



SESSION ABSTRACT

The 'layered cake' of neighborliness: everyday interactions at different scales
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This session stems from the collective project on Russian-Finnish neighborliness (privet-sosed.org) which is currently being realized by the team of Russian and Finnish sociologists, anthropologists, and art curators with the support of KONE Foundation (Finland).

As two neighboring countries sharing a border and long history of relationships, Russia and Finland are interconnected by a multitude of contexts, which makes 'Russian-Finnish neighborliness' a complex and multilevel phenomenon. This composite complexity is reflected in the architecture of our project – it is designed as a set of subprojects that consider various levels and facets of neighborliness predefined by the proximity of the two countries. We study neighborliness on the microlevel as close relationships that unfold within a yard or microdistrict, we look at neighborliness on the level of cities, focusing on public spaces and routes that are used by locals and migrants (together or separately), as well as by non-residents. Besides, we look at neighborliness as an important part of everyday life and identity of the residents of border areas. While most of the project's themes are shaped by Russia-Finland connection, a separate work package is dedicated to the study of neighbor relationships in a metropolitan city, that is, St. Petersburg. The variety of situations of, and perspectives on, neighborliness embraced by the project allows us to look beyond its geographic scope and pose broader theoretical questions. At the session, we will present some findings of our empirical work along with theoretical and conceptual reflections on the nature and meanings of neighborhood and neighborliness in contemporary societies. The project is conducted by qualitative methods and involves an artistic component - up to date, there has been a photo contest on the theme of the project; we also plan to organize an art-social science exhibition as one of the project's outcomes. We invite those who are interested in the issues of everyday, neighborhood and neighborliness and artistic means of social research and presentation of research findings to join us at this session.

SESSION SCHEDULE

Friday, September 21, 2018 | Slot 6 | Room 1

Elena Bogdanova: *New Solidarities of Neighbors vs Individual Strategies: Two Approaches for Improvement of the Utility Servicing in the Russian Metropolitan City*

Olga Brednikova: *"The neighbor is dead? Long live the neighbor!": co-living as the creation of situational solidarity and the management of proximity regimes*

Marina Hakkarainen: *Embodying Europeanness: Neighbourship and the Consumption of 'Goods from Finland' in St. Petersburg, Russia*

Friday, September 21, 2018 | Slot 7 | Room 1

Elena Nikiforova: *The Russian-Finnish borderlands and 'neighborliness through time'*

Ekaterina Melnikova: *Transnational care over Local Cemeteries*

SESSION PAPERS

New Solidarities of Neighbors vs Individual Strategies: Two Approaches for Improvement of the Utility Servicing in the Russian Metropolitan City

Bogdanova, Elena (Centre for Independent Social Research, St.Petersburg, RUS)

Do Russian people prefer to solve problems of utility servicing together or separately? If institutional conditions, predetermined by private property right, features of privatization carried out in the 1990s, contemporary utility services, or memory about the Soviet model of public servicing play any role in stimulation of solidarities among neighbors? The paper considers these questions through the prism of case-study, which has been realized in the old part of St.Petersburg, in one particular apartment house (1905 year of construction). The research involves ethnography of the everyday life of the house, and practices of everyday interactions among the neighbors for over two years, investigation of history of the house, and in-depth interviews with inhabitants of the house.

The study was provoked by the real situation of poor public services. Over the past 40 years, there have been no serious repairs in the house. Recently institutional environment of the house servicing began to change. On the one hand the state subsidies for renovation of the old houses had been reduced. The state servicing company had been declared bankrupt in 2016. On the other hand there emerged some new opportunities for servicing of the house, which are unavailable without cooperation of the inhabitants. These are attraction of funding from alternative sources, charging for rent of walls and other common places of the house, collective applications to the administrative bodies, etc. In 2016 the inhabitants established a house council (*domovoi sovet*), which allowed improving the situation in many ways.

Simultaneously, the research shows, that particular individual strategies of improvement of the living space also may succeed. Certain additional resources like calling the hot lines, or friendship with local governors, may entail positive changes in the interests of separate housemates. The efforts of particular neighbors may interfere with the order of repair and other improvements, approved by the general decision of the house council, and redirect financing from common to individual needs. In my research I try to follow the origins of the new solidarities of neighbors, successfulness on the common efforts of the newly established house council, and competition between the common and individual strategies of improvement of the living conditions.

