Book of Abstracts:

The Marshrutka Project’s final conference:

Spatial dynamics of informal and shared mobilities

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1. Sharing mobility-work with humans and non-humans: flexibility, uncertainty, and control in marshrutka (case of Volgograd, Russia)

Author: Andrey Kuznetsov

Abstract:
In my paper, I seek to bridge science and technology studies (STS) and mobilities research. Existing attempts to connect STS and mobilities focused on Social Construction of Technology, ecological analysis of «boundary objects» and Social Informatics as relevant approaches (Pellegrino, 2010). I would like to introduce a material semiotics to the research of urban mobilities combining ideas of John Urry and Bruno Latour. The use of material semiotics in the field of mobilities research is still limited and rare (Hofmann, 2016). On the one hand, Urry's concept of mobility-systems understood as a set of socio-material conditions that make possible spatial (as well as virtual and imaginary) movements of humans and non-humans and their eventual meetings and interactions. This idea implies that movement of humans and non-humans in a contemporary world linked to vast sociotechnical assemblages.

On the other hand, material semiotics elaborated by Latour and Akrich (Latour, 1992: Akrich, 1992) suggests that every sociotechnical assemblage can be described as a dynamics of pragmatic programs (scripts) and anti-programs. Both approaches suggest that mobility is a complex and collective endeavor. We never travel or even stand still alone but always with, thanks to, next to, via others. Thereby there is always some work involved in our (im)mobility. I propose to call it mobility-work.

The notion of mobility-systems points to the quality and the amount of work that stands behind sociotechnical assemblages of (im)mobility and is performed in the actual practice of movement. The concept of pragmatic program, in its turn, suggests that this work could be done by actors of different ontologies. Following the idea that "we need to be able to share the social with things" (Latour, 1996) I come to an understanding that we share mobility-work in its actual performance with a variety of human and non-human beings.

Thus material semiotics make us sensitive to differentials between materials and their shares in (im)mobility scenarios. It also helps to break up with common sense distinction between material and immaterial and suggests to treat signs, practices, bodies, technologies, media as equally material repertoires and to study processes of translating something from one repertoire to another. In STS material semiotics traditionally was used for the analysis of the construction of technical artifact and relatively tight scenarios. Introducing material semiotics into mobility research I would like to apply it to the analysis of loose and multiple scenarios of usage in flexible urban public transport exemplified in my case by Russian share-taxis (marshrutkas). To show the characteristic features of marshrutkas I will use the tram case for a comparison.
Drawing on empirical ethnographic research I will describe pragmatic programs of tram and marshrutka in Volgograd. Different patterns of delegation and different balances of human and non-human actors in pragmatic programs generate various levels of uncertainty in mobility scenarios of tram and marshrutka usage. I will also show how users manage and use these uncertainties. Material semiotic toolbox allows assessing the level of practical (un)certainty in «mobile situations» produced by various differentials of materials and could be useful in applied mobilities design (Jensen, 2016).

Bio:

Andrei Kuznetsov is Senior Research Fellow at the PAST-Centre, Tomsk State National Research University, and Associate Professor at the Department of Sociology of Volgograd State University. His research interests include actor-network theory, science and technology studies, mobilities research, French pragmatic sociology, and urban studies.
2. Informality, market, and nationalism in post-Soviet marshrutka

Author: Andrey Vozyanov

Abstract:
Although studies of informal transit were predominantly focused on economic and communicatory effects of a weaker state’s presence, marshrutka’s informality also manifests itself in symbolic representations of identities within vehicle’s space. In post-Soviet cities, this is particularly true for the presence of nation’s marks and state language in marshrutka: absence of standardized pre-recorded electronic voices, semi-private soundscape with music chosen by the driver, and unofficial register of communication could result into an identity setting different from official one. In the Ukraine during the military conflict in Donbas, marshrutkas acquired a new kind of ambiguity: in some cases, the nation discourse could be passed over here, on the contrary to infrastructural nationalism of current investments into municipal transport; in other cases, nation space was produced here in a bottom-up fashion: through patriotic stickers and markings, or modification of soundscape, such as formal and informal ban on Russian chanson. However, marshrutka entrepreneurs and their passengers have to compromise with public attitudes and moderate identity messages. The paper describes these tensions proposing to think about shared-taxis as spaces to observe relations between informality, infrastructure, and nationalism, and, more widely, between identity and market in post-Soviet countries.

Bio:
Andrey Vozyanov is an anthropologist working on topics of mobility, infrastructure, crises, and soundscapes. In 2013, he graduated from the MA program in anthropology at the European University at St. Petersburg with the project "Public transit and mobility of elderly people: case of Mariupol, Ukraine". In 2018, he submitted his PhD thesis "Infrastructures in Trouble: Public Transit, Crisis, and Citizens at the Peripheries of Europe " at the Graduate School for Eastern and Southeast European Studies, Regensburg. Currently he is working as an editor of the Minsk Urban Journal http://urbanist.by/magazine/.
3. To compete or not to compete? Exploring the relationships across the uses of motorcycle-based ride sourcing, conventional motorcycle taxi, and public transport in Jakarta Metropolitan Area

Authors: Muhammad Zudhy Irawan, Prawira Fajarindra Belgiawan, Ari K. M. Tarigan, Fajar Wijanarko

Abstract:
In the last few decades, the existence of ride-sourcing services has transformed the personal trip behavior. In the context of Indonesia, ride-sourcing services have evolved into two forms of transport mode: motorcycle- and car-based online taxi. The presence of such services has clearly impacted the travel mode choice decision. However, it needs to be deeply examined whether the online taxi service plays as a competitor or a supporter of the existing public transport and conventional taxi. Using 438 motorcycle-based ride-sourcing consumers, we applied a structural equation model to investigate the interactions among the two-wheeled-vehicle-based online taxi, conventional motorcycle taxi, and public transport in the Jakarta Metropolitan Area. The result shows that motorcycle-based ride sourcing works as a feeder mode for the TransJakarta bus and Jakarta commuter train, thus filling the service gap of those public transport modes. We also found that motorcycle-based ride sourcing could replace the existing motorcycle taxi. The use of the online motorcycle taxi is influenced by exogenous factors such as the demographic features of ride-sourcing users, their technology usage experience, and travel time. In conclusion, we propose to integrate the online motorcycle taxi and public transport service and regulate both the conventional and online motorcycle taxi by including these transport means in the law as a form of public transport.

Bio:
He is Associate Professor in Department of Safety, Economics and Planning, Faculty of Science and Technology, University of Stavanger (UiS), Stavanger Norway. He obtained his Doctor of Engineering in 2009, from Department of Urban Management, Kyoto University (Japan), conducting research about leisure activity and travel behavior. His research interests and teaching areas are in the intersection of urban transport planning, road safety and travel behavior.
4. ‘This issue is the war of ideologies’: The Conflict between UBER and Taxi Drivers in İstanbul/Turkey

Author: Ayla Deniz

Abstract:
Just as it is in many big cities of the world, there is a problem of transportation in Istanbul as well. There are different types of means for public transportation. However, UBER, a recently introduced means of shared travel, has also been in service. In Istanbul, where a widespread taxi network is functioning, there has been a major conflict between taxi drivers and UBER drivers arising from competition. UBER users are accused of being 'traitor; immoral' by taxi drivers; taxi drivers are seen as 'dishonest, careless and dangerous' by UBER users. Due to the fact that taxi drivers start physical attacks on UBER drivers and customers, lawsuits related to these discussions have also been filed. In fact, politics have become part of this conflict. At the end, activities of UBER were stopped by the president. The reflection of the issue on the social media and daily life has divided the people two different sides. This distinction, in fact, concerns the question of intervening in lifestyles. In other words, taxi drivers want to maintain the old system that is central, male-dominated and power-oriented but UBER drivers have tried to make an alternative transportation way that is self-controlled, well-organized, respectful and optional. This, in fact, was it also an expression of the current political situation in Turkey. However, in these discussions, a large number of sexist discourses about women emerged; women were invisible in discussions because of the high voices of men.

