



SESSION ABSTRACT

Taking a Break - Anthropological Reflections on Resting while Travelling

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Abstract: How do we engage with our surroundings when we take a break from travel? As our globalised world continues to produce masses of mobile people, this panel explores how people on the move experience breaks during travelling. To do this, we leave behind any social paradigm that presumes mobility as a deviant way of life. On the contrary, we consider being mobile an ordinary status from which voluntary or forced, planned or improvised breaks are taken. For the panel, we seek to understand how breaks from travel are provisioned on the spot and in synergy with adjacent communities and environments.

Inspired by Kurt Beck's account of the Forty Days Road in Sudan (2013, 2017), we invite contributors to reflect with us on the role and practices of pausing from travel. Different travel occasions and means of travel are taken into account and allow for a qualified discussion on holding, waiting and interrupting journeys. Sticking with how people interact with, shape and are shaped by the environments surrounding them when having a break, we envision moving beyond phenomenological perspectives. Approaches we find promising, advocate for or contest concepts such as 'rootedness along the way' (Saxinger 2021) and 'mooring' (Urry 2007), 'uncertainties' in waiting (Janeja & Bandak 2020; Bauman 2006), and/or 'sociality' in (im)mobility (Amit 2015).

SESSION SCHEDULE

Wednesday, September 28, 2022 | Slot 2 | Room 2

Johanna Markkula: Navigating Interruptions: Maritime passages and blockages onboard merchant ships

Manuel Moser: The Never Ending Road of Truck Drivers? Waiting and transitory dwelling in German and Bolivian logistical networks

Michael Anranter: "Do not help them" About Stopping Over to Buy an eVignette at the Rest Stop

Ria-Maria Adams: Waiting for Northern Lights: Young Lifestyle Migrants in Finnish Lapland

SESSION PAPERS

Navigating Interruptions: Maritime passages and blockages onboard merchant ships

Johanna Markkula

Merchant ships are mobile worksites, however, life onboard them is as much shaped by breaks and interruptions as it is by movement. When Ever Given, one of the world's largest container ships, ran aground and blocked the Suez Canal for six days in March 2021, it dramatically brought to light the fragile dependency of global trade on maritime infrastructures. The massive media attention it attracted seemed to suggest exceptionality. Yet, interruptions are part and parcel of shipping's normal workings. In this 'friction' (Tsing 2005) – the physical term for the tension between something that moves and something that hinders that movement – new forms of sociality emerge. In this paper, I draw on ethnography from onboard merchant ships to reflect on maritime passages and blockages and the particular social worlds that emerge through them. For those on and around ships, navigating blockages, interruptions and breaks often entails forming various social constellations, collaborative practices, and relations of exchange. Being stuck, far from home, in port or out at sea, seafarers creatively engage with their environment and with other people they encounter in these situations, such as authorities, pilots, boatmen, and peddlers, who, at times facilitate, at times obstruct ships' passages. Through this ethnographic lens, I make visible the intersecting dynamics of mobility and immobility, flow and friction, and connection and isolation that permeate the contemporary maritime, and which shape, and are shaped by, the different forms of sociality that emerge in and around ships.

The Never Ending Road of Truck Drivers? Waiting and transitory dwelling in German and Bolivian logistical networks.

Manuel Moser

If we believe in Vilém Flusser's prophecy, soon we will all live as "happy new men" in mobile homes constantly on the road. Therefore, from whom to learn better how to dwell in these mobile times of (post-)modernity than from long-distance truck drivers who already nowadays live the life of the future? Transporting cargo across nation-states, they provide societies in Europe and abroad with practically everything and keep our industries buzzing. However this presupposes them to be far away from their

places of origin for the majority of their lifetime, so how do they deal with being on the move constantly while never arriving?

In my paper, I will discuss how Bolivian and German truck drivers dwell on highway rest areas and other logistical transit places. My contribution will analyse how different material (e.g. roads) and immaterial (e.g. laws) infrastructures facilitate and limit their transitory dwelling. The truck's body and its interior space are crucial counterparts when it comes to (re)build a comfortable surrounding where one can rest. However, it is obviously not the only one: Local communities, co-drivers of different nationalities, facilities for basic human needs (e.g. toilets, showers, restaurants), but also super-human protectors, are important collaborators of many drivers in their efforts to build and constantly rebuild homes on the road.

“Do not help them.” About Stopping Over to Buy an eVignette at the Rest Stop Michael Anranter

My colleagues were always offered help when the drivers came to the petrol station for a short break. They took time to explain the course of the road and inform them of its condition. They helped to remedy minor defects and, if necessary, arranged where drivers could get technical or administrative assistance. There was only one type of break, it seemed, that was not welcome: the stop needed to buy the e-vignette. All of a sudden, as my observations showed, hospitality was gone. Thus, the terminal for the e-vignette is the starting point for my contribution.

As pointed out by several scholars (e.g. Dalakoglou 2010, 2012), roads and their associated infrastructure are linked to the state and state administration. And indeed, one can think of sanitation prescriptions, price fixings for specific product classes, and prescribed stocks for basic commodities at service areas. Also, my interlocutors frequently interacted with state authorities stopping over at the service area. It is the contemporality of smooth interaction between service area staff members and state authorities, but unmet acceptance of the intertwining of the state, roads, and associated infrastructure that raises the question of why, while waiting for the e-vignette, the mood was tense and willingness to support had disappeared.

In my contribution, I answer the question why state-imposed disruptions in transport and travel change the environments and contexts, but also forms of interaction with local people. The absence of taken-for-granted support for drivers, I argue, reveals a conflict of responsibility that affected the employees' attitudes towards hospitality at a service areas, but also a shift in the relationship between roads (site of movement) and rest stops (site of waiting and pausing) itself.

Waiting for Northern Lights: Young Lifestyle Migrants in Finnish Lapland Ria-Maria Adams

This presentation focuses on young lifestyle migrants in Finnish Lapland who, despite the general tendency of local youth to migrate from the region, have decided to move to the Arctic. The migrants of this study are described as active agents of their own fate; they distinguish themselves from refugees or work migrants in having made a conscious choice to move to a place they consider worth living in. The results of this ethnographic, long-term research show that a strong connection to nature and nature-based leisure activities are main drivers for young lifestyle migrants. One such activity

that will be highlighted in this presentation concerns the young lifestyle migrants experiences on waiting for the northern lights to light up in the Arctic skies. Hence, this presentation discusses the newcomers' perceptions of the building blocks of a good and meaningful life in a geographically remote area, with social media channels playing an essential role as a platform promoting a particular lifestyle. The research seeks out to present the range of ways in which young migrants construct their lives - lives that run counter to the predominant narrative emphasising hardships of integration and adjustment as an immigrant. In identifying young people who have moved to the Arctic, a region with high living costs and a harsh climate, the research challenges the prevailing argument in the lifestyle migration debate whereby middle-class people move to places with lower living costs and sunny climates.