

VERA SMIRNOVA

Kansas State University
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EDUCATION

- BA and MA in Architecture and Urban Studies, Vologda State Technical University, Russia, 2010
- Master of Science in “Environment-Behavior and Place Studies,” funded by the Fulbright Graduate Scholarship (IIE, US Department of State), College of Architecture, Planning & Design, Kansas State University, 2014
- PhD in “Planning, Governance, and Globalization,” School of Public and International Affairs, Virginia Tech, 2018

RESEARCH INTERESTS

Political geography, geopolitics, land grabbing, property regimes, Russian, Eastern European, and Eurasian studies

ACADEMIC POSITIONS

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| 2024- | Assistant Professor (tenure track) of Geography and Political Science, Kansas State University, Manhattan, KS |
| 2020-2024 | Visiting Assistant Professor of Geography and Political Science, Kansas State University, Manhattan, KS |
| 2022- | Adjunct Researcher, Center for Russian, East European, and Eurasian Studies, University of Kansas, Lawrence, KS |
| 2018-2020 | Postdoctoral Researcher, Faculty of Urban and Regional Development, National Research University Higher School of Economics, Moscow, Russia |
| 2014-2018 | Research Assistant, Global Forum on Urban and Regional Resilience, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Blacksburg, VA |

PUBLICATIONS

Peer-reviewed publications:

Smirnova, V. (in press). Statecraft through land: Land abandonment and land theft in Russian property regimes. *Global Studies Quarterly*

- Smirnova, V.** (in press). Geopolitics of land tenure in the territorial governance of occupation. In Jeffrey, A. & Klosterkamp, S. (eds), *Research Handbook on Legal Geography*. Edward Elgar Publishing
- Smirnova, V.** (2025). Constructing and contesting identities in Russian area studies debates. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, <https://doi.org/10.1111/tran.70031>
- Smirnova, V.** (2023). Russia's spatial anxiety and the production of geographical knowledge. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 48(4), pp. 816-820.
- Smirnova, V.** & Golubchikov, O. (2023). More-than-state ontologies of territory: Commoning, assembling, peopling. *Annals of the American Association of Geographers*, 113(6), pp. 1444-1460.
- Toto, R., Grabkowska, M., Nientied, P., **Smirnova, V.** & Dragović, S. (2023). The Uncommonness of Urban Commons in Central and Eastern European Countries. *International Journal of the Commons*, 17(1), pp. 155–173.
- Smirnova, V.** (2022). From the commune to the 'borderless world'. Russian perceptions of land and ownership, special issue on Conjunctural Geographies of Postsocialist and Postcolonial Conditions: Theory Thirty Years after 1989, *Connections. A Journal for Historians and Area Specialists*, 11.11.2022.
- Smirnova, V.** & Adrianova, E. (2022). From systemic underdevelopment to basic urban maintenance: National priority projects in the Russian periphery. *Changing Societies & Personalities*, 6(2), pp. 433-454.
- Smirnova, V.** (2022). Socialist and post-socialist urbanisms: critical reflections from a global perspective, edited by Lisa B.W. Drummond and Douglas Young, Toronto, Canada, University of Toronto Press. *Eurasian Geography and Economics*, 63(3), pp. 1-3.
- Zupan, D., **Smirnova, V.**, & Zadorian, A. (2021). Governing through stolichnaya praktika: Housing renovation from Moscow to the regions. *Geoforum*, 120, pp. 155-164.
- Smirnova, V.**, Lawrence, J.L., & Bohland, J. (2021). The critical turn of resilience: Mapping thematic communities and modes of critical scholarship. *Geographical Journal*, 187(1), pp. 16-27.
- Smirnova, V.** & Zupan, D. (2020). Introduction: The City Between Center and Periphery. *Urban Studies and Practices*, 4(2), pp. 7-20.
- Smirnova, V.** (2019). Territory, enclosure, and state territorial mode of production in the Russian periphery. *Geographica Helvetica*, 1(74), pp. 13-25.