For this reason, I interviewed 12 women in Istanbul who used taxis before but then started to use UBER. I asked them two questions. The first was the effect of gender in the selection of means of transportation. The second was how they were influenced by the conflict between UBER and taxi drivers. Women said they feel discomfort from public controlling and discourses. Women state that their use of public space is restricted. Because of the attitude of taxi drivers, they said they stopped using taxis now even there is no alternative like UBER anymore.

Bio:
Ayla Deniz works as a research assistant at Department of Geography, Ankara University, Turkey. Her work focuses on a range of issues pertaining to gendered face of mobilities. She has conducted research and contributed to publications on a variety of topics including the relation between gender, mobility and the city.
5. Project “Dörpsmobil“ – a model for e-carsharing in rural areas?

Authors: Dr. Angela Jain, Charlotte Hegel, Norman Döge

Abstract:
While different commercial carsharing models are already integrated into our daily urban lives, they are very rare in the rural areas. One of the reasons for the little demand could be the high number of private vehicles in these areas. But even second cars of households are in most cases seldom used.

Sharing a vehicle with several households though could mean saving a good amount of fixed costs. Equipped with an electric drive and fuelled with regionally produced power, a shared vehicle could make a real difference in terms of environmental protection.

Next to these economical and ecological aspects the long-term provision of public services is an important factor when thinking about the implementation of alternative transport modes. The frontrunner project "Dörpsmobil Klixbüll" in Schleswig-Holstein (Germany) shows that e-carsharing can be implemented by bottom-up initiatives and operated on a cost-covering basis and therefore could be an important part of the rural transport network. Following the model of Klixbüll, many other surrounding municipalities in Schleswig-Holstein plan or already operate an e-carsharing system.

But the key question is: in what case it is reasonable to start such an initiative, which steps are necessary to succeed and how can important stakeholders be encouraged to participate?

To find a structured answer to this question, the nexus Institute developed a guideline for the implementation of e-carsharing in rural areas on behalf of the “Akademie für ländliche Räume Schleswig-Holsteins e.V.”.

The overall goal will be the dissemination of the project in a large number of municipalities in Schleswig-Holstein. This will on the one hand actively contribute to climate protection goals and on the other hand have an impact on the provision of public services in deprived rural areas. The latter will secure social participation as well.

In our presentation we will speak about research considering informal rural mobility as well as bottom-up initiatives. Moreover the development process of the final guideline for rural e-carsharing will be discussed.

Bio:
Charlotte Hegel holds a Master degree in Urban and Regional Planning and completed her studies in the cities of Hamburg and Berlin. The focus of her work during two years of work experience as a Scientific Researcher at the nexus Institute for Cooperation Management and Interdisciplinary Research is the interface of mobility and public
participation. Furthermore, she is academic coordinator for the MBA Sustainable Mobility Management program at TU Berlin EUREF Campus and a PhD candidate for the topic: “Users Perspective in Railway Innovation: a Comparative Case Study of Denmark and New South Wales“.
6. Mobilities and masculinities in the streets of Tbilisi: negotiating exclusion, risk and personal advancement

Author: Costanza Curro

Abstract:
This study investigates the interaction and mutual shaping of narratives and practices of masculinity and mobility across the cityscape of Tbilisi, Georgia. Focusing on the constraints and possibilities provided by social, political and economic discourse and intervention on and in the urban space, the paper analyses mobility strategies and trajectories of a group of young men living a suburban area of the Georgian capital made up of low and middle income families.

Drawing upon data collected on the field in 2008-2009, 2014 and 2017, media analysis and anthropological and geographical literature, the paper discusses the dynamics of young men’s access – or the lack thereof - to different kinds of mobilities (public, private and shared or informal transport), highlighting the tension between exclusion and belonging, risk and safety, personal fulfilment and collective loyalty.

The intersection of mobility strategies and the making of masculine identities, narratives and practices provides a lens through which to understand everyday approaches to the transformation of urban spaces, offering an empirical account of the Georgian context, but at the same time contributing to the growing literature on gendered mobilities in the post-socialist space and beyond. Such an angle also helps make suggestions for the development of more inclusive, accessible and safer mobilities across gender and class inequalities.

Bio:
I have a PhD in social anthropology from the School of Slavonic and East European Studies, University College London, with a thesis titled ‘From Tradition to Civility: Georgian Hospitality after the Rose Revolution’. My doctoral research explores hospitality practices as potential sources of civil values amid social, political and economic disintegration brought into place by the post-Rose Revolution political project of radical modernisation. I have also been working on the transformation of urban public spaces in Georgia during the Saakashvili government from the perspective of the form of young male street socialisation known as birzha. I am currently developing a research project which focuses on masculinity, mobility and migration through a cross-generational study of Georgian men between Tbilisi and Strasbourg.
7. Urban mobile practices: in search for status and comfort

Author: Diana Saty baldina

Abstract:
In the context of in-depth research conducted in Ekaterinburg (Russia) and its suburbs, the paper explores the routines, the routes and the justifications of urban pedestrian and auto mobilities and aims to grasp the complexity and ongoing “reformatting” of these trips in which the rational motivations are combined with the preoccupation with symbolic meaning of the means of transportation. The discursive renderings of everyday urban mobilities by the informants are specifically investigated in order to demonstrate the experiential aspects of urban mobile practices.

I argue that citizens’ participation in urban mobility is marked by the tensions between their experiences of personal and public space. Exposed to hustle and bustle of the everyday life of the large city, people are looking for or trying to create places of solitude, rootedness and stability. Development of technologies and different types of transport allow citizens to engage in different types of interaction with the urban space.

The present article attempts to answer the question of how the participants in urban mobile practices form their personal space as they move across the city. Applying mobility studies arguments and concepts, including the work on “public transport mobilities” (Urry, 2007; Bunich, 2014, Ivanova 2014), I investigated such trends of urban transport mobility (characteristic also for other big cities) as hybridization and borders formation. The fieldwork was comprised from participant observation and the interviews with city-dwellers (car owners, public transport users and pedestrians).

Bio:
Post-graduate student of PhD program "Social philosophy" at Ural Federal University named after the first President of Russia B.N.Yeltsin, Yekaterinburg (Russia)
Projects: research assistant in the project “Legitimacy, urban planning and sustainable development in Russia and Sweden”, (LUPSRUSS), Swedish International Centre for Local Democracy and research assistant in the project “Post-imperial situation of the interwar period in the intellectual reflection: war, responsibility, identity”, Russian Science Foundation.
Research interests: Social philosophy, Mobility studies, Urban studies, Social stereotypes
8. Urban Justice and Mobility Justice in contemporary Russia: informal aspect

Author: Evgeniy Karchagin

Abstract:
The paper presents some results of the social and humanitarian study of the problems of social justice in the urban context, using the case of controversies in contemporary Russian public transport systems.

