H-Net Reviews
in the Humanities & Social Sciences

Cultures of Mobility. Munich: Bayerische Amerika-Akademie / Bavarian American Academy, 05.07.2012-07.07.2012.

Reviewed by Pia Eckert

Published on H-Soz-u-Kult (October, 2012)

Cultures of Mobility

For the interdisciplinary conference "Cultures of Mobility", scholars from the fields of urban studies, geography, history, sociology, and literary and cultural studies convened to discuss the multiple meanings of mobility in a transatlantic context. In order to provide an extensive insight into the many definitions of mobility, scholars from different disciplines were invited. Presenters used a range of subject-specific approaches to indicate the results of their research and scholarly work in five panels.

The conference was opened by JOHN D. KASARDA (Chapel Hill, NC, USA) with a keynote address on "The Rise of the Aerotropolis". After giving an overview of the recent transformation of city airports into airport cities, Kasarda introduced his Aerotropolis concept. It is designed to improve the competitiveness of urban areas by using air transportation infrastructures in multiple ways and by planning new cities around the air facilities.

Panel I, "Logistics and Freight Mobility" focused on the transport- and logistic-related definitions of mobility. In "'Resolving' Spatial and Scalar Mismatches in North American Freight Logistics", PETER HALL (Vancouver, Canada) spoke on contemporary challenges in North American freight logistics and highlighted the importance of combining integrated and disintegrated freight logistics systems. Using the city of Vancouver as an empirical foil, he demonstrated how spatial and scalar mismatches are resolved in urban areas. BARBARA LENZ (Berlin, Germany) explored "Mobility, Information, and Travel Behavior" and investigated the various reasons for changes in travel behavior such as the effects of new technological developments.

In Panel II, "The Wings of Democracy: Mobility in the Times of Airtravel", the speakers concentrated on American aviation. DAVID COURTWRIGHT (Jacksonville, USA) commenced his presentation "Airworld: The History, Culture, and Prospects of American Aviation" with an overview of the history of American aviation and space travel. Courtwright further spoke of the possible depopulation in American aviation due to rising costs, environmental causes and the development of digital communications. In "(Post-) Modern Architectures: American Airports and the Limits of Mobility", ANKE ORTLEPP (Munich, Germany) presented the shift in American airport architecture from lofty, open spaces to highly controlled security-zones. Ortlepp also highlighted the socio-cultural aspects of airport architecture, visible for example in segregated areas for African Americans until the 1960s.

Panel III, "Mobility and the Arts", shifted attention to the fields of literary and cultural studies. In his talk "Tempo Giusto: The Art of the Slow Ride", TED BISHOP (Edmonton, Canada) drew from his book "Riding with Rilke: Reflections on Motorcycles and Books" to convey his perception of speed as an illusion and to explore the relations between speed and space. FRANCOIS SPECQ (Lyon, France) discussed "Thoreau's Geographies of (Im)mobility" on the basis of Thoreau's "Walking". Specq analyzed various essays with regard to the meaning of walking, westward expansion and the celebration of the wild.

The presenters of Panel IV, "Social Mobility", focused on mobility and migration. In her presentation "Life-Trajectories of Poles in the UK: Deskilling in a Transnational Perspective", MAGDALENA NOWICKA (Munich, Germany) spoke on the employment trajectories of Polish migrants to the UK. On the basis of interviews, she portrayed the lives of skilled and highly-

skilled polish migrants in the UK and explained various reasons for their degrading labor situations. LUDGER PRIES (Bochum, Germany) presented on transnational migration in "Cross-Border Mobility and Transnational Social Spaces – the Example of Mexico-US-Migration". Pries stressed the need for new concepts of space which take into consideration the pluri-local transnational social spaces caused by transnational migration. On the basis of empirical research, he demonstrated how transnational migration will gain even further importance in the near future.

Panel V focused on "Cultural Mobility" on the Canadian West Coast and in the city of Portland, Oregon. PHILLIP VANNINI (Victoria, Canada) spoke about "Cultures of Mobility on Canada's West Coast". With the help of empirical characterizations and ethnographic descriptions, he discussed the concept of islandness as a practice and the various cultural meanings of ferry boats. In her presentation "Reading Multiple Mobilities: Chuck Palahniuk's Fugitives and Refugees", ALEXANDRA GANSER (Erlangen-Nuremberg, Germany) gave an overview of mobility studies and the study of cultural aspects in the field. Ganser then critically analyzed the various meanings of mobility in Palahniuk's guidebook to the city of Portland.

