



CALL FOR PAPERS

SPECIAL ISSUE: “PATHS TO PEACE? INFRASTRUCTURES, PEACE, AND CONFLICT”

Guest Editors: Dr Jan Hansen (jan-eric.hansen@hu-berlin.de), Humboldt University of Berlin, and Dr Christoph Laucht (c.laucht@swansea.ac.uk), Swansea University

Abstract deadline: 15 February 2023

Transport infrastructures such as roads, highways, railroads, canals, airports, and sidewalks are vital to the functioning of human civilization. They facilitate the movement of people, goods, and information. Scholars usually understand infrastructures as socio-technical systems. Recently, historical scholarship has started to analyze how infrastructures were linked to questions of power and both integrated and disintegrated various societies. On the one hand, infrastructure connectivity thus enabled or facilitated the integration of vast territories, strengthened central statehood, and mitigated political or social conflicts. During the 1960s and 1970s, several African governments promoted plans for a Trans-African Highway to foster unity, peace, and prosperity across the African continent, for example (Engels and Gerrit 2014).

On the other hand, infrastructures also had a disintegrating effect: certain user groups (e.g., non-white and poor people) had low access to car ownership and mobility or were prevented from accessing certain urban spaces through arrangements of the built environment, leading to social and racial exclusion. In some cases, asymmetric access to infrastructures sparked violence in urban, suburban, and rural contexts. However, the nexus between infrastructure and conflict also had an international dimension. In the Middle East, disputes over water resources that

involved transport infrastructures such as canals have repeatedly led to violent conflict, as the 1956 Suez Crisis impressively demonstrated. Similar conflicts have erupted around infrastructures and the use of natural resources and raw materials. There is much evidence that such processes unfolded globally, with regional variances in the global South and North.

This proposed special issue of *The Journal of Transport History*, therefore, examines the relationship between transport infrastructures, peace, and conflict from an interdisciplinary perspective. In doing so, it ventures into new historiographical terrain, bringing together the history of transport infrastructures with historical peace and conflict studies. Although there is rich literature on the role of infrastructures such as railroads in wartime and in the perpetration of mass violence, and scholars have discussed the contribution of roads or highways to peace and nation building, there is still a lack of systematic understanding of these processes. This desideratum becomes apparent when we consider peace and conflict not only from the perspective of international history and diplomacy, but also in terms of broader issues such as social inequalities, racism, and social peace.

As a result, the Special Issue employs a broad concept of peace and conflict in order to arrive at a fuller understanding of the processes of integration and disintegration – social, political, and territorial – through the lens of transport infrastructures. Moreover, it aims to ground international history and the history of conflict and peace in their material environments. Through its combined approach and with its focus on the material fabric and the spatial as well as environmental dimensions of peace and conflict, the Special Issue seeks to develop a deeper and more systematic understanding of the complex relationship between transport infrastructures, peace, and conflict. This includes both the opportunities and limits of such a combined approach.

We invite scholars from a range of different disciplines, including (but by no means limited to) history, anthropology, geography, sociology, political science and international relations, to reflect on peace, conflict, and transport infrastructures from a historical perspective (modern and premodern, micro and macro, local and global). Questions that individual papers can explore include, but are not limited to:

- To what extent did transport infrastructures have a system-stabilizing effect and to what extent did they become the starting point or the object of conflict and violence?
- Which transport infrastructures (and associated resources like water, minerals, oil, or metals) were prone to generate conflict?
- What role did transport infrastructures play in overcoming conflict? Were there limits to their roles in promoting peace?
- How were maintenance and decay of transport infrastructures related to peace and conflict? Can we identify a link between the maintenance of infrastructures and the management of conflict, or the decay of infrastructures and the transformation of post-conflict orders?
- What specific notions of social peace went hand in hand with infrastructures?

- How does a focus on transport infrastructures and the environment help us to broaden our concept of peace and violence (peace with nature, environmental peacekeeping, Nixon's "slow violence")?
- To what extent did the relationship between peace, war, and conflict and transport infrastructures depend on space? How did space impact the making, remaking, and unmaking of peace? Were there differences between the global North and the global South?

The Special Issue will be guest edited by Dr Jan Hansen (jan-eric.hansen@hu-berlin.de), Humboldt University of Berlin, and Dr Christoph Laucht (c.laucht@swansea.ac.uk), Swansea University, who will select (with JTH's editorship) papers based on their thematic fit, originality and scholarly rigor.

Abstract deadline: 15 February 2023

Abstract components: Your abstract should include the following items:

1. Name, affiliation, and email address
2. Short biography (150 words)
3. Abstract of 500 words including article title, exposition of case study/research question/outline, relevant theme addressed, and article type

Please send the above components in **ONE collated pdf document** to Dr Jan Hansen (jan-eric.hansen@hu-berlin.de) and Dr Christoph Laucht (c.laucht@swansea.ac.uk).

The authors of selected papers will be notified approximately four weeks after the deadline. The deadline for the submission of full articles will be 30 September 2023.

Papers will be subject to a double-anonymized review process. About JTH, its indexing and metrics and submissions guideline refer to <https://journals.sagepub.com/home/jth>

Queries before the abstract submission date can be directed to guest editors.

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