Non-peer reviewed articles and policy memos:

- Zupan, D., **Smirnova, V.**, & Zadorian, A. (2021). Stolitschnaja Praktika: Das Moskauer Wohnraum Sanierungsprogramm soll auf die Regionen ausgedehnt werden

[Stolichnaya Praktika: The Moscow housing redevelopment program is to be extended to the regions]. *Russland-Analysen*, 399, pp. 2-6.

Smirnova, V. (2019). "Spatialities of land enclosure in the Russian imperial and socialist periphery," in Camprag, N. & Suri, A. (eds.). *Three decades of post-socialist transition. Conference Proceedings*. Darmstadt: TU Prints.

Smirnova, V. (2017). "On the land-crisis nexus: Commodification of nature as a means of crisis management," in Stephenson, M. & Kirakosyan, L. (eds.). *RE: Reflections and Explorations: A forum for deliberative dialogue*. Blacksburg: Virginia Tech Institute for Policy and Governance.

Smirnova, V. & Guerra, V. (2017). Placemaking revisited. *Community Change*, 1(1), pp. 68-72.

Smirnova, V. (2016). Resilience of capitalist urbanism: Transformation of American cities at the expense of social equity. *Journal of Architecture and Construction of Russia*, 1(2), pp. 76-82.

GRANTS, AWARDS, & FELLOWSHIPS

2025 DASH (Design, Arts, Social Sciences and Humanities) Award, Kansas State University (\$10,000)

2024 Faculty Development Award (funding declined due to visa issues), Office of Research Development, Kansas State University (\$2,200)

Open Book Award, Alternative Textbook Initiative, Kansas State University (\$5,000)

Great Plains Residential Fellowship, Center for Russian and Eastern European Studies, University of Kansas (\$1,500)

2023 Jones Family Award, Department of Political Science, Kansas State University, (\$5,000)

Great Plains Residential Fellowship, Center for Russian and Eastern European Studies, University of Kansas (\$1,000)

2022 Jones Family Award, Department of Political Science, Kansas State University (\$4,000)

2019 Erasmus+ Mobility Program exchange grant, Cardiff University, School of Geography and Planning

Antipode Foundation travel grant, the Institute for the Geographies of Justice, Mexico City, Mexico

2018 IJURR Research Foundation Dissertation writing-up grant (\$7,410)

2015 The Metropolitan Institute travel award, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University

2014 John F. Helm Award for an outstanding thesis, leadership, and service, Kansas State University

Fulbright Scholarship, Russia-US Foreign Student Program, for pursuing graduate degree in the US, 2012-2014

2010 International Public Organization for Promoting Architectural Education, award for an outstanding thesis at the XIX international review, Russia

International Union of Architects, award for an outstanding thesis at the XIX international review, Russia

INVITED TALKS & WORKSHOPS

2025 Workshop participant, *The Routledge Handbook of Land Questions* (virtual participation), June 12, 2025

Invited discussant, keynote talk by Erin McElroy, Silicon Valley Imperialism: Techno Fantasies and Frictions in Postsocialist Times, *Capitalist Transformations in Eastern and Central Europe* (virtual participation), May 20, 2025

2024 *Land Theft and Land Abandonment: Property Question in Authoritarian Regimes*, in the workshop on Grounding IR: The Land Question in International Politics, Central and East European International Studies Association, Cres, Croatia, June 16

Spatial Modes and Contingencies of Russian Re-Colonization, in the Great Plains roundtable, Center for Russian Eastern European and Eurasian Studies, University of Kansas, Lawrence, March 8

Territorial Regimes and Spatial Forms of Russian De- and Re-Colonization, Geosciences Colloquium, University of Arkansas, Fayetteville, February 23

2023 Workshop participant, research group War Effects on Food systems and Environment, East-European Studies Institute, FU Berlin, September 27

