

Infrastructural Inequalities Journal: Policing, Crisis, Abolition

CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS

Edited by Astrid Lorange, Andrew Brooks, and Liam Grealy

Abstracts Due: August 14, 2020

OVERVIEW

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought into sharp relief existing infrastructural inequalities. The unequal distribution of access to the resources and networks of care necessary for living has resulted in increased risk of exposure and vulnerability to death. One response to the crisis has been the intensification of policing along race, class, and gender lines. The structure of detention and incarceration, in which people are locked in small and enclosed spaces, amplifies the risk of infection. In the midst of this crisis, the murder of George Floyd by the Minneapolis Police Department has sparked waves of protests around the world calling for the abolition of policing and the carceral system while asserting that Black Lives Matter. In the settler colony of Australia, calls for abolition have long been articulated by Indigenous activists fighting to put an end to racialised policing and Black deaths in custody. Recently, in Melbourne, police and other coercive measures have been deployed against public housing residents, enforcing a state of lockdown rather than prioritising infection prevention measures, local testing sites, appropriate health information, as well as medical, financial, and mental health services. The uneven policing of the global health crisis works to obscure the infrastructural inequalities that have rendered certain subjects more vulnerable to death in the first place. As has long been argued by activists and scholars, racism is a public health issue.

It is in this context that calls for abolition have grown in volume. These demands do not merely call for the end of policing but for the production of new infrastructures and networks of care that respond to existing inequalities. Abolition is not merely the demand for a world with no prisons or police, but a practice of building the systems of support that enable people to access the resources they need in order to live well. Abolitionist thinking is, in part, about the development of infrastructure for jobs, food, education, housing, health care, and more. Ruth Wilson Gilmore puts it this way:

[A]bolition has to be “green.” It has to take seriously the problem of environmental harm, environmental racism, and environmental degradation. To be “green” it has to be “red.” It has to figure out ways to generalize the resources needed for well-being for the most vulnerable people in our community, which then will extend to all people. And to do that, to be “green” and “red,” it has to be international. It has to stretch across borders so that we can consolidate our strength, our experience, and our vision for a better world.

We are seeking papers that examine the relationship between policing, crisis, and infrastructure. If, as Brian Larkin tells us, ‘infrastructures are built networks that facilitate the flow of goods, people or ideas and allow for their exchange over space’, what do abolitionist infrastructures look and feel like? How do

abolitionist infrastructures respond to and intervene in the racial regimes of policing and redress infrastructural inequalities? What are the conceptual, material, and political challenges that impede the articulation of more just infrastructures?

The CFP relates to a digital special journal issue that will be published online in December 2020 – January 2021 under the title *Infrastructural Inequalities: Policing, Crisis, Abolition*. We encourage submissions from scholars, activists, and practitioners working at the nexus of these problems.

FORMAT

Articles should be submitted that are between 1500 and 2500 words in length. Alternative genres (e.g. maps, poems, personal essays, video, and sound works, etc.) are also encouraged. Given the relative short length compared to traditional academic publishing, authors (with support from the editorial team) should clearly articulate the key focus and argument of their contribution. Provide key references using the Harvard system and hyperlink where possible. Submissions will be published online and open-access and authors are not restricted from republishing submitted work elsewhere. Images are strongly encouraged, although authors will need to source copyright permission for images they do not own. You can find the inaugural issue of the journal [here](#) for examples of format, layout, and writing styles.

THEMES

The examination of infrastructural inequalities, crisis, policing, and abolition might include such themes and topics as:

- Race and racialisation
- Housing
- Health care
- Data
- Surveillance
- Protest
- Education
- Mutual aid and care

SUBMISSION

Interested authors should submit an abstract of 250-300 words that outlines their topic, argument, key foci, and format by August 14 to a.brooks@unsw.edu.au. By August 31st, the editorial team will let you know if your submission is accepted and, if so, we will ask you to complete a submission by October 31st 2020. This is a relatively short timeframe, however the length of articles should make this turn-around achievable. The editorial team will review all submissions and endeavor to provide concise and useful feedback. Please consider whether your workload commitments will make an October 31st submission possible.

Infrastructural Inequalities is a continued collaboration between the [Housing for Health Incubator](#) and [Snack Syndicate](#). For any queries please email Andrew Brooks: a.brooks@unsw.edu.au