

Title: Infrastructure mega corridors: a way out (or in) to the crisis?
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“Infrastructure mega corridors: a way out (or in) to the crisis?”

Colophon

A Nourishing Network is a peer-to-peer publishing experiment starting from the feed as a potentially multi-directional circulation device.

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Davide is an artist and curator working in the blurry area between media and contemporary art.

Manetta Berends is a designer working with forms of networked publishing, situated software and collective infrastructures.

Alice Strete is an artist and researcher interested in the intricate relationship between humans and the technologies they surround themselves with.

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Infrastructure mega corridors:
a way out (or in) to the crisis?

by Recommon.org

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-----r-r-r-r-r-r-r-----
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-----s-s-s-s-s-s-s-----
-----h-h-h-h-h-h-h-----
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-----t-t-t-t-t-t-t-----
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■ In the last few months our lives have changed dramatically. Many of us lost
■ their jobs while many others continued working under extreme conditions.
■ Inequality and social injustices have become increasingly visible features of
■ the economic system and the society in which we live.

┌ The pandemic might have impacted everyone's life, but it has not affected
everyone in the same way. Among the sectors that did not suffer, but rather
benefited from the crisis, are online platforms such as Amazon and the likes. Those
sectors have become the vehicles for the transfer from "real life" to a virtual
dimension for our working, schooling, sporting and socialising. Fortunately, many
have been questioning what the implications of all this would be; including what
might happen to the data generated by our online lives; by whom and how is this data
being treated; and what are the implications? This is a debate that we hope will
remain open, since it concerns aspects that are not contingent to the health crisis,
but are instead key factors in the reorganization of "the extractivist society". A
society that enables a few elites to extract more and more material and financial
wealth from the territories and local communities that inhabit them, effectively
expropriating them from the power to decide upon their own lives.

While most ongoing conversations center around the health crisis and the resulting
recession, we want to bring attention to the systemic reorganization that is taking
place as we speak. We are talking about a process that began before the pandemic, a
new way of organizing large infrastructure according to the logics of mega-corridors,
to reduce time and space, with the aim of continuously increasing profits on an
increasing scale in the face of a slowdown in the growth of global trade. This
process, which remains only partly visible, is highly energy-intensive and rooted in
the fossil fuel economy, involving the construction of new high-speed railways for
the transport of goods, port terminals, data centres and power stations, as well as
new logistics centres covering hundreds of hectares. All this implies a radical and
irreversible transformation of territories for the benefit of large private capital,
where ports and production areas identified as "free trade", or "Special Economic
Zones" (SEZs), all become interconnected.

What are the manifestations in Italy and Europe of this global capital agenda? How
will it change the social, economic and productive structure of our country and the

continent? What impact will it have on the climate and the environment, two central areas where failures and systemic contradictions are already very visible? The question is partly rhetorical: it is difficult to imagine a “globalization 2.0” which will accelerate production, transport and consumption of goods at an unprecedented speed while at the same time profoundly reduce the systemic impact on the environment and climate, an impact that goes far beyond proposed calculations of direct and indirect emissions generated.

Will the major infrastructure mega-corridors plan be challenged in the post-pandemic economic crisis or will the current crisis be an excuse to accelerate it? Will its overall impact be properly assessed? This remains doubtful since harmful impacts of the global infrastructure agenda are so far considered as the least of their problems by investors and policy makers dazzled by forecasts and data about the production, logistics and global trade that is starting again.

How does this infrastructure masterplan meet the needs of the millions of people who are already paying the highest costs of a profit-driven model at all costs? How does it meet the needs of communities that will be removed from their lands to make way for new mega infrastructure? How will it make our societies more resilient to the great droughts, typhoons, and increasingly heavy rains? How will it counteract the increasing cementing of the most densely populated areas and how will it enable everyone to have a roof over their heads?

We believe that it is high time to open up to such far-reaching questions.

Translated from an original blogpost in Italian by Elena Gerebizza and Filippo Taglieri from Re:Common introducing their new report: [“The great illusion. Special economic zones and infrastructure mega-corridors, the way to go?”](<https://web.archive.org/web/20200814132820/https://www.recommon.org/la-grande-illusione/>) The original article and link to the report can be found here.