

1. Events

Event Details

Critical Geographies of Urban Infrastructure

Scientifique

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Conférence

Start date : 5 November 2014 01:00

Date de fin : 6 November 2014 01:00

Where : London

Hosted by : Urban Geography Research Group (UGRG) of the RGS-IBG

Information sources :

<http://urban-geography.org.uk/2013-conference>

Call for Contributions

This year's UGRG Conference will explore the relationship between critical urban theory and infrastructure. Critical urbanism may be defined by Brenner et al (2009: 179) as concerned:

- (a) to analyze the systemic, yet historically specific, intersections between capitalism and urbanization processes;
- (b) to examine the changing balance of social forces, power relations, sociospatial inequalities and political-institutional arrangements;
- (c) to expose marginalizations and injustices that are inscribed and naturalized within existing urban configurations;
- (d) to decipher the contradictions, crisis tendencies and lines of potential or actual conflict within contemporary cities, and on this basis;
- (e) to demarcate and to politicize possibilities for more progressive, socially just, emancipatory and sustainable formations of urban life.

Since the publication of *Splintering Urbanism* (Graham and Marvin, 2001), there has been a heightened focus on employing critical urbanist perspectives to study the fundamental issues of urban infrastructure, of who gets what infrastructure and where? This includes

work on the assemblage and effects of different types of infrastructure including water, waste and other metabolic systems (Gandy 2002; Marvin and Medd 2006; Nikolas et al 2006), traffic and city streets (Hamilton-Baillie 2008; Buiter 2008) motorways and flyovers (Harris 2013; Merriman 2007; Norton 2008), various forms of public transportation (Butcher 2011), cycling (Aldred 2012) and airports (Guller and Guller 2003; McNeill 2010). Emerging research has highlighted the particular materialities of different infrastructure systems as they sustain and disrupt the circulations that constitute urban life (Amin and Thrift 2002; Gandy 2004; Latham and McCormack 2004; Hommels 2005). It has also examined practices of dwelling and experiences of inhabiting infrastructural systems as particular kinds of public spaces (Bissell 2010, 2014; Koch and Latham 2014; McIlvenny 2010; Sheller and Urry 2003; Wilson 2012).

Such work has demonstrated the exercise of social and political power through infrastructural provisioning, and the challenges of governance which might bring about more inclusive and democratic forms of urban infrastructure (Boudreau et al 2009; McFarlane and Rutherford 2008; Spinney 2010; Swyngedouw 2005).

Much work remains, however, in exploring the key dynamics through which infrastructure structures and restructures urban spaces. In particular, the UGRG is keen to hear from scholars working on topics and theoretical perspectives which include (but are not limited to) the following:

- state versus private provision, management and maintenance of infrastructure
- dynamics of access and exclusion
- privatization of key urban infrastructure
- Global North and Global South standards and models of infrastructure provision
- comparative studies of infrastructural provision and innovation
- policy mobility and the circulation of 'best practice'
- dwelling and inhabitation within infrastructural spaces
- new imperatives of sustainability, austerity and resilience agendas
- innovations ranging from micro-scale to regional master-planning

Papers are welcomed from researchers at any stage of their careers (including doctoral students). We will also be holding a 'pecha-kucha' session as we did in 2012.

Mobility

For the Mobile Lives Forum, mobility is understood as the process of how individuals travel across distances in order to deploy through time and space the activities that make up their lifestyles. These travel practices are embedded in socio-technical systems, produced by transport and communication industries and techniques, and by normative discourses on these practices, with considerable social, environmental and spatial impacts.

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Practical informations :

The deadline for 200 word abstracts is Friday, 5 September 2014; abstracts should be submitted to the official UGRG conference email

Please contact Luke Binns () and Gabriel Silvestre () if you have any questions. We'll look forward to hearing from you!