Interview for the *Urban Political Podcast*, "Urban Lives of Property" podcast series, eds. Hanna Hilbrandt and Markus Kip, June 14

Security Studies panel on Anniversary of the Russian Invasion of Ukraine, Kansas State University, February 24

2022 Keynote speaker (canceled due to visa issues), Regional Studies Association Central and Eastern Europe, Leibniz Institute for Regional Geography, Germany, September 15

Panelist (with Kristine Beurskens, Špela Zorko, & Monika Bobako), "In Need for More Exchange: An Open Discussion on Research Collaboration Between East and West", Regional Studies Association Central and Eastern Europe Annual Conference, Leibniz Institute for Regional Geography, Germany, September 15

Security Studies panel on The Russian Invasion of Ukraine: How we got here and what to expect next, Kansas State University, March 4

The Idea and the Practice of Territory in Russian Political and Geographic Thought, Center for Russian Eastern European and Eurasian Studies, University of Kansas, January 30

- 2021 *Land Enclosure: Contested Histories, Narratives, and Practices*, Planning Against Property reading group, April 11
Invited discussant, virtual symposium on Entangled Ontologies, Decoloniality, and Decolonization, Virginia Tech, March 4
- 2020 *Stolichnaya Praktika: Housing Renovation from Moscow to the Regions*, Decolonizing Eastern European Studies group, The New School for Social Research, December 11
Political Technologies of Property in Russia, Research Laboratory of Urban Sociology, Higher School of Economics, Moscow, May 29
- 2019 *More-than-state Ontologies of Territory: Decolonizing Political Geographic Perspectives from a Russian Standpoint*, colloquium for Economic and Political Geographies Research Group, Cardiff University, School of Geography and Planning, May 20
Critical Discourse Analysis in Urbanism, Research Laboratory “Inequalities in new residential areas in Moscow”, Faculty of Urban and Regional Affairs, Higher School of Economics, Moscow, April 5
The Concept of Territory in Political Geography, Research Seminar “Cultural landscapes of cities”, Faculty of Urban and Regional Affairs, Higher School of Economics, Moscow, April 15
- 2018 *Collective mobilizations of urban space in times of crisis*, workshop on Participatory Development in Cities and Regions, Institute of Geography, Russian Academy of Sciences, Moscow, November 14

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

- 2025 Conference paper, “The geopolitics of land cadaster”, annual convention of the *Association for Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies*, Washington DC, November 20-23, 2025
Conference paper, “From abandonment to theft: Statecraft through land”, 11th *International Urban Geographies of Post-Communist States Conference*, Tirana, Albania, September 22-24, 2025
Conference paper, “Organized abandonment in land: Property as infrastructure of occupation”, annual conference of the *American Association of Geographers*, Detroit, March 24-28, 2025
- 2024 *Organized abandonment in land: Property as infrastructure of occupation*, Annual Convention of the Association for Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies, Boston, November 20
- 2023 *Land theft and land abandonment: Property question and the war in Ukraine*, Annual Meeting of the American Association of Geographers, Denver, March 23
Property question in authoritarian regimes, Annual Convention of the Association for Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies, Philadelphia, November 30

