Stop and Go
Nodes of Transformation and Transition
Michael Hieslmair and Michael Zinganel
Contents

Placeholder/Substitution
Artist Insert
Sonia Leimer 10

Road Map of Research:
Introduction
Michael Zinganel 14

Interrelated Networks: Material and Social Infrastructure between the Former East and West of Europe

Networking Eurasia:
Bulgarian International Truck Drivers and SOMAT in the Cold War Era
Emiliya Karaboeva 40

Memoryscapes and the Legacy of SOMAT Networks and Nodes Today:
Reflections on the Applied Methodology
Michael Zinganel, Michael Hieslmair, and Emiliya Karaboeva 68
Corridors into Vienna and Beyond: The Bus, the Terminal, the Border—Infrastructural Publics and Politics

Gates to the City: Transformations and Encounters at Vienna’s International Coach Terminals
Michael Hieslmair 88

Check Point Nickelsdorf, 2015: Reactivation of a Border for the Mobilization of Forced Migration
Michael Zinganel and Michael Hieslmair 120

Tallinn Harbor: Rhythms of a Road to Sea Bottleneck and the Effects on the City

A Speaking Passenger Network Diagram: Reflections on the Applied Methodology
Michael Zinganel, Michael Hieslmair, and Tarmo Pikner 144

Harbors and Practiced Lines: Evolving Mobilities between Tallinn and Helsinki
Tarmo Pikner 156

Corridors Rerouted and the Choice of Vehicles

Secondhand Car Markets and Mobilization in Eastern Europe
Michael Zinganel 184

From Guangdong to Wólka Kosowska: Migrants’ Transnational Trade
Katarzyna Osiecka and Tatjana Vukosavljevic 200

The Last European: A Romanian Driver Navigates the Soul of the EU
Juan Moreno 224

Retraveling and Reknotting Ideas and Interim Findings of Our Project: Summary
Michael Zinganel 236

Modernize or Die!
Artist Insert
Johanna Kandl 244

Appendix
Image Credits 248
Biographies 252
Sonia Leimer’s artworks are situated between real spaces and imaginary contexts. Her “cut-outs,” pieces of street asphalt, were extracted during construction work from the context of their functional use in real places as the surface of Viennese streets and carefully stored. These pure material appropriations, literally “registering” the traces of their use, are combined with steel and plastic elements, which refer to construction site barriers or (sub-constructions for) traffic signs and their visual language; these isolated fragments are open to multiple interpretations on archaeological, psychoanalytical, political, and poetic levels. (Michael Hieslmair and Michael Zinganel)
When increasing numbers of people are obliged to spend increasing amounts of time in transit, then routes, corridors, vehicles, and stopping points become operationalized as important public places for dwelling-in-transit (rather than as generic nonplaces). Here trade might happen, rituals and routines are developed, contacts initiated with regions of origin or target. This is also where those who were mobile before engage in cultivating and maintaining on-the-spot, fragmented communities. Here we can observe a “vernacular cosmopolitanism” and “doing with space” becomes a kind of “knotting”: a multi and trans-local mobile culture of integration specific alongside these road corridors. The alternative models of urbanism that ensue from the paradigmatic shift at these spaces are shaped by polyrhythmic densifications and the continual performance of difference such as also increasingly inform our everyday lives. These nodes and knots are perfect places to investigate not only the strategies of (supra-)national institutions to control mobilities but also to examine how this “knotting” is practiced on site in a widely mobile/mobilized life and what kind of publics are already articulated.

After the fall of the Iron Curtain, “leaking eddies of small-scale traders” began to spread along the road corridors between what was the East and the West. According to Karl Schlögel, these were responsible for furthering the unification of Europe from below well before EU financing resulted in the development of the infrastructure and likewise before the large-scale logistics companies built their huge hubs and trading centers. But the implementation of new modern traffic infrastructure went hand in hand with the expansion of the EU, albeit with different delays, speeds, and qualities. New highways might improve accessiblity and accelerate connections between some places but will eventually also disrupt access between others by interrupting old paths or by bypassing entire regions. On new highways, the flow of traffic becomes increasingly organized and monitored, and there is hardly any place left for traders who attempt to earn a living by doing business by the side of the road, like those alongside the old low-speed corridors that pass through villages and towns, and especially close to major crossroads or border stations.

