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Methods

Assembling cities and projects: Mixed empirical methodologies for planning research

Laura Lieto
(Federico II University Italy)
lieto@unina.it

Davide Ponzini
(Politecnico di Milano, Italy)
davide.ponzini@polimi.it

The session engages planning's constitutive tension toward multiple disciplinary domains by looking in particular at actor-network theory and assemblage thinking. The main purpose is to provide new theoretical and practical insights for planners, designers, and policy makers (rather than theorists and methodologists alone) regarding the socio-material assemblage of urban projects and places. From a methodological standpoint, the workshop approaches the city as more than a mere collection of humans, institutions, and built forms. Rather, it focuses on the city as a collaboration – or assemblage – of humans, material objects, nature, and technologies. Crucial to the assemblage are both the norms and regulations that mediate the relationships among human and non-human actors, as well as the everyday city. In this framework, urban projects are interpreted as situated practices of collective city-making rather than the mere enactment of predetermined rules and designs. The workshop draws on multiple examples and provides a set of mixed methods to help young researchers deal with the empirical while critically investigating the city and its evolution.

Keywords

Actor-Network Theory; Assemblage; Mixed-Method Approach

Suggested Readings

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