The first theories of urban justice showed that the problem of social justice cannot be considered in isolation from the material and technical environment of a modern city. The problematique of urban justice is connected to the right to a city (H. Lefebvre), the right to infrastructure (A. Corsin Jimenez), the right to mobility (T. Cresswell) as justified participation of different groups of citizens (along with municipal authorities, investors) in the overall production of urban life, including urban mobility.

Mobility justice (M. Sheller) deals with the problems of inequality and injustice in mobilities of all kinds.

In the center of contemporary transport disputes in Russia there is a tension between municipal and private public transport. The preparation to the 2018 FIFA World Cup also had initiated transformation of the transport infrastructure (marginalization of “marshrutkas” or Russian shared-taxis and dominance of buses, while maintaining the “status quo” for the electric vehicles), which inevitably had involved numerous disputes and disagreements on different levels: 1) informal level of quotidian trips in the city, 2) citywide public discussions, 3) official formal communications.

In this regard, the following questions are topical: What and why do the participants consider just and unjust in the transport systems and in the city? How do they criticize and justify their actions and the actions of others? An analysis of the development of informal aspect of public disputes over the transformation of the transport system in Volgograd, as well as in other Russian cities, will be presented in this paper.

Bio:
Evgeniy Karchagin is Professor at the Department of philosophy, sociology and psychology, Volgograd State Technical University (Russia). His primary research field is justice studies. In recent years, he has focused on urban justice and mobility justice problems. He has also published articles on social studies of mobilities, data in social sciences, metaphilosophy.
9. Engaging incumbent paratransit operators as bus operating companies in public transport reforms: Lessons from Accra

Author: Emmanuel Theodore Asimeng

Abstract:

A number of African cities are reforming their public transportation from weak and self-regulated paratransit operations to regulated formal operations. Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) has been a mechanism for public officials to reform the ubiquitous yet fragmented paratransit sector, inspired by the success of South American city reforms in Bogota, Mexico City, and Curitiba. In implementing BRT, public officials are faced with the question whether to include paratransit operators or not. To avoid agitations that might derail the reform process, public officials are obliged to include incumbent paratransit operators. Some public officials support incumbent operators to form bus operating companies for the BRT without tender processes. While this enables the political feasibility and improves interactions between public officials and paratransit operators, it brings to the fore controversies and conflicts with the potential to erode successes initially achieved. The goal of the study was to document potential controversies and conflicts associated with the engagement of paratransit operators in public transport reforms with BRT. The case of Accra is examined through qualitative interviews with actors in the reform process on how the BRT is been implemented. The study shows that, non-inclusion of owners of paratransit fleet; lack of competence and investment of paratransit companies for formal services; absence of precise reform approach and leadership from government institutions; and perceived loss of individual and union control of paratransit operations are largely affecting the reform process. Public officials in African cities reforming public transport with BRT by engaging only incumbent paratransit operators should take note.

Bio:

Emmanuel Theodore Asimeng is a doctoral candidate at the Institute for City and Regional Planning at the Technical University of Berlin and Guest Scientist at the Institute of Transport Research under the German Aerospace Centre. Mr. Asimeng works with the department of city development and mobility at both institutes where the research focuses on the interrelationship between transport demand, urban transport provision and urban spatial structures. His research interest is public transport reforms with Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) in developing countries. His focus is understanding reasons behind incumbent “informal” transport operator’s resistance to reforms in Accra-Ghana.
10. Is Ride Sharing finally becoming disruptive? A Case of Karachi-Pakistan

Authors: Faisal Rasool, Irfan Ahmad Rana

Abstract:
The article explores the emergence of ride sharing businesses and their success around the globe. The business model adopted by many ride sharing services allows ordinary people to take advantage of their cars; otherwise sitting idle in their homes or offices by offering rides to generate money. Many researchers have attributed the success of these services to their disruptive business model; which have the potential to disrupt not only traditional taxi services, but have a long term effect on public transport and city planning. Christensen on the other hand at many occasions have refused the premises of ridesharing services such as Uber to be disruptive and have argued that unless these services come up with an alternate offering the business model is not disruptive and is another incremental innovation. Recently many ride sharing services have adopted a new business model by providing ride sharing services using motorbikes. These new businesses offer a variety of services such as courier, food delivery, parcel pickup and delivery along with ride sharing at a much lower price point compared to traditional transportation services. This article analyze the disruptiveness of these new business models on proposed criteria of disruptive innovation by Christensen in Karachi Pakistan, and analyze the positive and negative effect of ridesharing in large cities.

Bio:
Faisal Rasool is currently a PhD student in Industrial and Manufacturing Engineering, School of Engineering and Technology, Asian Institute of Technology, Thailand. He received his master's degree in Industrial and Manufacturing Engineering from Asian Institute of Technology. His research interests focus on product innovation and co-creation.
11. Uberisation in China and EU: The Regulatory challenges of the drivers’ status

Author: Griselda Qosja

Abstract:
Digital Platforms like Google, Facebook, Uber, Amazon, Ebay and Youtube have created contemporary policies and regulatory challenges to regulators and enforcers in the European Union. Today, online platforms are subjects of EU rules in the areas of competition, consumer protection, protection of personal data and single market freedom. However when it comes to the protection of the crowd and collaborative economy workers’ rights, this sector is almost entirely unregulated at the EU level. In the “Commission Work Programme 2018” in the digital single market section there is no attempt whatsoever to tackle and give special attention to the rights of platform and crowd workers, although it is a pressuring issue and the ECJ has twice been requested to deliver preliminary rulings on the question from (a) Juzgado de lo Mercantil No 3 de Barcelona (Spain) C-434/15 and (b) Tribunal de grande instance Lille (France) C -320/16. In both C-434/15 and C -320/16, the same legal question arose if “Uber’s activities should be considered as an information society service?” The ECJ Advocate General Szpunar, clarified that Uber services could not be regarded as an information society service within the meaning of Article 1 (2) of Directive 98/343. In both cases the opinion delivered clarified that Uber was required to obtain the necessary licenses and authorizations under the national law, concluding that the issue should be regulated at a national level, according to existing law. Indirectly the preliminary rulings aimed to protect Uber workers. This was however not done explicitly as in the London Employment Tribunal 2016 ruling in Aslam, Farrar & Others vs Uber, where specifically the decision stated that Uber Independent’s contractor should be classified as workers. On the other side the Chinese government attempted in 2016 to regulate the sector through a new regulation on platform based transport economies. The implication of this regulation in the labor relations, contracts and the status of the drivers is yet to be fully understood. At the same time, I will look at the current protections offered by the Chinese labor law and if these protections can be applied in ascertaining the status of the workers in ride-sharing services, or if a new category of employment should be introduced.

Bio:
Griselda Qosja is a Research Associate at the Faculty of Law, University of Hamburg and a PhD candidate at the University of Flensburg. Her research interest lies at the intersection of constitutional law, human rights, labor law and the EU financial crisis. She holds an LL.B. (Bachelor of Laws) from the European University of Tirana,
M.Sc/MA/Cand. Soc. in European Studies from the University of Southern Denmark and University of Flensburg. She has been a Visiting Scholar at the University of Texas at Austin (USA), Max Planck Institute for Comparative and International Private Law (Hamburg, Germany), Max Planck Science Po (Paris, France), China-EU School of Law (Beijing, China). In 2017, she was awarded the Civil Society Scholar Award from the Open Society Foundations for her research.
12. Users’ preference for local versus international ride-hailing services: Empirical evidences from Pakistani cities

Authors: Irfan Ahmad Rana, Faisal Rasool

Abstract:
Ride-hailing services are now available in metropolitans of the world. These services are now being expanded into developing countries, including Pakistan. Poor public transportation and informal transport sector has instigated rapid growth of such smartphone based services. However, these services are now being offered in form of localized context, in competition to international services. Uber (international), Careem (regional), Bykea (local) ride hailing services are taken for comparative analysis. This study measures user’s preference for local versus international brands. Three cities i.e. Lahore, Islamabad and Karachi, are taken to observe behavioural aspects of choosing such services. Results show that middle to high income, well-educated, and mostly young people are utilizing such services. Localized apps are preferred by some, as English language based apps are not inoperable by users. This studies shows that ride-hailing have complemented public transportation in study area. However, impact of app-based and on-demand services are seen as detrimental towards cities overall traffic situation.

