SESSION ABSTRACT

Human entanglements with infrastructures: mobility, sociality, and the built environment

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Despite long histories of colonization, arctic and subarctic areas have (re)appeared as new resource frontiers of the 21st century. With the advancement of resource extraction and construction technologies as well as the increasing attention of developers, politicians and other stakeholders, new transportation and industrial infrastructures are imagined, planned and built. They physically change the landscapes by affecting local and indigenous land use practices and mobility regimes and boosting the growth of urban infrastructure and industrial settlements along its way. Large-scale infrastructure projects produce networks of human and non-human actors, including resource extraction companies, state bodies, NGOs and other interest groups, as well as tracks, rails, mines, financial and natural resources, etc. These constellations are formed and reconfigured in the process of negotiations about development plans, distribution of benefits, and access to resources and particular infrastructure services.

In this panel we use the notions of "hard" infrastructures (rails, roads, pipes, ports, buildings) and "soft" ones (social institutions and groups, interactions and knowledge) in order to address co-production of material structures (of the built environment) and social networks. Questions we intend to explore may be related to the roles of state and private investors in infrastructure projects; benefits, "fly-over effects" and other impacts on local communities; practices of land use, mobility, and sociality induced by new infrastructures; and other material and affective interactions of humans with infrastructure. We invite papers in the fields of infrastructure and materiality studies, social impact assessments, STS or Actor Network Theory involving both present-day and historical investigations. While the regional focus of the panel is on arctic and subarctic regions, we actively encourage comparative studies in other "remote" areas, in the Global South and elsewhere.

SESSION SCHEDULE

Friday, September 21, 2018 | Slot 6 | Room 4

Peter Schweitzer: *Remoteness and the Built Environment: Historic and Ethnographic Examples of Railroads in Russia and Alaska*

Dennis Zuev: *Implications of Infrastructure and Technological Change for Lifestyles in Siberia*

Olgs Povoroznyuk: *Affective Infrastructure: Memories and Expectations at a (Post)-Socialist Railroad*

Mikhail Garder: *Moscow subruban railway network at the homeless population's service*

Gertrude Saxinger: *Mining in the Yukon - Multilocal lives and multiple meanings of places in the (re)making of a resource frontier and the (un)making of remoteness*

Friday, September 21, 2018 | Slot 7 | Room 4

Sigrid Schiesser: *When will the train arrive? On expecting infrastructural futures in Sakha, Siberia*

Tobias Holzlehner: *Forensic Infrastructure. Reconstructing Structural Violence and Resistance through material assemblages*

Tatiana Evseeva: *Connecting Transportation Infrastructure and City Regional Governance: The Case of Cardiff City Region*

Gertraud Illmeier: *Changing Paths and other Transformations of Siberian Landscapes and Lifeways*

SESSION PAPERS

Remoteness and the Built Environment: Historic and Ethnographic Examples of Railroads in Russia and Alaska

Schweitzer, Peter (Institut für Kultur- und Sozialanthropologie, Wien, AUT)

Contrary to some geopolitical scenarios and globalizing development plans, the circumpolar North is not a frozen wasteland but a region with a long history of human habitation and an even longer history of flora and fauna. Given the sensitivity of arctic and subarctic ecosystems, the amplified impacts of climate change in the North, as well as the dynamics of remote human settlements, the construction of railroads can be expected to have even bigger impacts there than elsewhere. It can be argued that the development and construction of railroads in the 19th century was primarily driven by the attraction of cheap and fast transport of resources and goods. Human mobility, originally an afterthought, became central to rail projects at a much later stage and primarily in and between urban areas. Obviously, remote and sparsely populated regions – such as the Arctic – are no exception here. On the contrary, it can be argued that railroad construction plans in the Arctic, of which there is an increasing number in the 21st century, continue to be driven by resource extraction and the transport of goods and commodities. Our case studies come from Russia and Alaska, with an ethnographic emphasis on an ongoing research project in eastern Siberia. The goal of the presentation is to explore the materiality and sociality of transportation infrastructures in remote regions.

Implications of Infrastructure and Technological Change for Lifestyles in Siberia

Zuev, Dennis (CIES-ISCTE-IUL, Lisbon)

The aim of this presentation is to prepare the ground for understanding how the changing habits in mobility and use of media technology have contributed to the pluralisation of lifestyles in Siberia. The presentation is fed by the need to reflect on technological changes which have directly influenced peoples' lives in Siberia. An experiential autoethnographic approach usually absent in descriptions of infrastructure and technology in the Soviet Union and Russian Federation is used along with the data collected during fieldwork in 2011-2013 in several cities in Siberia and the Far East (Krasnoyarsk, Irkutsk and Vladivostok). The article focuses on infrastructural changes and compares data on infrastructural change collected within the project "Conditions and Limitations of Lifestyle Plurality" (2010-2013), funded by Max-Planck Society.

