOIR’s first phase; (2) provide opportunities to network and engage with infrastructural regionalists (particularly early career researchers and scholars from the Global South—supported by NOIR travel bursaries); and (3) chart out future directions for work at the intersection of infrastructure and regional studies. An open call solicited papers that engaged the Network’s core themes.

***Special Session 1: Infrastructuring Regions***

***Special Session 2: New Directions in Infrastructural Regionalism***

***Special Session 3: NOIR Keynote Panel***

* Jonathan Silver (University of Sheffield) *Corridor Urbanization: What are Corridors and Why do they Matter for Thinking about Urban and Regional Geographies*
* Grete Gansauer (Montana State University) Discussant
* Allen Xiao (National University of Singapore) Discussant

Papers presented by NOIR members helped to disseminate finding from network activities, assess the impact of our collective contributions to date (including several position papers and a special issue and edited volume that should be published within the next year). After several years of COVID-19 disruptions and online meetings, the event provide an opportunity to network with current and prospective NOIR member in person and discussion possibilities for future research collaborations and intellectual agendas. Based on the presented papers and discussions held in Ljubljana, these NOIR panels flagged most prominently the need—and challenges—of conveying social scientific and wider academic conversations around infrastructure development with the timeframes and applied concerns of policymakers and practitioners. While there are obvious synergies between these two forms of knowledge production and action, more attention clearly needs to be paid on the demands on aligning the concerns and time horizons of each sector, while recognizing the distinct contributions each makes to the development of more equitable, inclusive, and resilient regional spaces. The different national contexts (from Italy and the Netherlands to Myanmar and India), as well as the divergent infrastructural systems discussed (water, transport (active and informal), energy, knowledge-based) illustrates the value of inter-sectoral and geographic comparative work at a number of scales. Rather than moving towards a singular theory of infrastructural regionalism, NOIR’s conceptual agenda has provided a robust framework and provocations to address social and political issues arising at the intersection of infrastructure and regional studies.

NOIR travel bursaries (of $500) were provided to support attendance and participation from early-career researchers Soma Sarkar and Grete Gansauer.