Bio:
Dr. Irfan Ahmad is an urban planner by profession. He received his doctoral degree from Asian Institute of Technology, Thailand. His research interests includes urban and regional planning, disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation. He is currently working as Assistant Professor at Department of Urban and Regional Planning, National University of Sciences and Technology, Islamabad, Pakistan.
What Kind of Person Drives a Boda Boda? Motorcycle Taxis, Personhood, and the Moral Landscape of Informal Transport in Kampala, Uganda

Author: Jacob Doherty

Abstract:
Boda Bodas are motorcycle taxis that provide a vital means of urban mobility in Kampala, the capital of Uganda, as they cut through congestion, extend the reach of the city’s minibus system, and navigate the hilly city’s uneven road surfaces. They are also involved in hundreds of accidents a year and have given rise to a moral panic in the city’s media, the municipality, and the national government around moto-mobility and informal transportation. This paper argues that two divergent concepts of personhood are at the heart of the dominant moral framings of the boda boda industry. On the one hand, drivers view the industry as a moral community and engage in numerous modes of exchange, ranging from mutual aid to financial exploitation, that are predicated on an extended notion of the person as embedded in and emergent from social relations. On the other, regulators in the government, NGOs, and the tech-sector mobilise an individualized and individualizing notion of personhood in order to transform the industry through disciplinary technologies like apps, loans, registration, and safety equipment. Based on ethnographic research conducted from 2013-14, the paper compares how the practices and materiality of these two visions of personhood shape the distribution of risk, injury, and recognition for Kampala’s boda boda drivers.

Bio:
Jacob Doherty is an anthropologist whose research focuses on the everyday life of infrastructures, the dynamics of urban transformation, and the constitution of political authority in African cities. He has conducted ethnographic research on the motorcycle taxi-industry in Kampala, Uganda, as well as on the politics of waste, cleanliness, and disposability in the city. As a research associate in the Transport Studies Unit at Oxford University Center for the Environment, his current research, part of the PEAK Urban project, examines how modes of collective transport in Abidjan, Cote d’Ivoire, differentially provide operators and passengers opportunities for social mobility while (re)producing social identities and inequalities.
14. Dynamics between hitchhiking and formal ride sharing platforms

Author: Johanna Hopp

Abstract:
Against the backdrop of rising environmental concerns, ride sharing schemes have gained increased (economic) attention throughout the past decade. While formal ride sharing concepts that have entered the market sphere are omnipresent in public discourses on environmental sustainability and future mobility, the informal practice of hitchhiking has been marginalized by both public and academic discourses.

Hitchhiking is a mode of transport that has exited since the beginning of the 20th century and is based on soliciting strangers for a ride in public spaces such as the road side, parking lots or gas stations. Through my dissertation project, which comprised an autoethnographic field trip of hitchhiking through Germany and Austria in summer 2017, complemented by semi-structured interviews with hitchhikers and lift-givers, I came to understand that the ultra-spontaneous encounter between hitchhiker and lift-giver in the confined space of the car opens up spaces for enacting alternative economies based on reciprocity and mutuality, thereby allowing to negotiate difference through affective human encounters. Based on these insights, I seek to ask in what ways this under-researched mode of transport has been influenced by the marketization of ride sharing through initiatives such as blablacar. Through this paper I wish to shed light on the dynamics that unfold between the informal grassroots practice of hitchhiking and the digitalization and marketization of the mutual idea it shares with ride sharing platforms: sharing a car with a stranger.

Hence, this research contributes to the broader discourse on informal ride-sharing in the global North in transport and mobilities studies and promises to offer interesting insights into an under-researched but very vivid means of transportation.

Bio:
I am currently working as a research associate in pluralist economics at Cusanus Hochschule, a denominationally and ideologically independent college in Germany. I have a background in cultural studies from Leuphana University and Universidad de Costa Rica and completed an MSc in Nature, Society and Environmental Governance at Oxford University in November 2017. Both programmes allowed me to gain deeper insights into socioenvironmental assemblages from perspectives such as cultural geography, political ecology and STS. Inspired by my dissertation on hitchhiking, I enjoy meandering through the field of mobilities, inspired by feminist and economic geography. I am currently reworking my dissertation into a (hopefully) publishable paper which I would like to use as a starting point for my PhD project, for which I will be applying at the Transport Studies Unit in Oxford.
15. A Network Off the Grid: the Usage of Marshrutkas in Frozen Conflict Zones

Author: Justin Tomczyk

Abstract:
Although unrecognized and largely isolated from the international community, the frozen conflict zones of the former Soviet Union have managed to build rudimentary transport and trade networks. The usage of ageing rail lines, taxis, and the ubiquitous marshrutkas have granted these territories a degree of connectivity with the world that would not be available through conventional transport enterprises. This study will examine the historic usage of marshrutkas as a means of travel to and from frozen conflict zones, the economic and legal utility of marshrutkas in resource-scarce areas, and trends in the normalization in travel to frozen conflict areas (with a specific focus on Abkhazia). Ideally, this study will hint at the future of travel into and out of the self-proclaimed Donetsk and Luhansk People’s Republics and the long-term sustainability of current marshrutka networks in frozen-conflict zones.

Bio:
Justin Tomczyk is a recent graduate from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. His academic and professional focus is the political and social transformation of the six members of the Eastern Partnership, along with American foreign policy in the South Caucasus and integration processes in the Eurasian Economic Union. He is an associate of European Horizons, a student-run think tank dedicated to Transatlantic affairs and EU-US relations.
16. Reclaiming the land with tourism development: informal transport services of Buryat marshrutka drivers on Olkhon Island (the Lake Baikal)

Authors: Maria Kuklina, Vera Kuklina

Abstract:
One of the most visible signs of the tourism development on Olkhon Island in the Lake Baikal: a growing number of “tabletki” – all-wheels Russian vans adjusted for the bumpy local roads to provide tourists with rides to attractive places and shuttle them between the ferry and the places of their accommodation. The drivers are usually local Buryats who have not registered their transportation services officially. Industrial economy as well as Buryat traditional subsistence activities come in conflict with new environmental law protecting the Lake Baikal as the UNESCO world heritage site. Tourism remains one of very few options for local formerly rural economies. However, most of the low-skilled occupations provided by tourism development are traditionally taken by women (accommodation, food preparation, retail and food services). Taking the example of practices and strategies of legitimization of informal transport services of the Buryat marshrutka drivers, the paper discusses the changing place of the ideas on customary land rights in a globally gendered division of labour. The paper is based on field studies (interviews and observations) conducted by the lead author in the summers of 2016, 2017 and 2018.

Bio:
Maria Kuklina, Candidate of Economic Science.

Current position: Senior Lecturer of Department of Management of industrial enterprises of the Irkutsk State Technical University.

Research interests: electronic reservation systems in tourism, the development of tourism in the Baikal region, Actor-network approach in tourism, commercialization of high technology, academic innovation ecosystem.

