



# Wednesday Seminars

SOMMERSEMESTER 2017

**Elena Trubina**

*Comparing the cities across the global regions:  
between the Global South and the Global East*

Mittwoch 17.05.2017, 17.00, HS C, IKSA, NIG, Universitätsstraße 7, 1010 Wien, 4. Stock



**Elena Trubina** is Professor of Social Theory and Philosophy at the Institute of Social and Political Studies at Ural Federal University in Ekaterinburg, Russia. She is currently a Research Fellow at the IWM (Vienna). Her research addresses a broad set of issues in

social theory, including the intersections between neoliberalism and cultural industries, cultural memory and built environment and the interactions between urban space and subjectivities. She is part of the team which launched in 2011 the MA programme "Critical urban studies" at European Humanities University (Vilnius) and co-founder (together with Martin Muller) of the research center on the Global East at her home university.

## ...kommende Termine

**DI 23.05.2017 Pamila Gupta**  
(am Institut für Afrikawissenschaften)

**Blue Johannesburg**

**24.05.2017 Patrick Plattet**

**Teaching ethnographic methods  
online through multimedia  
examination of human/animal relations in  
Alaskan dog-mushing**

The proponents of comparative urban studies (for example, McFarlane, 2010; Nijman, 2007; Ward, 2010; Cook and Ward 2012) argue for comparisons of diverse and different cities which have not been traditionally registered on the map of modern urban theory and, analytically, were very distant from each other. The location of the urban, as a level of analysis, between several scales, complicates comparative work immensely because several scales of analysis currently undergo intense methodological scrutiny (for example, in the framework of critique of methodological nationalism (Amelina et al., 2012; Chernilo, 2006). Based on fieldwork conducted in Medellin (Colombia) and in several Russian cities, I conduct a comparison of "closed contexts" across global regions. "Close contexts" is the term I use, first, following the political geographer Natalie Koch, to refer to empirical research in difficult, including authoritarian, settings and second, remembering that "there are many ways of assembling contexts and holding them together" (Law and Moser 2010, 348). One commonality between the contexts I want to "assemble" is that in both countries cities are busy with fixing images. It can be said that the cities are also used to improve the highly problematic national images. Both countries thus oscillate between closure and openness, between coping with stigmatization and attempts to come up with alternative images (of the countries and the places). Both in Columbia and Russia, the spectacular urban projects are variously used to raise legitimacy of the governments. The question I pose in this lecture is as follows: How can cities belonging to different world regions be compared?