"The neighbor is dead? Long live the neighbor!": co-living as the creation of situational solidarity and the management of proximity regimes

Brednikova, Olqa (Centre for Independent Social Research, St.Petersburg, RUS)

This paper presents the preliminary results of the study of the phenomenon of neighborhood in the modern metropolis. The study was conducted in St. Petersburg (Russia), and the focus of the study is on the practices of neighborhood and on the understandings of what it means to be neighbors. The main methods of research were biographical interviews, Ethnography of neighborhood, observation and diary method (informants wrote down all interactions with neighbors in their diaries for two weeks).

The heritage of the Soviet era of "housing distribution" is a patchwork of neighbors, when people with different economic incomes and different social status live next to each other in the same house. The modern Russian real estate market is somewhat changing the situation, but no major transformations have yet occurred. Thus, in one house, next to each other live people with different economic, social and cultural backgrounds, and have to interact with each other.

The neighbor's daily life consists of routine interaction of neighbors that can take different forms among which it was possible to distinguish:

- small talks. In these conversations the neighbors are playing out scenarios of "being polite", exchanging information, in particular, local news. In addition, the neighbors gradually get acquainted with each other, learn some information about the lives of people living nearby.

- mutual aid. Often, the neighbors provide each other with small services, such as watering flowers in the apartment during host's absence, walk with the dog and so on.

- practices of the neighbor's economy: exchange of things, small services for money, etc.

In addition to regular routine interactions, there are occasional events that force neighbors to solidarity. Usually these are the problems with the house/infrastructure, security issues, etc., the solution of which requires joint actions.

In order to maintain neighborhood relations, people living side by side learn to manage proximity regimes that allow them to control the boundaries allowing (or not allowing) neighbors to come into your life. On the one hand, people living nearby are trying to isolate themselves, to build boundaries that do not allow neighbors to penetrate into private life. On the other hand, they are forced to maintain relations in order to build solidarity if necessary.

The presentation will address the practice of 'fencing', as well as strategies of solidarity. Solidarity networks are situational and reflect / produce social diversity and inequality. At the same time they are regulated by moral grounds

Embodying Europeanness: Neighbourship and the Consumption of Goods from Finland in St. Petersburg, Russia

Hakkarainen, Marina (European University at St.Petersburg, St.Petersburg, RUS)

This paper will discuss how inhabitants in St. Petersburg while representing their consuming choices of Finnish food and goods are constructing their embodied identities. During the ambiguous political situation, showing their preferences to Finnish shopping services, food and clothing they not only identify their Western-ness and represent themselves as Europeans. Specifying their using 'goods from Finland' they construct their closeness to Finland as neighbour solidarity and stress the unity of the North-West region.

Finland and Russia share the state border, and the city of St. Petersburg is situated approximately two hundred kilometres from it to the south-east. The border is dividing (and connecting) the areas that due to historical, political and cultural processes have traces of 'Finnishness' and 'Russianness' and generally has been seen as close to each other. They have also been developing as economically collaborative that might be seen not only in transnational cooperation and local business initiatives but also on the grassroots level. Inhabitants of the neighbouring countries cross the border, spend their leisure time and make shopping on neighbouring sides on a regular basis. Both economic collaboration between countries and the vivid cross-border movement of visitors create the situation of co-presence of people and things representing neighbouring countries. In its turn, St. Petersburg is a special place that contains the presence of the Finns – their political, economic and cultural activity from the common past when Finland was a part of the Russian Empire. It is a place where the Finnishness seems to be multifaceted and represented through time and space.

Many realities represent the Finnishness and Finland in St. Petersburg. They are areas in the city and especially around it. On the south, they were inhabited by local Finnish population, and on the north, the land belonged to Finland before the WWII. There are also institutions and buildings in the city and the suburbs. Even geographical objects such as the Finnish Gulf and the Finland Station, where the route to Helsinki, the capital of Finland starts, remind about the closest neighbour. However, when Petersburgians are talking about the Finnishness in their city, they more often are mentioning Finnish shops and goods than geographical, cultural and historical objects.

Indeed, several supermarkets represent the Finnish goods and shopping culture in St. Petersburg. The inhabitants of the city who use them especially marked that they represent orderliness, cleanness and fairness in services and a high quality of goods as well. They take these stores as examples of social order and ethics in doing business. Over the city, there are also many small shops and stalls in shops that sell both Finnish food and other goods that usually brought by people in connection with their private visits to Finland. The food that after the conflict between European countries and Russia became the 'sanctioned goods' is under demand in particular: fat-free milk, cheeses, sweets and other kinds of food are regarded tastier and healthier than the local ones. Besides, people buy clothing made in Finland. For many of them, it responds to the regional climate conditions and they meet the standards of the highest quality of making useful things.