The central questions of this project are: How have formal and informal nodes and knots of transnational mobilities alongside the major road corridors in the triangle between Vienna, Tallinn, and the Turkish-Bulgarian border been developed and transformed since the fall of the Iron Curtain and the expansion of the European Union? What is this transformation doing to people and how are these nodes and knots being appropriated and transformed here into anchors in the everyday lives of their multi-local existence? Our perspective: the city of Vienna, a capital of the “former West,” but once the center of a multi-national European empire and an important meeting point between the East and West during the Cold War, has been crisscrossed by traffic corridors connecting the East and West of Europe. By examining the changes in transnational mobility patterns starting from and arriving here, the post-socialist transformation of the wider geopolitical sphere—the former East of Europe—can easily be investigated. Transnational routes lead to the north- and south-east, for instance to Tallinn and the Bulgarian-Turkish border region, both located in the “former East” of Europe, at the two opposite ends of an important north-south axis (within the East), characterized by quite different geopolitical constellations and tensions, both historically and in contemporary political transitions and urban transformations. This post-socialist transformation, understood as “a process of decolonizing and disclosuring the Cold War European mind and its spaces,” “arrived with intense commitments to market reform, liberalization and internationalization of the economy, as well as to fast capitalism and primitive accumulation,” “producing new class formations and deepening divisions between the winners and losers.”

The regions we investigated (including Vienna) differ significantly in terms of state regulation, gradations between formal and informal economy and governmentality, commitments to market reform, liberalization and internationalization of the economy, as well as to fast capitalism and primitive accumulation, “producing new class formations and deepening divisions between the winners and losers.”

The chapters of this book are based on fieldwork conducted during the research project “Stop and Go—Nodes of Transformation and Transition” (2014–16), hosted by the Academy of Fine Arts in Vienna and funded by the WWTF—Vienna Science and Technology Fund under the 2013 call Public Spaces in Transition. Principal investigators were the Vienna-based cultural historian Michael Zinganel and the architect and artist Michael Hieslmair, supported by international research partners at each research destination: for Bulgaria, the anthropologist Emilija Karboeva, from Eindhoven and Plovdiv Universities, and for Estonia and the Baltic, the geographer Tarmo Pikner, researcher at the Center of Cultural Studies of the Estonian Institute of Humanities, Tallinn University.

Infrastructure, Power, and the Everyday Life on the Road

Since the discourse on globalization has denounced the restrictive mandate underpinning the “container theory” of space and its “methodological nationalism” as historical fiction, mobility is discussed in the context of a “mobility continuum” that extends from one extreme form, tourism, to the other, migration. These two forms of mobility are no longer perceived as dichotomies however. Instead, the focus has now shifted to their common and interchangeable features, indeed, even to their contingency on one another, which is also true for the logistics of transporting goods and refugee aid.

With the announcement of a general “mobilities turn” in humanities, now infrastructure and logistics also seem to be a hot issue: Anna Tsing, for instance, theorized supply chain capitalism as a model for understanding both the continent-crossing scale and the constitutive diversity of contemporary global capitalism. In contrast with theories of growing capitalist homogeneity, her analysis points to the structural role of difference in the mobilization of capital, labor, and resources. Deborah Cowen’s book The Deadly Life of Logistics: Mapping Violence in Global Trade made it an even hotter issue: although the object of corporate and governmental logistical efforts is commodity supply, she demonstrates that they are deeply political—and, when considered in the context of the long history of logistics, deeply indebted to the practice of war (and colonialism).