The article discusses the changing habits in mobility in the context of the most salient trends in post-Soviet infrastructural change: 1) a shift towards individual means of transportation, and increasing prominence of automobility culture; 2) rapid decrease of aviation to remote settlements and their isolation; 3) decrease in passenger rail transportation as air-travel has becomes more affordable to big urban centres, 4) the introduction and rapid expansion of mobile telephony into nearly all parts of Siberia and highly unequal access to the Internet across regions.

Affective Infrastructure: Memories and Expectations at a (Post)-Socialist Railroad

Povoroznyuk, Olga (Institut für Kultur- und Sozialanthropologie, Wien, AUT)

The Baikal-Amur Mainline (BAM) is a railway line built in the northern areas of East Siberia and the Russian Far East for strategic and economic reasons in the 1970s and 1980s. The construction of the BAM in the late socialist period was accompanied by communist propaganda, a mass population influx and the formation of new groups and identities. As a result, the railroad has become a largest technological and social engineering project, filled with the myths and promises of mobility, connectivity and modernization. The economic reforms, ideological and political shifts of the 1990s interrupted Soviet development and construction plans. Unfinished buildings and tracks left behind and underutilized cargo capacity of the mainline caused public disillusion and skepticism towards the state and its grand BAM project.

The recently launched state program "BAM-2" fueled by resource extraction interests of state and private stakeholders evokes the feelings of nostalgia, hope and expectation of new development. The ideology of the current railroad modernization program largely draws on Soviet discourses and myths appealing to memories of the socialist past. Aimed at the construction of the once projected and started second track and renovation of railway stations, BAM-2 is also a material continuation of the Soviet construction plans. However, new economic realities and fragmentary investments, fuzzy decision making and financial management makes the scale of the modernization program incomparable to the massive Soviet urban and railway infrastructure development.

The railroad reconstruction process shapes networks of actors – local and Moscow-based railroad offices, construction companies, former builders of the BAM, administrations and residents, as well as trains, tracks, stations, building machinery and financial flows. New expectations evoked by references to the glorified socialist project, competition for allocation of resources and contested visions of regional development make the railroad an affective infrastructure. The paper is informed by archival and ethnographic data gathered in the region and focuses on the temporality of infrastructure in the production and translation of memories, emotions and identities at large-scale development projects in socialist and post-socialist Russia.

Moscow subruban railway network at the homeless population�s service

Garder, Mikhail (Russian State University for the Humanities, Moscow, RUS)

Designed for comfortable and convenient commuting, Moscow electric train thoroughfares grant a range of marvellous opportunities to "free-riders", specifically the homeless. Besides providing them with a space to stay overnight, it also builds into the wider all-Russia network of electric trains that, though not intended for the purpose, serve as a means of free hop-on/hop-off nearly omnireaching transportation. I'd like to concentrate on the more localized intracity function of the railway network in the daily activities of Moscow's homeless.

Commuter trains running between Moscow city centre and towns in Moscow region are in many ways convenient for my homeless informants: they provide shelter in the colder seasons and a place to stay overnight, the latter function relevant nearly all year round. Drawing from my observations and numerous interviews, I assume that commuter longer-route electric trains that don't terminate at central stations but take a 2-3 hour journey through Moscow are one of the most convenient, accessible and multifunctional urban railway infrastructure elements for the homeless staying in Moscow. Loner routes mean longer sleeping or resting hours, which is crucial for the precariously housed. However, many of the homeless in Moscow retain the qualities often assigned to them, such as frequent alcohol consumption, soiled and smelly clothes, etc. This, coupled with their fairly standard violation of transportation payment rules, cannot but make room for conflicts with both the "legal" commuters and "the system", impersonated first of all by security personnel, fare collectors and the police.

These conflicts and police raids on homeless occupying commuter trains are however surprisingly sporadical and in the long run seem to represent part of an established system rather than a deviation from it. I mean that electric commuter trains are the most homeless tolerating transport environment compared to any means of Moscow public transport (buses, trams, trolleybuses and metro, in the first place).

