

# The Politics of Infrastructure Security: Infrastructures as Sites of Contestation and Transformation

Infrastructures are essential to modern life. They provide us with the water we drink, the electricity we use, and the transportation we rely on. But infrastructures are not neutral objects. They are shaped by and reflect the power relations and ideologies of the societies in which they are built.



## Letters, Power Lines, and Other Dangerous Things: The Politics of Infrastructure Security (Infrastructures)

by Ryan Ellis

★★★★★ 5 out of 5

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In recent years, there has been growing interest in the politics of infrastructure security. This is due in part to the increasing number of attacks on infrastructure targets, such as the 2015 terrorist attacks in Paris and the 2017 WannaCry ransomware attack. But it is also due to a growing recognition that infrastructures are not simply technical systems, but also social and political constructs.

This article explores the politics of infrastructure security, examining how infrastructures are sites of contestation and transformation. It argues that infrastructures are not neutral objects, but rather are shaped by and reflect the power relations and ideologies of the societies in which they are built. The article draws on examples from the United States, the United Kingdom, and India to illustrate how infrastructures can be used to exclude and marginalize certain groups of people, while also providing opportunities for resistance and empowerment.

## **Infrastructures as Sites of Contestation**

Infrastructures are often seen as neutral objects, but they are in fact sites of contestation. This is because infrastructures are not simply technical systems, but also social and political constructs. They are built by people, and they reflect the values and priorities of those people.

For example, the United States interstate highway system was built in the 1950s and 1960s. This system was designed to connect major cities and facilitate the movement of goods and people. However, the interstate highway system also had a significant impact on the social and economic landscape of the United States. It led to the decline of many small towns and rural areas, and it exacerbated racial segregation in cities.

Another example of infrastructure contestation is the Three Gorges Dam in China. This dam was built in the 1990s and 2000s to provide hydroelectric power and flood control. However, the dam has also had a significant impact on the environment and on the lives of people living in the area. The dam has caused the displacement of millions of people, and it has led to changes in the local climate.

These examples illustrate how infrastructures are not neutral objects, but rather are sites of contestation. Infrastructures are shaped by the power relations and ideologies of the societies in which they are built, and they can have a significant impact on the lives of people living in those societies.

### **Infrastructures as Sites of Transformation**

While infrastructures can be sites of contestation, they can also be sites of transformation. This is because infrastructures can provide opportunities for resistance and empowerment. For example, the interstate highway system in the United States was used by civil rights activists in the 1950s and 1960s to challenge racial segregation. And the Three Gorges Dam in China has been used by environmental activists to raise awareness of the environmental impact of dams.

Another example of infrastructure transformation is the favelas in Brazil. Favelas are informal settlements that are often located on the outskirts of cities. They are often characterized by poor housing conditions, lack of access to basic services, and high levels of crime. However, favelas are also home to a vibrant and resilient community. Residents of favelas have organized to improve their living conditions, and they have created a sense of community and belonging.

These examples illustrate how infrastructures can be sites of transformation. Infrastructures can provide opportunities for resistance and empowerment, and they can help to create more just and sustainable societies.

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The politics of infrastructure security is a complex and

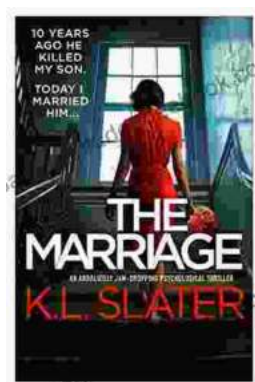


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