But what has been missing in critical Marxist and postcolonial critique of global capitalism and the spatial and functional analyses of logistic landscapes is the logistic landscape as a place of everyday encounter and experience. Ole B. Jensen, for instance, argues that “critical mobility thinking” should also “[re-concep-


5 See e.g., Jeremy Morris and Abel Polese, eds., The Informal Post-socialist Economy: Embedded Practices and Livelihoods (London: Routledge, 2014); Martin Demant Frederiksen and Jørgen Harboe Knudsen, eds., Ethnographies of Grey Zones in Eastern Europe: Relations, Borders and Invisibilities (London: Anthem Press, 2015); and many more mentioned later in this publication.


tualize] mobility and infrastructures as sites of (potential) meaningful interaction, pleasure, and cultural production,” where people engage in “negotiation in motion” and “mobile sense making”; and also to respect the material and affective dimensions of everyday social life en route or on hold.11

Another very different but equally productive approach, spreading around the humanities, is to discuss the relations of publics and infrastructures: Penny Harvey and Hannah Knox and Collier in “Publics Infrastructures/Infrastructural Public” analyze with reference to John Dewey how technical infrastructure projects induce or support the constitution of certain temporary publics, e.g., organizing against the construction, or in favor of the construction, and how specific communication and transport infrastructures enable the continuity of trans-local publics.12

Lyubomir Pozharliev, for instance, describes the effects of the construction of the Highway of Brotherhood and Unity in the 1940s and 1950s in socialist Yugoslavia, which was originally intended to support the formation of a trans-ethnic collective but through choice of route in fact contributed to reestablishing and reenforcing uneven economic developments in the federation and furthering the “peripheralization” of underprivileged regions.13 Besides this, it was also used for purposes it was not planned for: foreign tourist transit, transcontinental cargo transport and labor migration. In two brilliant comprehensive anthologies of roads, Penny Harvey and Hannah Knox reflected on both the conflicts caused by and the enchantment people attribute to a Peruvian road while under planning and (re-)construction,14 while Dimitris Dalakoglou investigated a road between Albania and Greece, scaling up and down from the intimate interactions in a small Albanian town, to the political ambitions of the state, and to the cross-border migrations that structure Albania today. Roads, for Dalakoglou, are also anoxic technologies, promising gifts but also bringing dangers: smuggling, drugs, human trafficking, and money laundering.15 Here infrastructures like roads and road corridors are perceived as technical networks—representing tools of governance and governmentality. But simultaneously they are also perceived as “aesthetic networks,” which support the circulation of people, goods, and capital, but also images, imaginaries and desires.16

Pan-European Road Corridors

Pan-European transport-corridor(s) is the term used to describe the transport connections between the former Eastern European countries and Western Europe, intended to network Europe in vital ways. The ten corridors (fig. 4) were already defined at the second Pan-European Transport Conference in Crete, in March 1994, at the height of hostilities between the states that made up former Yugoslavia, and a year before Austria, Sweden, and Finland joined the EU, and even many more years before the former Eastern European nations followed. Additions were made at the third conference in Helsinki in 1997, regarding which routes in Central and Eastern Europe required major investment over the next fifteen years.17

Despite also producing unintended side effects for many regions, the implementation and upgrading of traffic corridors is the unquestioned core project of EU infrastructural planning.18 We are dealing here with monuments to the modernization of both state and multi-state organizations, exceptional technical achievements and financial investments, which while being planned, built, and extended, are facing conflicting ideas even from inside the planning consortium and its experts and political and economic pressure from outside (including, for instance, protests against expropriation and ecological counter-arguments).19 Since they are often contested they are subject to strict controls or at least a marked will toward the imposition of order and control. At the same time, however, they also stand for a great reserve of imagination and imaginaries to which individuals and institutions attach a great number of dreams (and nightmares).20


14 Harvey and Knox, Roads.


17 Therefore, these corridors are sometimes referred to as the “Crete corridors” or “Helsinki corridors,” regardless of their geographical locations. These development corridors had been distinct from the Trans-European transport networks, which include all major established routes within the European Union. There are proposals to combine the two systems, since most of the involved countries are now members of the EU.