The panel presentations were complemented by a panel discussion held in German. The participants THOMAS HAMACHER (Munich), ARMIN NASSEHI (Munich), MANUEL SATTIG (Munich), and the moderator KLAUS BENESCH (Munich, Germany) spoke about the future of mobility. In "Mobilität/Immobilität – Wege in die Zukunft", a lively discussion emerged about the prospects of electric cars, new forms of car sharing and the future of individual mobility on a global scale.

The BAA annual conference on "Cultures of Mobility" has been an inspiring get-together for academic and non-academic participants. In the days of the event over 200 participants attended keynote, panels, and panel discussion. The conference brought together scholars from the USA, Canada, France, and Germany, additional participants were students from different academic disciplines (economics, geography, history, political science, media studies, American literature and cultural studies), international scholars, and professionals working in related fields. The complementary film series added an audience of experts in film and an interested general public. Three objectives have been met: One central objective for the annual conference was to enlarge communication between scholars from different disciplines and different regions to enhance their own scholarly work. Another objective was to inform a scholarly audience about a new and specific field of studies. To attract members of the international business community in Munich and to win these as multipliers was another objective of the conference. All conference papers will be published in the BAA publication series with Universitätsverlag Winter in Heidelberg. KLAUS BENESCH will be the distinguished editor of the anthology.

Conference Overview:

Panel I: Logistics and Freight Mobility
Chair: Barbara Hahn (University of Wuerzburg)

Peter Hall (Simon Fraser University, Vancouver): "Resolving" Spatial and Scalar Mismatches in North American Freight Logistics

Barbara Lenz (German Aerospace Center, Berlin): Mobility, Information, and Travel Behavior

Panel II: The Wings of Democracy: Mobility in the Times of Airtravel
Chair: Volker Depkat (University of Regensburg)

David Courtwright (University of North Florida, Jacksonville): Airworld: The History, Culture, and Prospects of American Aviation

Anke Ortlepp (LMU Munich): (Post-)Modern Architectures: American Airports and the Limits of Mobility

Panel III: Mobility and the Arts
Chair: Klaus Benesch (LMU Munich)

Ted Bishop (University of Alberta, Edmonton): Tempo Giusto: The Art of the Slow Ride

François Specq (Ecole Normale Supérieure, Lyon): Thoreau's Geographies of (Im)mobility

Panel IV: Social Mobility
Chair: Stefan Schirm (University of Bochum)

Magdalena Nowicka (LMU Munich): Life-Trajectories of Poles in the UK: Deskilling in a Transnational Perspective

Ludger Pries (University of Bochum): Cross-Border Mobility and Transnational Social Spaces – the Example of Mexico-US-Migration

Panel V: Cultural Mobility
Chair: Heike Paul (University of Erlangen-Nuremberg)

Phillip Vannini (Royal Roads University, Victoria): Cultures of Mobility on Canada's West Coast

Alexandra Ganser (University of Erlangen Nuremberg): Reading Multiple Mobilities: Chuck Palahniuk's Fugitives and Refugees

Keynote Address
John D. Kasarda (Director Kenan Institute of Private Enterprise, Kenan-Flagler Business School, University of North Carolina): The Rise of the Aerotropolis

Panel Discussion
Mobilität/Immobilität – Wege in die Zukunft
Moderation: Klaus Benesch (LMU Munich)

Discussants:
Thomas Hamacher (TU Munich)
Armin Nassehi (LMU Munich)
Manuel Sattig (BMW Group)

If there is additional discussion of this review, you may access it through the network, at:

http://hsozkult.geschichte.hu-berlin.de/

Citation: Pia Eckert. Review of , *Cultures of Mobility*. H-Soz-u-Kult, H-Net Reviews. October, 2012.

URL: http://www.h-net.org/reviews/showrev.php?id=37343

Copyright © 2012 by H-Net, Clio-online, and the author, all rights reserved. This work may be copied and redistributed for non-commercial, educational purposes, if permission is granted by the author and usage right holders. For permission please contact H-SOZ-U-KULT@H-NET.MSU.EDU.