From 2016, we are implementing the project "Development of an information tourist system of the Baikal region on the basis of the actor-network theory" together with Very Kuklina, (supported by the Russian Foundation for Humanities 16-33-01189 (a2)).

Development and reading courses: "Information support of innovative activity", "Information systems in economy", "Information technology in the economy."
17. Entropic Urbanism and Stochastic Cities: Mobilities and Spatial Economies at the Postcolonial and Postsocialist Conjuncture

Author: Mithilesh Kumar

Abstract:
This paper attempts at conceptualizing "entropic urbanism" and "stochastic city" in order to bring out the specificities of the manner in which urban spaces are being planned, produced, and consumed in postcolonial and postsocialist nation-states. The twin concepts will seek to capture the randomness, informality, and autonomy of people and spaces in the everyday practices of urbanism in these two geographical and socio-political economic settings. Also, these two concepts will provide a radical critique of the current trends in the study of urban mobilities and city spaces. The referent of the urban experiences in academic and even popular writings are always that of the West. Concepts such as megacities, megalopolis, and global cities etc. are often used to demonstrate that the cities in the postcolonial and postsocialist conditions either produce a distorted version of the urban experiences in the West or the formers’ genealogical locations are such that they perpetually produce a variant space and in the process reproduce the conditions of core-periphery, developed-underdeveloped-developing, and so on. Instead, concepts of “Entropic Urbanism” and “Stochastic City” seek to capture the unruliness of the postcolonial and post-socialist cities, their constant innovations in the art of not being governed, which marks the shared but distinctive experiences of postcolonial and postsocialist urban conditions.

The paper develops its argument at multiple levels of analyses. On one level, it studies the postcolonial and postsocialist cities in relation to the production and circulation of global capital. At this level, the paper will trace multiple institutions, companies, credit agencies, urban planners, architects, and other actors. These transnational political and economic actors rove around the globe armed with material and discursive power and are often provided with special and exceptional power by the postcolonial and postsocialist nation-states. These amalgamations of transnational actors and the nation-states have an ideal technocratic vision and desire for urban spaces that allows for smooth and unbridled movement of capital, commodities, and with severe restrictions, people. At the second level, the paper will trace those political subjects (workers, peasants, local elites, urban underclass, agents of governmentalities etc.) who constitute and are constituted by the long processes of evolution and transitions of postcolonial and postsocialist nation-states. These political subjects, at once, take on the forces of global capital as well as their own regime of governmentalities in a manner that make them distinct from the resisting and rebellious political subjects in the developed West. This analysis of complexity constituted by myriad political subjects, nation-states, and actors of global capital will also, hopefully, reveal that the contemporary global urban turn is constituted by the postcolonial and postsocialist cities, which constantly challenge the global cities and their imperial power.

This paper will engage with literature on urbanism and mobilities and will read them against the grain along with an analysis of empirical data of political and social movements to buttress the argument around the concepts of “entropic urbanism” and “stochastic city.”
Bio:
Mithilesh Kumar is an Assistant Professor, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Patna Centre. His research interests are migration, labour, urbanization, infrastructure and logistics, postcolonial and postsocialist theories.
18. Immutable Automobiles: Informal Taxis and the System of Orientiry in Tashkent, Uzbekistan

Author: Nikolaos Olma

Abstract:
In the aftermath of the dissolution of the USSR, the subsidies that kept Tashkent’s mass public transport systems running were reduced as part of the transition to the market economy, which in many cases led to their deterioration and even collapse. Such developments undermined the trust of the city’s population in mass public transport, impeded their movement, and forced them to find new ways of moving around. This opportunity was grabbed by private car owners, who, amidst growing unemployment rates and plummeting salaries, took advantage of the increase in the volume of cars available and resorted to carrying passengers as a way of earning a living or supplementing their income, essentially becoming informal taxi drivers.

However, in addition to being a source of income for drivers and an accessible and relatively affordable means of transport for passengers, I will suggest that Tashkent's informal taxis are also involved in the production of a parallel spatiality. Constant street renamings have made official street and place names and addresses scarcely – if ever – used by the population of Tashkent and have led to their substitution by an abstract system of vernacular orientation points known as orientiry as the preferred wayfinding technology. The system of orientiry, then, takes the form of a fragmented two-dimensional matrix of nodes, with cars moving from one nod to another, without, most of the time, taking into account the distances between them, and following routes than are not necessarily fastest or shortest. Hence, based on long-term ethnographic fieldwork in Tashkent and drawing on the recent "mobility turn" in the social sciences, this paper will argue that orientiry are generated and proliferated by means of the use of informal taxis, and in particular the combination of individual cognitive mapping processes and the exchange of environmental information that occurs between driver and passenger while they find their way through various places and temporalities.

However, as I will further suggest, for this process to be successful, informal taxis need to be what, building upon the work of Bruno Latour, I have called “immutable automobiles,” which means that they need to be in a position to move around Tashkent and hold their shape both physically and as an assemblage of heterogeneous elements, such as the driver, the passenger(s), the car, unreliable public transport, and a series of other factors. If any of these preconditions break down, the immutable automobile is disrupted, loses its form, and turns into something else, hence losing its capacity to generate orientiry.

Bio:
Nikolaos Olma is an urban anthropologist with a regional focus on post-Soviet Central Asia. Based on long-term ethnographic fieldwork in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, his PhD dissertation (University of Copenhagen, 2018) explores the ways in which embodied memory processes are generated by and through the interaction of humans with urban infrastructure systems and how this co-functioning results in the enactment of memoryscapes.
19. Everyday auto-(rickshaw) mobilities in Mumbai

Author: Prajna Rao

Abstract:
In this paper, I examine the tensions between low-tech auto-rickshaw systems and the modernized, corporatized, high-tech, high-speed aspiration for mobility futures in Mumbai.

Over the last decade, the city of Mumbai has invested in a plethora of mega transport projects that include an elevated and subterranean metro-rail, a monorail, flyovers, bridges, sea-links, skywalks and coastal roads. Ride-sharing services like Ola and Uber have also grown exponentially in the last five years, influencing the ways in which mobility is not only provided, but also imagined for the future. These alleged innovations are not only touted as responses to rapid urbanization, but also bear the elusive promise of a world-class status in a globalized world. This euphoria of world-ing the city moves messily in tension with technologies, infrastructures and practices that belie these urban mega-visions.

In this paper, I focus especially on how auto-rickshaws bear the burden of hegemonic aspirations and symbols, exploring the relation between government ideas of technological progress and everyday modes of operation. Associated more with ideas of informality, intermediate-ness, slowness, outdatedness and disorder, auto-rickshaw systems are often defined as problems that are recommended to be solved through greening, modernizing and corporatizing. Auto-rickshaw technologies have successively gone through shifts in metering, fuelling, engine designs, colour schemes among others to purportedly resolve socio-spatial discourses of gender, ethnic identities, parochial politics, globalized ideas of sustainability and modernization. Drawing from mobility studies in geography, sociology and critical theory, the paper discusses how neoliberal frameworks in Mumbai prioritize specific values, technologies, aesthetics and subjectivities of mobility over others. It explores how the regime governs not just mobility in a society, but also societies themselves through mobility practices. The first part of the paper uses the Foucauldian formulation of the dispositif to explore how mobility regimes are constructed and sustained through an attempted ordering of knowledge, practice, space and subjectivity. Here, mobility is not a problem to solve or a right to achieve, but a register to understand hegemonic relations in the city. The second part of the paper uses ongoing fieldwork material from participant observations to explore how everyday mobilities, here associated with auto-rickshaws, are never fully ordered. The fare meter is never really tamper-proof, the fueling system is never fully reorganized, the engine is not as high-tech; and it is these unfulfilled gaps that open the potential for imagining newer ways of moving and mobilizing within the city.