- 2022 *Colonial legacies of mestorazvitie*, Annual Convention of the Association for Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies, Chicago, November 10
- Postsocialist-postcolonial junction on the question of land, property, and ownership*, Regional Studies Association Central and Eastern Europe Annual Conference, Leibniz Institute for Regional Geography, Germany, September 15
- Spatial anxiety as a national idea*, Annual Meeting of the American Association of Geographers, February 26
- 2021 *Commoning, assembling, and ordering: Territory in Russia's political and geographic thought*, RGS-IBG Annual International Conference, London, UK, September 1
- More-than-state ontologies of territory*, Political Geography Specialty Group Pre-Conference at the Annual Meeting of the American Association of Geographers, January 6
- 2020 *Russia's decolonial approaches to property*, conference on Conjunctural Geographies of Postsocialist and Postcolonial Conditions: Theory Thirty Years after 1989, Leibniz Institute for Regional Geography, Germany, May 14-16 and December 4-5
- 2019 *Territory from Russian political geographic perspectives*, 8th International Urban Geographies of Post-communist States Conference, Belgrade, Serbia, September 25
- Spatialities of post-socialist land enclosure*, International Conference on Cities and Change "Three Decades of Post-Socialist Transition", TU Darmstadt, Germany, May 17
- Political technologies of post-socialist property regimes*, Annual Meeting of the American Association of Geographers, Washington DC, April 3-4
- 2018 *Territories of dispossession in the Russian frontier*, Annual Meeting of the American Association of Geographers, New Orleans, April 10
- Territorial formations of the frontier: Extralegal appropriation, border materialities, and land in the imperial Siberia*, Annual Dimensions of Political Ecology Conference, Lexington, February 22
- 2017 *On the territorialization of crisis*, Annual Meeting of the American Association of Geographers, Boston, April 5
- 2016 *The land-crisis nexus: Enclosure and territorialization of landed relations in the late Tsarist and post-Soviet Moscow*, Regional Studies Association Winter Conference, London, November 24
- Urban metabolism in the time of capitalist crisis*, Annual Meeting of the American Association of Geographers, San Francisco, March 29
- 2015 *On the political economy of urban metabolic transformations*, poster presentation, Annual Meeting of the American Association of Geographers, Chicago, March 5

- 2011 *Socio-Spatial Approach to Public Housing*, poster presentation, Death and Life of Social Factors international conference, UC Berkeley, February 5

ORGANIZATION OF PANELS & SESSIONS

- 2025 Session organizer (with Jonathan McCombs), "Land and Property: Postsocialist and Postcolonial Dialogues," Annual Meeting of the American Association of Geographers, Detroit, March 24
- 2024 Session organizer (with Zhivka Valiavicharska), "Left Perspectives on State Socialism IV: Land, Soil, Communes, and the Rural," Annual Convention of the Association for Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies, Boston, November 21
- 2023 Session organizer (with Megan Dixon), "Words for mapping Eurasia: Vectors of colonization and nation-state formation," Annual Meeting of the American Association of Geographers, Philadelphia, March 23
- Discussant, "Environment and (de)colonisation," Annual Convention of the Association for Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies, Philadelphia, December 1
- 2022 Session organizer (with Megan Dixon), "Contingencies of Russian colonization: Looking up from the ground," Annual Convention of the Association for Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies, Chicago, November 10
- Session organizer (with Daria Volkova & Guenola Inizan), "Property regimes in and across the Central and Eastern Europe", Regional Studies Association Central and Eastern Europe Annual Conference, Leibniz Institute for Regional Geography, Germany, September 15
- Session organizer (with Alan Ingram & Jeffrey Whyte), "Russia, Eurasia, and the West in and beyond the New Cold War," Annual Meeting of the American Association of Geographers, February 25
- 2021 Session organizer (with Jeffrey Whyte), "The 'new Cold War' and return of geopolitics," RGS-IBG Annual International Conference, London, September 1
- Session organizer (with Jeremy Tasch), "Reimagining post-socialist political geographies," Annual Meeting of the American Association of Geographers, April 7
- 2019 Workshop organizer (with Daniela Zupan), "Urban practices in the context of Russian center-periphery relations," Urban Research and Practices journal, Faculty of Urban and Regional Research, Higher School of Economics, Moscow, June 5
- Session organizer (with Daniela Zupan), "New patterns of land appropriation in the post-socialist space," International Conference on Cities and Change "Three Decades of Post-Socialist Transition", TU Darmstadt, Germany, May 18

