

When is a Wasteland?

DIGITAL WEBINAR

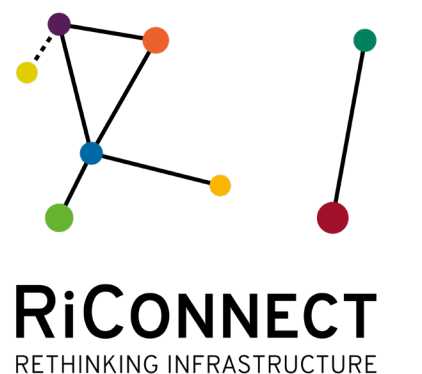
A Critical Understanding of Infrastructure and Residual Spaces

by Brian Rosa



30th NOV

- 11:00 Input session by Brian Rosa
- 11:40 Group discussion with Roland Krebs
- 12:15 Internal Meeting about Roadmap



When is a Wasteland?

A Critical Understanding of Infrastructure and Residual Spaces



by Brian Rosa

Large-scale urban infrastructures such as highways, railways, and ports have long been associated with disorderly and poorly-defined landscapes on the fringes of cities: residual spaces of various scales without clearly defined purposes, often re-appropriated by a variety of formal and informal uses (light industry, warehousing, recreation, squatting, etc.). In Europe as elsewhere, above-ground infrastructures tend to occupy districts dominated by extant or obsolete industrial activities and low-income housing, and have created barriers and boundaries to mobility. However, with deindustrialization, expanding development pressure, and the increased desirability of waterfront properties, spaces of infrastructure have become the focus of urban design, environmental remediation, and other forms of physical transformation. These sites are often defined as under-utilized "wastelands" in need of renewal; however, it is rare that they are fully without use, and these zones often serve as important environments for vulnerable communities. Gentrification becomes a key concern. To speak of wastelands is ideological, as the term tends only to be used when attempting to justify their reconfiguration. In this presentation I explore the notion of the wasteland in relation to urban infrastructure, when and why districts are classified as wastelands, and some of the ethically complex policy considerations about reconfiguring these spaces.

Brian Rosa is Marie Skłodowska-Curie Research Fellow at the Department of Humanities of Universitat Pompeu Fabra in Barcelona. From 2015 to 2019 he was Assistant Professor of Urban Studies and Geography at the City University of New York. With training as an urban planner (MRP, Cornell University) and human geographer (PhD, University of Manchester).

*His research focuses on the transformation of post-industrial urban districts, political debates about urban heritage and gentrification, and the social, cultural, and spatial impacts of urban transportation infrastructures in the United States, United Kingdom, and Spain. His doctoral dissertation focused on the transformation of the spaces along and beneath Manchester, England's railway viaducts. He is the co-editor of the book *Deconstructing the High Line: Postindustrial Urbanism and the Rise of the Elevated Park* (Rutgers University Press, 2017) and is current working with interdisciplinary teams on proposals for rethinking urban infrastructure and public space in Barcelona.*

30th NOV

- 11:00** Input session by Brian Rosa
- 11:40** Group discussion with Roland Krebs
- 12:15** Internal Meeting about Roadmap

