

## **Center and Periphery Assemblages: Transfer, Adaptation, and Refusal of Urban Policies**

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The legacy of central planning lives on in the post-Soviet urban space, creating and reinforcing interdependencies between the center and the periphery. The centers of power generate hegemonic practices that dictate urban and regional innovations, thereby setting up the stage and agenda at the national level. In reaction to these centrifugal practices, the periphery seeks to obtain alternative positions and to form counter knowledge. To strengthen territorial and social autonomy, peripheral cities channel customary practices, ideas, and trends from center to periphery and vice versa. The transfer of local knowledge about urban development thus serves as the main object of analysis in this work.

This presentation sheds light on this phenomenon by analysing different forms and formations of peripheral assemblages. We see assemblages as complex networks of actors, ideas, flows, and matter that organize at specific time and space (Allen and Cochrane 2010; McFarlane 2009; Robbins and Marks 2009). We draw on assemblage theory to emphasise the heterogeneity and relationality of things, people and practices, arguing that a whole is made up of parts that can simultaneously be assembled into other relationships and other wholes (Deleuze and Guattari 1988; DeLanda 2006). This approach provides the basis for a relational analysis (Law 1992; Latour 2006) of local strategies and actions that form in the urban and regional periphery under the pressures from the centers of knowledge and power – issues that are often seen as intertwined.

We consider periphery not as territorially closed and inherently depended on the center but as a performative assemblage of complex practices, actors, and actions. We approach this study through the empirical analysis of professional events, actor exchange, educational programs, and popular narratives in two case studies. This work is based on the ongoing research project conducted within the framework of the Masterskaya “City in the Periphery”.

In particular we pay attention to the following questions:

- What are central elements of these relations and is it possible to identify specific characteristics of the ‘peripheral assemblage’ in Russian context?
- How stable or fragile are these assemblages? By which means and to which extent do they stabilize and reproduce themselves?
- Which effects do these assemblages generate and do they influence back, maybe disturbing the hegemonic practices and discourses of the centre?

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