Bio:
Prajna Rao is a PhD candidate from the School of Community and Regional Planning at the
University of British Columbia. She is broadly interested in everyday urban life and mobility infrastructures in postcolonial contexts. Her ongoing doctoral research investigates auto-rickshaw technologies and their relationship with mobility aspirations in the city of Mumbai.
20. Taxi Drivers and Ride Sharing in China

Author: Simon Yin

Abstract:
Across the world, the taxi industry has experienced radical changes in the past years, mainly thanks to the IT revolution. As a symbol of workplace digitalization, ride-hailing companies like Uber have fundamentally changed the employment status and relations worldwide, sometimes in highly controversial ways. As the Chinese government promotes the sharing economy, ride-sharing has boomed in China. Meanwhile, strikes by taxi drivers have taken place a few hundred times per year in China.

This article examines how taxi drivers adapt to, manipulate and fight against the rise of ride-hailing platforms like Didi Chuxing (which purchased Uber China in 2016) in China. Chinese taxi drivers entered the on-demand labour platforms before private car drivers. Based on a nationwide data survey, the article argues that the technological power of Didi took shape by reinforcing inequalities facing informally employed taxi drivers prior to the emergence of ride-hailing apps. Drivers, far from being passive app users, have countered the changes in the work environment that resulted from platformisation in new and evolving ways, from strikes to algorithmic activism.

This study suggests that online platforms are contested spaces where digital labour politics penetrate beyond the purported algorithmic power of the technology. It enriches researches on on-demand labour by deconstructing the distinction between taxi drivers and private gig drivers and by pointing to the unfolding new grounds for digital labour activism. It helps us, including policymakers, to better understand the impacts of ride-sharing.

Bio:
After earning his BA degree from Peking University in China, Simon Yin obtained his Master degree from Harvard University in the USA and his PHD from the University of Tübingen in Germany. Now he teaches at Hefei University of Technology in China.
21. Passenger Experiences and Driver Constraints: Labour and Mobility on Paratransit in Lubumbashi, Democratic Republic of the Congo

Author: Tamara Kerzhner

Abstract:
The paper examines the experiences of passengers in tandem with the working conditions and finances of paratransit drivers in Lubumbashi, in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, based on a survey of 300 drivers, 3000 passengers and mapping of paratransit routes. The operating structure of the paratransit sector consists of atomized, individually owned minibuses with no centralized regulation, on daily leases with a strict division of ownership and operation. The paper considers the effects of labour informality and precariousness on the service quality and spatial distribution of transport in a low-regulation environment.

Informal transportation fills a crucial gap in cities in the Global South, and in some instances in the Global North, where formal services are lacking or non-existent. At the same time, informal transit is often a site of labour exploitation, along with dangerous driving, unreliable and expensive services, congestion and takeover of public spaces and streets. Regulation is difficult and operators are unable to function profitably under more extensive regulation, leading to mutually destructive competition between formal and informal services and outbreaks of violence as livelihoods are threatened.

The survey of passengers finds an overwhelming concern with the behaviour of drivers and the physical conditions of travel to be the most pressing issue, speaking to a basic need for dignity, respect and comfort. This runs counter to the rationalist assumptions of planners and development bodies, which measure the quality of transport, and assume the preferences of passengers, to operate primarily in economic terms. Analysing the conditions of work of drivers and conductors from a labour-oriented perspective, meanwhile, sees the sector arriving at a rock-bottom equilibrium of rents, incomes and working conditions, in which risk and degradation must be structurally shifted further on to passengers in order for services to exist.

The spatial regime of transportation in Lubumbashi is formally unplanned but perniciously coherent. Services are distributed in an unequal and self-reinforcing pattern through the evolution of land-uses and urban growth, in a city that has doubled in population in 15 years. The effects of limited regulation, planning and competition leads to a systemic under-service and ‘cannibalization’ in public transport. At the same time, the dynamic active growth of the city around ad-hoc and repurposed transit nodes and corridors means these patterns cement the urban structure and simultaneously give form to their immediate environments.

Bio:
Tamara Kerzhner is a 1st year PhD student in City and Regional Planning at the University of California, Berkeley, focusing on informal transportation. She previously researched issues of transport equity and accessibility for women in East Jerusalem and has worked in planning and development in Burundi, DR Congo, India, Israel and Palestine.
22. Informalities of Shared Mobilities: The Case of Finland and Estonia

Author: Tauri Tuvikene

Abstract:
In contemporary discourses about the future of urban transportation, shared mobility solutions such as Uber, Lyft and Taxify are often envisioned as wide-scale solutions for how city dwellers will move around. Less attention has been put into the sociohistorical contexts in which such solutions are set. These conditions, however, highlight the diverse considerations wherein high-tech solutions exist side-by-side with informal measures and precarity, otherwise associated with less-modern contexts, as well as different cultures of sharing. In this paper, we use two vignettes both on pooling and on more individualised taxi service to put shared urban mobility in context. In the first vignette, we discuss a discontinued shared mobility solution from the spectre of shared taxi/marshrutka “Kutsuplus” services in Helsinki, Finland (2012-2015). We argue that one reason for why the Kutsuplus concept did not gain popularity was that there was no culture for shared mobility in Helsinki. Second, we reflect on the characteristics of cities where smartphone-enabled shared mobility solutions have gained popularity often at the expense of labour rights and other concerns of conditions of service-provision. Bringing in the Estonian case and reflecting through media analysis, we highlight the national appeal of technology that has rationalised legal revisions, which—while not officially seen so—could be argued to be “informal”: working at the border of legal/illegal and challenging existing formal ways of doing. We claim that the success of the services in Estonia (and elsewhere) are related to the inventive re-imagination of taxi services where the similarity to “taxi” as a particular culture of being mobile has in principle remained but the service is also associated with new technological, economic and social innovations. We conclude the article by underlining the importance of context: why a pre-existing culture for shared mobility may be an enabler in some contexts but a constraint for the spread of high-technology solutions at another:

Bio:
Tauri Tuvikene is an urban geographer at Tallinn University. His research deals with comparative urbanism in relation to post-socialist cities. He has published on conceptualisations of post-socialism, garage areas in (post-)Soviet urban spaces and urban (transport) infrastructures, including the politics of parking and walking in urban environment.
23. Shared Transport, Unshared Space: Marshrutka as Phenomenon of “Transport for the Insiders” in Ukraine

Author: Valerie Lazrenko

Abstract:
Inclusiveness and exclusiveness may be the dividing characteristic of different types of public transportation, where on one pole we can find super-modern public transport that allow all categories of passengers to enter it, and unregulated, semi-official marshrutkas on another hand. Typical marshrutkas in Eastern-European post-socialistic countries like Ukraine, Moldova or Belarus create the excluding obstacles by itself: the steps might be too high for elder or disabled people to enter it, and the doors might be too narrow for baby carriages or a wheelchair.

