

Introducing RTG 2725 Urban future-making



Irina Redkina

Irina Redkina has joined the RTG “Urban future-making: Professional agency across time and scale” as a doctoral candidate in May 2022. For her MA, she studied Sociology and Social Anthropology at Central European University (Budapest, 2019) with the focus on urban change and uneven globalization. Her thesis was about the working strategies of women, who in the beginning of their family and working lives (in their 20s) during the dissolution of the USSR found themselves in a coal-mining Russian city. She has lived in St. Petersburg and Budapest, and has a diverse working experience in publishing, human rights advocacy, projects coordination, logistics, and floristry. For the last few years she translated a few books and articles and currently works as a guest co-editor for an upcoming special issue at *feminist critique: Journal of Feminist and Queer Studies in Eastern Europe* dedicated to the Eastern European Feminist Conference “Gender Struggle in Eastern Europe” (Kaunas, 2019).

Irina is interested in the legacy of Soviet urban development and possible futures of post-socialist industrial cities in the wake of climate change. She focuses on single industrial towns (monotowns) - a Soviet type in industrial ex-novo city built on the ideological set of urban space, welfare, and industry - a triad for building egalitarian socialist society. Gigantic state-led modernization projects, flagships of socialist modernity, in the aftermath-1989 single-industry towns were labelled as hopeless relics of Soviet urban planning, the failures of command economy. The mainstream approach of much policy-oriented literature and urban scholarship on monotowns takes “Western” forms of urban and industrial development for granted. It is also dangerously close to the narrative of capitalist triumphalism.

Internationalism has recently re-emerged as one of the crucial lenses for an analysis of political economy and urbanism in histories of state socialism, and for revisiting urban globalization processes. Exploring the transformation of the built infrastructure of two cities, one in a former Soviet republic, another one in a postcolonial country, this research examines the legacy of the internationalist socialist project after the end of the WWII. Irina aims to understand what these built during the Cold War structures do to the future making in the specific places. The research contributes to the understanding of mobilities of architectural knowledge, technology and resources and to the scholarship on deindustrialization.