My primary explanation for this is that commuter trains, running to and from Moscow suburbs and out-of-Moscow destinations are a periphery – spatially, socially and politically. Spatially speaking, this periphery is defined by the mere principle of its destinations that belong to the regional rather than the solely Moscow environment. In terms of social (and cultural) differentiation, commuter trains have long been marginalized alongside their destinations as poorer and lower class attributes. In municipal politics, suburban railway network is again at the periphery, a network shadowed by prioritized intercity and incity transportation issues. The curious part of the story is that despite the increasingly strict control over fare-payment rules on commuter trains, one or two cars on the thoroughway "long-distance" trains are virtually reserved by the homeless, a fact known to both security personnel and commuters, who avoid boarding the first or last car on certain trains. Security personnel, finding an "obviously homeless" passenger, would make him or her move to the "homeless" first or last car of the commuter train.

Thus, despite the municipal attempts to make transportation tules more rigid, the illegal homeless users of the infrastructure still continue to use it, being, on the one hand, illegal, while on the other, with all the illegality, made invisible by other actors and at the same time entitled to the use of railway transportation network.

Mining in the Yukon - Multilocal lives and multiple meanings of places in the (re)making of a resource frontier and the (un)making of remoteness
Saxinger, Gertrude (Institut für Kultur- und Sozialanthropologie, Wien, AUT)

The mobile lifestyle of fly-in/fly-out (FIFO) and rotational shift workers in general is considered as being multilocal since it involves circular living in and between two meaningful places: home and on site. This paper tackles First Nation and non-indigenous mining workforce in the Yukon Territory. The synchronic place attachment, i.e. multilocality between home and on site, is complemented by the structural condition of multiple meanings of place in the regions of mineral extraction. While for the transient incomers the Yukon has the significance of a resource frontier, the region is the "land" for the Indigenous where subsistence and stewardship of the land takes place. In this sense the region itself has a multilocal component since different groups of people are differently attached to the same place. Beyond this obvious division of meanings of the land, the (growing number of) indigenous workforce is confronted to negotiate the two symbolic and economic meanings of this very locale. On the one hand they earn their wages in the mines, on the other hand they pursue a hunting and fishing way of life in the mining region. This paper asks if increased indigenous involvement in mining can help to unmake "remoteness". It also shows the conceptual fruitfulness of "multilocality" for mobilities and spatial studies.

When will the train arrive? On expecting infrastructural futures in Sakha, Siberia
Schiesser, Sigrid (Institut für Kultur- und Sozialanthropologie, Wien, AUT)

Railroad connections may be taken for granted in large parts of Europe. In the Megino-Kangalasskiy region in Sakha (Yakutiya) however, people have been waiting for a passenger connection to be opened for more than a decade. Applying ethnographic methods, in 2015 and 2016 I researched people´s expectations of their future lives in a rapidly changing material and social environment. The railroad development not only brings about a changing landscape as well as progressive urban development and recently implemented educational opportunities in the railroad industry, it also triggers enthusiasm, hopes and dreams as well as fears and disapproval. In this way, it causes intrinsic and societal debates on lifestyles and tradition as well as on immigration and connectivity. Anyhow, individuals include the railroad into their future life plans, no matter if people have a positive, negative or mixed attitude towards the developments. While 'waiting' is frequently thought of something rather passive, in my paper I will show that 'waiting' and 'anticipating' is an active process. Furthermore, I will provide a critical elaboration of the anthropological notion of 'waiting' and discuss the manifold ways individuals throughout different age and social groups handle the fact that their region will be connected to the Russian railroad network.

Forensic Infrastructure:: Reconstructing Structural Violence and Resistance through material assemblages
Holzlehner, Tobias (Martin-Luther University Halle-Wittenberg, Halle (Saale), GER)

The native coastal population of Chukotka was subjected to a twofold loss in the twentieth century: the large-scale, state induced and enforced closures of many native villages, the subsequent, resettlement of the population to centralized villages, and the following collapse of the Soviet economy and infrastructure. The maritime landscape of Chukotka is a coast gone lonesome. Prehistoric villages, abandoned border guard stations, blind lighthouses, former Soviet whale processing plants, and contemporary hunting camps in old settlements remain. Yet, extraordinary resilience as well as novel strategies of coping with loss and industrial collapse created new forms of communities, where the re-use and re-settlement of previously abandoned village sites play a paramount role.

What becomes of a place when it has been abandoned? What of the attachment to and the sense of place when one is forcibly removed from the dwelling? How do people nowadays relate to and life in the ruins of the past? The build environment is evidence and means of violence at the same time. Reading in the material remains of the past, the paper investigates the transformations of a coastline, whose intricate settlement history traces back for thousands of years. As an ethnography in and of ruins, it attempts to explore the relationships between people, settlements, infrastructure and landscape through time. Combining discursive accounts with material narratives, the talk should open a discussion on the role of archaeological and material data in contemporary anthropology that is able to disrupt smoothed-over accounts of the past.