Just in 2018 more than 30 cases of marshrutka drivers refusing to stop for a mother with a carriage or elder person were reported in Ukraine. Surprisingly, the discourse not only evoked inclusiveness debates, but also showed that being ‘another’ within Ukrainian society means, by the way, not having access to some kinds of public transportation, that is often the only one way to come from one part of the city to another:

One more specific issue of marshrutka’s exclusiveness comes from irregularity and thus – unpredictability of this mode of transport. As marshrutka is a semi-legal transport, there are no single sources that cover up the space and the routes within the city or municipality, so they often remain a ‘secret’ way of moving around for the locals. So how the person from outside of the system may get through it? Is there a way other than through personal experience?

The same ‘outsiders’, who face many difficulties with perceiving the city through marshrutkas in Ukraine, are the internally displaced people, the migrants from Donbas. For now, there have been officially registered over 1.7 million IDPs, and most of them face social and psychological problems, like overcoming traumatic experiences, integration into the community, self-acceptance and acceptance by other community members. In my PhD project I am researching the issues of perception of place and space by people who were forced to leave their homes due to the armed conflict in Ukraine.

In my project, I am conducting in-depth interviews with Ukrainian IDPs to study the narratives of space and place, based on symbolic cultural codes – and marshrutkas usually appear in the corpus of these codes as a symbol of ‘familiarity’ of the space. Transport system by itself may reflect the symbolic picture of the space, as it makes the space ‘imaginable’ through the routes and enables creation of the implicit landscapes. According to narratives of displaced people, the ability to move freely and to understand the space around makes the topos potentially understandable and suitable. Thus, not-knowing the specific transport system of a particular location can make a person an ‘outsider’ within the space, othered and excluded from the spatial and social system and unable to get into it because of such system features as unregularity and ‘liquidity’ in terms of Zygmunt Bauman. And absence of the general transportation map that would have included all the marshrutka routes turns every new space into an a priori alienated and incognizable ‘not-
place’.

Most of the almost two millions of internally displaced people come from the industrial cities of Donbas, where the transportation had a specific way of development, and was mostly devoted to the specific routes from residential areas through the city centers to the mines and factories. The same thing was in Donetsk with its specific ‘First line’ – a trolleybus route #1 from the railway station to the gate of steel factory. So in 90s marshrutka was the only way to connect the city districts and neighboring areas into one space. The emergence of marshrutkas may, to some extent, be one of the markers that united Donbas cities into some kind of a system ‘for the insiders.’ On the other hand, when people needed to move from the home towns to completely new city texture, they might have faced the similar image of marshrutkas, maybe the same route numbers – but with no idea about the space around and with no possibility to get to know it.

An intersectional approach may bring up even more questions on the exclusiveness and relation with space in context of this specific form of public transportation, as some categories of people may become even more excluded: for instance, internally displaced women with small children may be completely ohered and crossed out of the spatial and social relation just because they cannot use a marshrutka – that is sometimes the only mean of mobility in small cities.

The mentioned examples may lead us to rethinking of the city texture and elaborate a new approach to the public transportation system, in order to make the space more inclusive for all the kinds of passengers that share these spaces.

Bio:
Valeria Lazarenko, psychologist, PhD Researcher, Kyiv Research Institute for Social and Political Psychology (Kyiv, Ukraine), Bayreuth University (Bayreuth, Germany, visiting researcher). MS in Social Psychology (Kyiv National Taras Shevchenko University), currently working on a PhD project about spatial narratives of internally displaced people in Ukraine.
Previously - guest researcher at the Center for Peace Studies at the Arctic University of Tromso, Norway (January – March 2018), practical psychologist at the All-Ukrainian foundation for Children Rights (2016-2018).
24. *Workers or entrepreneurs: formalization and post-fordism among Thai motorcycle taxi drivers.*

**Author:** Claudio Sopranzetti

**Abstract:**

This paper explores the shifts in labor organization among transportation providers in Thailand after the 1997 economic crisis. It shows how the emerging language of entrepreneurship is reshaping the drivers’ lives, between a push toward formalization of their business and informalization of their labor relations.

**Bio:**

Claudio Sopranzetti is a postdoctoral research fellow at All Souls College and a lecturer in the School of Anthropology and Museum Ethnography at Oxford University. His research deals with questions of urbanism, mobility, and mobilization in Thailand and Italy. He recently published his second book—*Owners of the Map: Motorcycle Taxi Drivers, Mobility, and Politics in Bangkok*—with the University of California Press.
25. Proximity Extended: Can Mutual Access to ‘Third Places’ Offset Distance’s Effect on Social Relations

Author: Darkhan Medeuov

Abstract:
One of the robust features of friendship networks that emerge in schools is that physical proximity often predicts friendship: pupils that live close to each other are more likely to be friends. One of the explanations for this proximity effect is that friendship requires tangible interactions that tend to happen at shorter distances: for example, walking together back home from the school. Such a logic, in general, points out that in-school contacts are reinforced by out-school interactions. In the context of a city, however, out-school interactions are not always exhausted by those that happens in the vicinity of the dwelling place, but also may happen because of mutual access to “third places”. One of the urban features that can provide such access is public transit.

In this study, I compare effects of pairwise distance and access to public transportation on friendship among a cohort of 157 high-school students in a city in Kazakhstan. To measure the actors’ inclusion in the public transport network, I construct a weighted network of bus stations, calculate combined M-reach centrality of bus stations within 10-min walking distance for each actor, and use its absolute pairwise difference as a dyadic covariate. Physical proximity enters modeling either as linear (as “the crow flies”) or walking (as “the wolf runs”) distance between actors. To account for possible non-linear relations between access, distance, and friendship, I follow Preciado et. al (2012) and explore overall dependencies of distances and access on friendship using non-parametric regression. Then I approximate the explored dependence with logistic regression and include the corresponding transformation of distances and access into Exponential Random Graph Models to compare their explanatory power and to examine if their effects retain significance in the presence of structural and individual covariates.

Results provide support for the access hypothesis: while linear distance effect tends to be somewhat stronger than that of walking distance, both effects lose significance once structural dependencies are controlled. The difference in access, however, remains significant, suggesting that in this case mutual access to public transportation may be more salient for friendship than pairwise proximity.

Bio:
I am a PhD candidate at Leipzig University. I have earned master degree in sociology at Saint-Petersburg State University (2014) and bachelor degree in philosophy at Kazakh National University (2010). My current research focuses on understanding co-evolution of relations and mobility practices in schools. I am primarily interested in how social ties between students (e.g. friendship, romantic affairs) come about and how it subsequently
impact mobility practices, as well as what effect mobility practices have on social networks.
Encountering marshrutka buses as multiple projection surfaces – What marshrutka interior and design tell us about its everyday participants?

Authors: Cholpon Turdalieva & Tonio Weicker

Abstract:
Marshrutka minibuses are in charge of providing daily transport services for millions of passengers in the post-Soviet urban space. In doing so, they shape the interindividual perception of public sphere and contribute to the interindividual production of a societal collective. In this sense, the interior and design of marshrutka minibuses contribute to a number of continuously and publicly negotiated discourse formations on collective identity patterns, such as inter alia nationhood, memory culture, as well as religious affiliation.

Drawing on empirical evidence from Kyrgyzstan and Russia, we try to deconstruct the multiple layers of marshrutka signposts representing struggles in the respective urban society. In their heterogeneity and contrariness, the marshrutka semiotics unveil the minibuses as a place of encounter and conflict, where fluid social institutions are consistently calling for negotiation. Triggered by the question how cultural trajectories and projections of identity are performed, manifested and sometimes negotiated through the design of marshrutka interior, we will choose a number of marshrutka messages like official licenses, commercial advertisement or patriotic proverbs and contextualise them in the local setting of application. Moreover, we examine how the sociotechnical arrangement within the marshrutka determines the daily interaction between drivers and passengers or reflects systemic struggles in the marshrutka business between operator and drivers as well as between transport workers and politicians.