- 2018 Session organizer (with Jared Keyel), “Contesting border formation(s): Territory, Resistance, Crisis,” Annual Meeting of the American Association of Geographers, New Orleans, April 5-9
- 2016 Discussant, “Territory and practice (Economic malaise, social consequences),” Regional Studies Association Winter Conference, London, November 24
 Workshop assistant (with Jennifer Lawrence, James Bohland, and Simin Davoudi), “Risk, fear and resilience: Implications for societies, communities, and individuals,” Global Forum for Urban and Regional Resilience, Arlington, September 5
- 2015 Workshop assistant (with David Bieri, Paul Knox, James Bohland, and Jennifer Lawrence), “Critical perspectives in post-crisis resilience,” Steger Center for International Scholarship, Riva San Vitale, Switzerland, July 5
- 2014 Workshop assistant (with James Bohland and Paul Knox), “Normative dimensions of resilience,” Global Forum on Urban and Regional Resilience, Arlington, October 14

TEACHING

Kansas State University

GEOG 100 World Geography and Globalization
 GEOG 200 Human Geography
 GEOG 480 Topics in Geography: Power, Justice, and the City
 GEOG 750 Urban Geography
 GEOG/POLSC 550 Political Geography and Geopolitics
 POLSC 630 Politics of Russia and the Former Soviet Union

Higher School of Economics, Russia (graduate courses)

Readings in Urbanity
 Critical Discourse Analysis in Urbanism
 Contemporary Issues in Urban Development
 City in the Periphery: Governance, Legacy, and Theory

Virginia Tech

ARCH 4034 Building Cities
 UAP 5104 Urban and Regional Development Theory

SERVICE

University Service

- 2024- Member of the International Overlay committee, College of Arts and Sciences, Kansas State University
- 2019-2020 Member of the University Scientific Committee, Shukhov Lab, National Research University Higher School of Economics, Moscow, Russia

Member of the University Scientific Committee, Faculty of Urban and Regional Development, National Research University Higher School of Economics, Moscow, Russia

Departmental Service

- 2024- Member of the Graduate Admissions committee, Department of Geography, Kansas State University
- Member of the Student Awards committee, Department of Geography, Kansas State University
- Open House and Hallway Displays organizer, Department of Geography, Kansas State University
- Member of the Engagement and Outreach committee, Department of Political Science, Kansas State University
- Member of the Retention committee, Department of Political Science, Kansas State University

Academic Community Service

- 2024- Chair of the Eurasian Geography Specialty Group, American Association of Geographers
- 2023- Organizer of the PE-EECA listserv (Political Ecology in Eastern Europe and Central Asia) (with Alexander Vorbrugg, Mihai Varga, Katarina Kusic)
- Member of the WEF international research network (War Effects on Food systems and Environment)
- Member and participant of the Global Land Program
- 2016-2018 Co-Editor-in-Chief, "Community Change" graduate student journal, Institute for Policy and Governance, Virginia Tech
- 2016-2017 Graduate assistant, Virginia Tech Honors College
- 2014-2018 Member, "Community Voices," graduate student and community initiative, Institute for Policy and Governance, Virginia Tech
- Interviewer, "Trustees without Borders" podcast produced by the Institute for Policy and Governance, Virginia Tech

Journal Peer-Review Service

ACME: An International Journal for Critical Geographies
Annals of the American Association of Geographers
Area
Demokratizatsiya: The Journal of Post-Soviet Democratization
Environment and Planning C: Politics and Space
European Spatial Research and Policy
Eurasian Geography and Economics
Geoforum
Geographical Journal

Geography Teacher
Globalizations
Journal of Historical Geography
Moravian Geographical Reports by the Czech Academy of Sciences
Political Science Quarterly
Urban Planning
Urban Studies
Urban Studies and Practices, Higher School of Economics, Moscow

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

American Association of Geographers

*Eurasian Geography Specialty Group; Political Geography Specialty Group;
Urban Geography Specialty Group*

Association for Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies