

## [Call for proposals on Incomplete Infrastructures - AAA St. Louis Nov. 2020](#)

Announcement published by Vikramaditya Thakur on Thursday, March 5, 2020

Type:

Call for Papers

Date:

November 17, 2020 to November 22, 2020

Location:

Missouri, United States

Subject Fields:

Anthropology

We have a few slots available for presenters in our panel, details below. Please contact Vikram ([vthakur@udel.edu](mailto:vthakur@udel.edu)).

### **Incomplete Infrastructures**

(Proposed Panel for AAA Annual Conference 2020 at St. Louis Nov. 17-22, 2020)

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Invisible. Enchanted. Utopian. Dire requirements, desired objects or necessary evils. Infrastructures are many things, but one thing many diverse infrastructural projects have in common regardless of the labels we apply to them is their incompleteness. We define infrastructure as proposed or built networks for ensuring the movement of material, people and ideas. Many spectacular infrastructure projects never materialise in the first place as they die at the planning stage and live their social lives on paper, in files and archives. Others are launched with much fanfare only to gradually stall as funds run dry, government priorities shift, or popular protests cause the wheels of infrastructural mega-development to grind to a halt. Many such projects may live prolonged 'suspended lives', strung out between a starting point that recedes into the past and a future that never arrives. Many of the more mundane infrastructural systems that are intimately integrated into our everyday social lives to the extent that we take their existence for granted – such as roads, railways, sewage systems, and telecommunications, never fully arrive at a stage of achieved completeness. All infrastructural systems require continued maintenance, repair, adaption or upgradation to remain functional in contexts where logistical and infrastructural demands keep changing.

In this panel, we invite presenters to reflect on the incompleteness of infrastructure.

We are particularly interested in papers that address one or more of the following questions: how does incompleteness materialise in specific infrastructural projects, and what are the social and symbolic ramifications of living with infrastructural incompleteness? What are the politico-economic drivers of infrastructural incompleteness, and what new possibilities and utilities does it generate? And how can we understand variations in incompleteness across space and time as well as comparative projects? What agents and interests including state and capital are at play for prolonging a project and what do they gain? Does an incomplete infrastructural project create new victors and victims displaying generative powers even in its incompleteness? What objectives does an incomplete project accomplish? Finally, what are the key elements that help complete the biographies of incomplete infrastructural projects? We invite submissions that draw on ethnographic fieldwork informed by social theory, and take their point of departure in empirical material.

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