Producing Critical archaeology / Disrupting.

The ruin as a storage media In the ruin, history has physically merged into the landscape (W. Benjamin). As a forensic investigation it Forensic in its double sense of combining an event with spatial and material evidence and presenting the evidence in front of a forum.

Connecting Transportation Infrastructure and City Regional Governance: The Case of Cardiff City Region
Evseeva, Tatiana (Urbica, London, GBR)

There is has been a growth of interest in city regions, which are considered to be solutions for a wide range of global issues: sustainable development, economic competitiveness and political functions. However, city-regionalism also has challenges, since delivery of the various projects to develop the city regions demands a governmental structure. Such structures usually serve as so-called 'soft-spaces' covering the entities with fuzzy boundaries. One can begin to see possible tensions between the actors which, indeed, has been an issue in the case of the Cardiff City Region. In the Cardiff City Region, stakeholders are concentrated on the City Deal – the investment of £1.2bn in the Cardiff City Region economy between with the key priority to deliver the METRO transport project. This project initially was central in the negotiations and initiated the deal. METRO is supposed to improve public transport connectivity throughout South East Wales, however, there are socio-economic impacts of the METRO project that require greater attention since increased mobility is potentially a 'two-edged sword'. METRO is coordinated by the local authorities, Welsh Government and the UK government.

This research applied a discourse analysis to investigate how different coalitions perceive the current transport and institutional development of the Cardiff City Region in order to better understand the governmental issues in the new city regions better. The precise aims are to determine what makes successful city regional governance, what are the main obstacles are, which issues become the core agenda, and which issues are marginalised. All the research questions are answered through three data collection methods: semi-structured interviews, documentary analysis, and secondary data. We interviewed 13 main stakeholders, involved in the Cardiff City Region negotiations, including Welsh Government, Cardiff Council, other local authorities, the business community, and third parties. We have found out that negotiation process is largely hidden from the general public, and the involvement of new actors is very selective. Presumably, the existing government structure will be used for the whole Cardiff City Region governance in the future. Among the obstacles are a lack of trust between the partners, difficulty in thinking beyond the interest of the local authority, and the 'narrow game' of the key players. The City Deal is a purely economic project, and the other is currently marginalised. Establishing city-regional governance is a long-term process, involving many parties. Importantly, there is no universal approach, however, it is important to make the process transparent for the potential stakeholders.

Changing Paths and other Transformations of Siberian Landscapes and Lifeways
Illmeier, Gertraud (Institut für Kultur- und Sozialanthropologie, AUT)

Siberian taiga regions are commonly imagined and represented as space which main feature is the lack of human traces. Such understanding overlooks the fact that Siberia has been inhabited since times immemorial by indigenous peoples, who have left their imprint in forms of networks of paths, trails and camp sites that have structured large territories according to the needs and life-ways of Evenki taiga hunters and reindeer breeders and other groups.

Forced sedentarization of nomadic indigenous groups, collectivization and new forms of labour organization, as well as accelerated industrialisation of northern territories in the course of Soviet modernization programs have irreversibly changed the life-ways of northern populations in the 20th century. Systematic exploration of resource deposits and the introduction of new infrastructures such as "profiles" (straight aisles cut across the forest for seismological testing) have been transforming northern

landscapes into resource frontiers. Today, a new wave of oil, gas and timber exploitation is under way. It incorporates new territories into large-scale development projects of globalized industries with severe impact on traditional livelihoods of local populations. While many of the old paths seem to be forgotten as they have lost their significance and meaning for hunters, new infrastructures such as roads, profile-grids as narrow as 30 x 30 metres, pipelines, drillings stations, worker's camps, etc. emerge in taiga.

This paper explores the transformation of northern landscapes understood as "natural-social places" (Hastrup 2017) by investigating the histories and workings of the built environment in Katangskiy District, East Siberia. Paying particular attention to paths and other types of ways such as roads and profiles, I intend to discuss these entanglements of humans, animals, infrastructure and the northern environment by emphasising their interrelationship and mutual constitution. Questions that will be raised ask for the ways, in which different kinds of paths impact on local mobility and subsistence practices and on people's perception of the environment as well as for the meanings that are being produced by these interrelated processes. While past experience holds evidence that local communities were able to integrate the old profiles in their everyday practices, infrastructures that are currently being introduced by large-scale development projects seem to exceed their capacities.