The Petersburgians, who participated in the project, not only presented their consumption preferences and the opinion about Finnish goods and their delivery. At the same time, they outlined the ethical aspects of mutual ties between countries and outlined their shared values and expectations. Through their descriptions, they expressed their attitude to Finland and conceptualised their neighbouring relations with Finland.

This research is a part of the project "The Layers of Neighbouring" conducted by the Centre for Independent Sociological Research, St. Petersburg (Russia), and supported by the Kone Foundation (Finland).

The Russian-Finnish borderlands and 'neighborhood through time'

Nikiforova, Elena (Centre for Independent Social Research, St. Petersburg, RUS)

My presentation opens up the conversation about neighbor relationships between the inhabitants of neighboring states, that is, in our case, Russia and Finland. Our two countries are interconnected by a multitude of contexts, which makes the phenomenon of 'Russian-Finnish neighborhood' a complex and multi-scalar array of practices and meanings. Here, I want to address one facet of these neighbor relationships, tagged by the notion of 'neighborhood through time'. We invented this notion as a working metaphor in order to reflect on the effect of the borderlands' traumatic past on the construction of the sense of neighborhood and neighborhood across the border.

As a consequence of the Winter War between the Soviet Union and Finland, and later WWII, in 1940 and 1944 a remarkable part of the territory of Finland was ceded to the USSR, and the residents of these territories were resettled all over Finland. In

Finland, this event is viewed as one of the most dramatic in the country's history, remaining particularly painful and problematized on an individual and family level. Due to this, the border territories on the Russian side are perceived of as "homeland" by Finnish citizens, who once lived on these territories (or their descendants), and Russians, currently residing there. The former inhabitants of border areas maintain ties with their home territory and are involved in all kinds of memory and identity work – they organize former residents' communities, take trips to their home grounds, take care of Finnish commemorative sites (e.x., cemeteries), do research and publish maps, books, and other materials on their former villages. Being an important part of family histories, this memory work also attracts younger generations who have no personal experience of relocation and trauma, but can still share these feelings and identify themselves with these lands in the emotional and emphatic manner described by Marianne Hirsch as 'post-memory'. Besides, there are actors on the Russian side, collectives and individuals, who are involved in the maintenance of local (Finnish) memory and serve as contact points, 'bridges' to these lands and their heritage for their Finnish counterparts.

In my talk, I will consider the exploration, maintenance, and working through the territories' and their people's traumatic past as one of important drivers for the building of neighbor relationships in the region. I will also try to attract examples from other border regions and think aloud about common features of 'nomadic borderlands' in relation to their complex picture of the 'ownership' of place, local memory, and local identity, and the impact of this complexity on crossborder neighbor relationships.

Transnational care over Local Cemeteries

Melnikova, Ekaterina (Peter the Great Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography (Kunstkamera), St. Petersburg, RUS)

The paper is focused on the uses of the Finnish cemeteries at the former Finnish Karelia after the territory was ceded by Finland to the USSR. I'm interested in the ways the foreign graves are incorporated into local landscape, rituals and memory becoming the sites of ignorance, heritage or mourning.

The paper is grounded on the anthropological fieldwork at the territory of the former Finnish Karelia – the region which was ceded by Finland to the USSR after the Second World War. Finnish people had left to Finland already during the war and new settlers from all over the Soviet Union came to the region in the late 1940s and 1950s. Until the early 1990s the territory was closed for foreign visitors but in the post-soviet time the former inhabitants, their relatives and descendants received the opportunity to visit their old places what provoked a rise of nostalgia tourism to the region. Among the main destinations of the Finnish tourists were local cemeteries where their ancestors were buried.

My focus lies in social life of the cemeteries which were eventually detached from the community of mourners and existed among people who had no family ties with those buried there. I discuss several symbolical frameworks which allowed incorporation of the 'foreign' graves into local landscape including the process of heritagization which implied creation of the touristic sites out of the former community cemeteries.

In the paper I also emphasize the role of the cemetery as an important tool for creation cross-border community of mourners and examine the relationships between local people and the Finnish tourists in regard to the local graves.