



Infrastructural Times: A Workshop Exploring the Temporalities of Urban-Regional Infrastructure

WORKSHOP RATIONALE

The *NOIR Workshop on Infrastructural Times* seeks to bring together new and original research that critically examines the role of time and temporality in how we study, produce knowledge of, and inform decision-making on urban and regional infrastructure. The past two decades have witnessed the emergence and maturation of an 'infrastructure turn' across a range of disciplines that belies the notion that urban infrastructure is a staid or neutral set of physical artefacts. Infrastructural systems are vital elements that make urban life possible in its myriad forms, yet they are produced and governed over variegated spatial frames and are experienced differently by diverse social groups, often in partial and fragmented ways. The uneven and contested nature of infrastructural spaces means they are always in a state of becoming, and as such, are built upon, and establish new, temporalities.

WORKSHOP THEMES

The *NOIR Workshop on Infrastructural Times* aims to unpack notions of infrastructural time and temporality. As an entry point into the discussion, we propose considering three core temporal modalities over which infrastructures unfold. First, urban-regional infrastructures can be approached through **periodizations** in which dominant approaches to material and governance technologies establish specific logics of design, construction, management, and utility – even as they blur at the edges, overlap, and vary depending upon the phenomena being analyzed. Second the notion of temporal **cycles** offers a lens to examine the overlaid and often contradictory timelines the urban-regional infrastructures engender and are shaped by, including political cycles, policy formation, environmental assessments, construction, and infrastructural lifespans themselves. Third, infrastructural spaces are animated through lived **rhythms** that capture notions of monumental and mundane continuity and change evidenced in seasonal transitions (the fluctuations of rainwater and snowmelt) to the daily pulses and flows of the 24-hour city. We intend these frames to serve as a conceptual point of inquiry into the formation of urban regional spaces and lives, and as a practical challenge for those making decisions about how infrastructures are regulated, maintained, governed, used, brought into being, and rendered obsolete.

The workshop is purposefully interdisciplinary in scope, global in focus, and actively seeks contributions from established, early-career, and graduate student researchers (including papers co-authored by junior and senior scholars) interested in exploring and theorizing our diverse infrastructural times. We welcome conceptual, methodological, and empirical interventions from a variety of disciplinary, geographic, infrastructural, and theoretical perspectives. Relevant themes include, but are not limited to:

- Temporal analytical approaches to urban infrastructure
- Infrastructural path dependency, lock-in, and crisis – how do urban infrastructures codify and facilitate paradigmatic modalities of governance, planning, spatial practice, resource allocation and service delivery?
- Urban infrastructure and the Anthropocene – the role of urban infrastructure in its production and how might they be reimagined for a world undergoing climate change
- The temporal frames of urban visions: whether utopian imaginaries of smartness, efficiency, and resilience or dystopian fantasies of failure and collapse
- Strategies for comparative temporal analysis of urban infrastructure
- Infrastructural disruptions (e.g. e-scooters) and their implications for urban governance
- The impact (and overlapping) of varied cycles (policy, political, environmental, ecological) on the planning, construction, and maintenance of urban infrastructure systems
- Infrastructures for the city at night
- Time and the financing of infrastructure (fictitious capital, bonds, assumption of debt)
- The role of spatial and temporal imaginaries in (re)shaping our concept of access within urban regions at different times of day and for people of different means
- Infrastructure's material space-times and the production of urban space and lives (e.g. electric flows, hydrological systems, lifecycles of construction materials, bodily rhythms, gestation periods of infectious diseases)

OBJECTIVES AND OUTCOMES

The two-day workshop will feature three keynote presentations, plenary sessions to workshop papers, and opportunities for extended networking and debate. The *NOIR Workshop on Infrastructural Times* will generate three primary outcomes:

1. An accessible and outward-facing workshop report to be distributed in collaboration with the Regional Studies Association.
2. An edited volume to be published with a leading university press on the topic of infrastructure time.
3. A research agenda that will form the foundation of future external research grants on the topic of infrastructural governance and regional lives.

SUBMISSIONS

Presenters are invited to submit a paper proposal consisting of a title, list of authors, and abstract of up to 300 words to Jean-Paul Addie (jaddie@gsu.edu) by **March 1, 2021**. We aim to reply to potential presenters within two weeks of this date with accepted abstracts to be submitted to the RSA's e-Festival by March 27, 2021. Please indicate on your submission if you wish your contribution to be considered for inclusion in a collective publication from the workshop.

LOGISTICS

The *NOIR Workshop on Infrastructural Times* will be held as a series of special sessions organized in conjunction with the *Regions in Recovery: Building Sustainable Futures* Global e-Festival. Thanks to generous support from the RSA we are able to cover the registration fee for presenters. We intend to structure the workshop around a series of special sessions organized into two sections; (1) an open paper session where presenters can discuss their research with time dedicated to Q&As for the panel; followed by (2) a private workshoping session restricted to contributors to the NOIR sessions. The goal of the private sessions is for authors to develop their papers for collective publication in a less formal setting. As such the workshop conveners will moderate an open and rigorous debate on the methodological, disciplinary, and thematic approaches. To facilitate discussion, we would like authors to



circulate draft papers among their fellow panelists by 21 May, 2021. Please direct any questions or informal expressions of interest to Jean-Paul Addie at the below email address.

CONVENORS

Jean-Paul Addie, Georgia State University jaddie@gsu.edu
Michael Glass, University of Pittsburgh
Jen Nelles, University of Sheffield

ABOUT NOIR

The RSA Research Network on Infrastructural Regionalism (NOIR) brings together researchers working at the intersection of infrastructure and urban and regional studies. The Network reflects both the increased conceptual, geographic, and political importance of infrastructure and the endemic crises of access (social space), expertise (technology), and resources (governance) that varied provision of infrastructures within regions can cause. NOIR offers multiple forums to debate the terrains of regional infrastructure, develop collaborative research projects, and facilitate meaningful dialogue between academics and practitioners. Network activities are generously supported by the Regional Studies Association (RSA) Research Networks funding scheme. To find out more about NOIR, check out the Network's web page, <https://www.noir-rsa.com/> and follow us on Twitter @NOIR_RSA.