

What kind of buildings and urban situations do things traverse on their way to become commodities? How are global production chains of bread or T-shirts anchored within specific places, and shaped by physical (infra)structures? This symposium explores how to study interdependencies of planetary production systems, uneven urban development, architecture and spatial planning. It concludes the project Transnational Production Spaces at Habitat Unit, TU Berlin.

Mapping the Global Factory. Architectures of Commodity Chains



Habitat Unit

Symposium
29 Sep 2019

Program

16.30–18.15

Introduction

Charlotte Malterre-Barthes: Architectures of Grain. Physical impacts of the political economy of wheat from Cairo to Chicago

Food systems as well as the factors that influence them at social, economic, and political levels affect architecture, urban form, and territorial organisation. The lecture examines how food systems operating at various scales – trans-national, national, and local – transform socio-spatial territories and how those systems are reciprocally transformed by ongoing changes in territorial relations.

Jesse LeCavalier: Surplus Form

Lean operations generate spatial redundancy and architectural flab. This presentation examines the relationship between logistical systems of commodity circulation and the spaces that support them by looking at the operations of Walmart and Amazon. It argues that through the analysis and theorization of logistical architectures, a range of design responses emerges.

Response by Elke Krasny

18.30–20.30

Elke Beyer & Anke Hagemann: Where is the Global Factory? Spaces of transnational clothing production in Turkey, Bulgaria and Ethiopia

Tracing the pathways of fashion production and its relocation to different manufacturing sites, this talk charts how transnational production relations interact with the urban built environment and urban planning. It discusses commodity chain approaches as a productive analytical tool for relational, multi-scalar urban research, offering insights into the transnational character and constitution of urban space.

Seth Schindler: Getting the Territory Right. Spatial planning and the expansion of production networks

A 'global growth coalition' comprised of multilateral development banks, elite private-sector firms and powerful nation-states is currently seeking to connect historically isolated places via large-scale intra-city infrastructure. Expansive territories are envisioned to connect resource frontiers with dedicated nodes of production and logistics, so that they can be 'plugged in' to global production and trade networks. I term this regime 'infrastructure-led development'. This talk explores its origins and its implications for urbanization and global production networks in the Global South.

Response by Jana Kleibert

Concluding statement by Philipp Misselwitz

Discussion

Participants

Charlotte Malterre-Barthes is an architect and urban designer based at ETH Zürich. She investigates the relationships between food systems and the built environment through the lens of political economy, from global financial market places to rural Egypt.

Jesse LeCavalier is a designer, writer, and educator whose work explores the architectural and urban implications of contemporary logistics. He conducts design and research work through LECAVALIER R+D and is associate professor at the Daniels Faculty of Architecture at the University of Toronto.

Elke Krasny is a professor at the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna. Her feminist scholarship in cultural theory, urban research and curation connects issues of labor, economy, and ecology in architecture, urbanism and contemporary art.

Elke Beyer and Anke Hagemann are architectural and urban researchers at Habitat Unit, TU Berlin. In the research project Transnational Production Spaces (2016-2019), they have investigated the mutual impact of global production networks of the clothing industry and urban transformations at production sites.

Seth Schindler is Senior Lecturer of Urban Development and Transformation at the University of Manchester. He is currently exploring the relationship between large-scale infrastructure projects and deindustrialization in developing countries.

Jana Kleibert is an economic geographer and leads a research group on transnational education spaces at the Leibniz Institute for Research on Society and Space and the Humboldt University of Berlin.

Philipp Misselwitz, architect and urban planner, holds the chair of Habitat Unit at TU Berlin. His recent research fields include user-driven urban development in Europe and the Global South, rural urbanisation, and patterns and economies of translocal spatial production.

Location

ExRotaprint, Projektraum
Gottschedstraße 4
13357 Berlin

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