Therefore, the expected insight of this paper is twofold: firstly, we contextualise social relations and struggles, which are reproduced in everyday marshrutka encounters, and secondly, we contribute to a better understanding of the everyday mobility practice as such, pointing to general deficits in the broader marshrutka enterprise, read out from daily communication practices and visualised statements in the social negotiation arena, marshrutka.

Bio (Cholpon Turdalieva):
Cholpon received the Candidate of historical sciences and Doctor of historical sciences degrees from the Institute of History at the National Academy of Sciences of the Kyrgyz Republic. Her main research focusing on the history and culture of the Kyrgyz in the works of the 19th and early 20th century travellers was resulted in two monographs and more than thirty articles.

She is currently dealt with the research on the marshrutka space as production of urban identity and negotiation of it with other identities like ethnicity, class and gender. Particularly, she is interested in to what extent these identities incorporate the element of change and transformation because of mobility and regular process of human negotiation and interaction.
Interferences of migration and urban mobility policies in conflicting transport assemblages of contemporary Russian cities

Author: Tonio Weicker

Abstract:
It is well known that Central Asian labour migrants build the backbone of crucial economy sectors in the Russian Federation as inter alia construction, agriculture and trade but also the rather understudied public transport service. To fill this gap, this article deals with the significant increase of labour migrants in the marshrutka sector in the past decade. Major reforms and formalisation processes in the 2000s brought operators back into the tax net and ensured a certain extent of control to the local transport departments on the one hand but worsened the labour conditions of the transport workers on the other. These changes marked the entry point of labour migrants working as marshrutka drivers all over the country, as many Russian drivers refused to accept the intolerable conditions in the market. At the same time, the public discourse on marshrutkas took a negative turn, with minibuses being perceived as dangerous and archaic while stigmatising the so called ‘Samarkand Squads’ stigmatised as rude drivers, who do not follow the rules or are incapable of driving appropriately. This is also reflected in the recent enactment of local laws denying, for instance, the thus far accepted validity of Central Asian or former Soviet driver licenses.

Drawing from empirical evidence of my fieldwork in Southern Russia, I describe currently problematized mobility assemblages and embed the actor’s articulations in broader conflicts within the marshrutka business and transport regulation policy. I further analyse how labour migrants have been forced to accept unfavourable working conditions in the enterprises, as a direct result of politically triggered reforms in the marshrutka business. The paper provides insights into the social arena of a “marshrutka” which serves as a societal encounter of urban conflicts and transformation mirroring the (un-)intended effects of local transport planning reform attempts.

Bio:
I studied sociology (B.A.) and Eastern European Studies (M.A.) in Jena and Munich. In my MA-thesis I analysed current commemoration-narratives in Ukrainian internet discourses. The thesis problematizes the idea of an equal and unlimited discussion culture in the digital world and shows processes of exclusion and homogenization in the case of Ukrainian digital commemoration practices. During the last two years I used to live and work in Volgograd. As a lecturer of the Robert-Bosch-Foundation, I taught at the State University and organized several projects at the university and in the culture life of the city. I organised various projects which aimed to intensify the educational exchange between Germany and Russia.
Of Marshrutkas and microraiions: everyday life in Tbilisi’s peripheral neighborhoods

Author: Mikheil Svanidze

Abstract:
This paper tackles the question of everyday life as it relates to the relationship of the two of its aspects – (informal) mobility and the built (physical) environment. What happens when mobility provision system governed by logic of private entrepreneurship, micromobility and early post-soviet capitalism spatially encounters a built neighborhood based on socialist modernist principles? To grapple with this questions, I have looked at work of one system – minibus networks in Tbilisi – within another, microraiions where the minibus paths cross.

Among other Post-Soviet capitals, the organization of Tbilisi’s transport system, its history and contestations vis-à-vis informal transport can be described as relatively diverse, with an extremely decentralized and haphazard system in the 1990s slowly shaping into a more stable system with a single private company as a provider – the ubiquitous yellow marshrutka. The relative stability, perseverance and relative longevity of this system (and the company) offered a unique opportunity to look at the behavioural patterns of marshrutkas within the soviet-build microraiions – neighborhoods of particular social orders. Based on extensive multi-layered fieldwork this paper offers empirical insights from two of Tbilisi’s largest microraiions and the marshrutka systems situated and working in their bosom.

Because marshrutkas and the travel or urban ways associated with them were not immediate products of Soveit planning, because this system spread in order to fill “the hole” in mobility provision, and due to various levels of autonomy from the state in which they operated, novel ways and habits of mobility for dwellers in these areas have been formed. On the other hand, the planned microraiions ideally had all the basic urban needs (mobility, education, recreation, availability of green space) available for them and the more recent extensive marshrutka network had to find its way to encroach these everyday life orders. All of this contributed to the formation of a particular tactics of everyday life – including but not limited to mobility behaviour and particular practices of operation and use to adapt to them.

Bio:
Mikheil Svanidze is a PhD candidate at Tbilisi State University. He has studied Sociology at Tbilisi State University and obtained Master’s degree in and Social Anthropology in Central European University. His research interests include political anthropology and political parties, social movements, inequality, mobility and public spaces in post-Soviet states. Methods-wise Mikheil positions himself as an anthropologist with extensive qualitative fieldwork expertise. Currently he is working towards his PhD thesis on
production and reproduction of urban inequality and post-soviet way of life in Georgia as seen through the lens of Tbilisi's transport networks, specifically minibus networks.
29. Conceptualising the *amaphela*: Informal and shared mobilities in South African townships

**Author**: Bradley Rink

**Abstract**: As a unique informal and shared mobility strategy in several of Cape Town’s township contexts, the *amaphela* [cockroach in isiXhosa] provides township dwellers in Gugulethu, Nyanga, Crossroads, Luzuko, Philippi and Samora Machel with flexible, affordable and relatively comfortable transportation in combination with semi-formalised services provided by mini-bus taxi routes. While this mobility practice has been described through the lens of paratransit and transportation geographies, it has evaded analysis through the lens of mobility. The flexibility and informality of this mobility practice can be understood through both utopian or dystopian lenses: It can be seen as a threat to order, formality, safety and reliability in the modern South African city; or it can be celebrated for the unique and creative ways that it penetrates the complex urban fabric of informality and serves the public through flexible and affordable on-demand service. This paper engages literature from the new mobilities paradigm to explore the functioning of *amaphela* services in Cape Town, and their impacts on the social, economic and spatial dimensions of everyday mobility in an African urban context.

**Bio**: Bradley Rink (PhD, University of Cape Town) is Senior Lecturer in the Department of Geography, Environmental Studies & Tourism at the University of the Western Cape (UWC) in Cape Town, South Africa. His current research project *Mobilities in the global South* is concerned with the relational aspects of people, objects and ideas in/around urban environments. His research aims to better understand mobilities and their contribution to our understanding of relationships between urban dwellers and the cities in which they live. His recent outputs have been published in leading journals within his field, including *Mobilities, Transfers, Tourism Geographies, Urban Forum*, as well as various edited collections including the forthcoming *Transport, Transgression and Politics in African Cities: The Rhythm of Chaos* (Routledge, August 2018) edited by Daniel Agbiboa. He is the recipient of the 2017 UWC Faculty of Arts Teaching & Learning Award, as well as the 2017 CHE-HELTASA National Excellence in Teaching and Learning Award.
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