

Call for Abstracts

Workshop and Special Issue on Transnational Infrastructures in Goeconomic Competition

(Deadline for abstracts **September 20, 2024**)

Infrastructures form the **material basis of globalization**. They represent networks of physical and non-physical structures that make it possible to bridge distances, i.e. to realize the movement of people, goods, services and capital in space (Larkin 2013). **Transnational infrastructures** include cross-border networks in the areas of transportation, energy supply, data transmission, as well as the financial system.

In a period that is characterized by a more diffuse economic order and intense **goeconomic tensions** (Babić et al. 2022; Brunnermeier et al. 2018), these infrastructures have moved to the center of strategic considerations for states and transnational corporations. States focus on the **control over transnational infrastructure** and related value chains for two purposes: first, to strengthen their domestic economy and companies vis-à-vis international competitors to realize welfare gains; and second, to ward off direct economic pressures from rivaling countries – or exert them themselves in the form of an instrumentalization of their influence on transnational networks.

Hence, infrastructures are susceptible to weaponization strategies in light of goeconomic competition (Farrell and Newman 2019). **Political conflicts over infrastructures** are particularly evident against the backdrop of the current constellation of a "new triad competition" between the U.S., China, and the EU (Abels and Bieling 2023). The strategic expansion of infrastructure development, both domestically and globally via large-scale projects like the Belt and Road Initiative, demonstrate that infrastructures are used to achieve goeconomic and geopolitical goals, even if this affects the process of globalization (Hameiri and Jones 2023; Leonard 2021; Schindler et al. 2024). Apart from states, transnational corporations such as large, globally operating tech firms are leveraging their role in financing, developing, and operating infrastructures as well (Abels 2024). The way in which infrastructures operate is evidently changing and these changes are **shaped by states as well as private actors**.

This transformation is taking place at a time when the **digital and socio-ecological transitions** are putting further pressure on politicians and businesses to innovate and transform infrastructures. Furthermore, a **series of overlapping crises** such as the Covid-19 pandemic, the energy crisis, and climate catastrophes have demonstrated the vulnerability of infrastructural networks. They disrupted global value chains and laid bare the insufficiencies of extant technologies and infrastructure (Gentili 2021).

Against the backdrop of these observations, we are looking to put together a **group of researchers** for an **international workshop** and a **Special Issue** with a renowned journal. Individual contributions will shed light on the importance of infrastructures in global goeconomic competition. Among others, we are looking for contributions from scholars of International Relations, International Political Economy, Political and Human Geography, History, but also any other field that concerns itself with the afore-mentioned complex of issues.

We seek to explore what **role transnational infrastructures play in geoeconomic competition** – and how they are being shaped by it in return.

To this end, we **call for papers** on the **following topics**:

- Papers that examine **specific transnational infrastructure fields** (such as data communication, transportation, energy, or finance) from a geoeconomic perspective, as individual case studies or comparative studies.
- Papers examining the geoeconomic impact of **large-scale global infrastructure initiatives** – with a focus on Global Gateway and the Partnership for Global Infrastructure and Investment as underexposed cases.
- Papers exploring the **role of transnational private infrastructure** and private companies in geoeconomic competition.
- Papers that reflect on the transformation of transnational infrastructures in the context of contradictory **geoeconomic, ecological, and social concerns**.
- Papers that reflect on transnational infrastructures from a **critical geoeconomic perspective**, e.g. with regard to global North-South and South-South relations.
- Papers that address **further issues** compatible with the outlined research agenda.

Accepted papers will be discussed at an **international workshop at the University of Tübingen, Germany, 27-28 March 2025**. Financial assistance for travel might be provided.

In collaboration with the research group, contributions will be submitted to a peer-reviewed journal as a **Special Issue**.

If you are currently working in the outlined field and would like to contribute, **please submit** 1.) a provisional title for the paper, 2.) a full abstract (approximately 500 words), 3.) an unstructured short abstract (150 words), 4.) the author(s) names, affiliations and contact information, **until September 20, 2024 to jan.ruck@uni-tuebingen.de**

If the paper is selected for the issue and workshop, the full manuscript must be submitted by March 13, 2025.

We are looking forward to your contributions and to a rich exchange on this topic!

Best wishes

Joscha Abels, Hans-Jürgen Bieling, Jan Ruck

Organization and funding:

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