19 Harvey and Knox, Roads.

These range from anticipated economic growth and transnational reconciliation to troop deployment capabilities (on the part of the government), from motorized escapes away from petit bourgeois parental homes or anything alienating one’s daily routine into the freedom of holidays to even labor migration and the mass exodus of refugees from war-torn regions.

Hence, “any given road or highway is socio-culturally many highways at the same time. [...] The meanings of a road as a product are open to [those who build it] and those who use it, experience its existence, [...] or even just expect it, or its rhythmic flows.”21 In fact, while being built and in operation these corridors function as magnets,22 attracting both things and individuals that move into their orbit or accumulate around them.23 These experiences are registered and reflected in construction records, official monitoring body statistics, mass media news clips, stories of the daily lives of road users and residents, popular songs, artworks, and research reports like ours.

**Investigating and Driving Nodes and Knots of Transnational Mobilities**

In our research project we expanded the focus on a variety of mobile actors and the places where, for various reasons, the flow of traffic stops or is interrupted—bus terminals, ferry ports, parking spaces for international lorry drivers, TIR stops (named after the transnational transport organization TIR24), motorway service stations, logistics centers, formal and informal markets, or border crossing stations along the corridors. The strategies of both the government (and supra-governmental) institutions and large-scale concerns can be discerned from how they control the flows of mobility. This applies to the different routes as well as the motives and mobility biographies of the passing actors, “doing with” or “performing” space in various ways.25 Sometimes, during the process, these anthropological non-places26—where, at best, objects communicate with each other—undergo transmutation into intimate anchor points in the daily routines of the multi-local existences of highly mobile subjects. They become places where trade might happen and where rituals and routines of relaxation are developed, contacts initiated with regions in which their destinations, origins, or targets lie, but these places are also where they engage in cultivating and maintaining the on-the-spot, fragmented communities. They are places to be inhabited for short periods of a break, overnight or sometimes even for weekends.

By describing driving as a social practice and the motorway as a place always in a state of becoming, Peter Merriman brilliantly deconstructed Marc Augé’s notion of non-places,27 still largely prevalent in the field of art and architecture. Samuel Austin juxtaposes Augé’s negative perception, with similar ideas of

highway stations as decentered, interrelated places of process, blurring the distinctions of local and global, place and non-place.28 During pauses in truck drivers’ auto-mobility, Nicky Gregson argues, the space of the cab, made economic through driving the logistic network of supply chain capitalism, is morphed into a cozy and habitable space for dwelling in transit, a home-from-home.29

This continuous transformation of and at these transit spaces generates the development of a dynamic polycentric model of a multi-local (sub-)urbaniy or post-urbaniy comprising interconnected archipelagos whereby each represents only a single station on a route taken by individuals or objects in their vehicles.30 They are not, however, permanent and may become obsolete or fall into disrepair to be replaced by new nodes (elsewhere). Alternatively, informal nodes may tend to become formalized and controlled so that new informal nodes pop up in other places.

Marxist thinkers in general, especially Michel de Certeau and Henry Lefebvre,31 harshly criticized transnational streetscapes as both symbols of and vehicles for the expansion of global capitalism. And, although they juxtapose driving roads with their own rather romantic perception of face-to-face interaction when walking the city, they offered a perfect basis for also analyzing peoples’ tactics for selecting, approaching and inhabiting such nodes and for appropriating and coproducing social space there. Following Michel de Certeau’s distinction between “strategies” (of those in power) and “tactics” (of tricksters) we propose to introduce the notions of “nodes” and “knots,” where nodes are constituted by strategies of powerful institutions within logistic networks and the network of road corridors, whereas

21 Dalakoglou, The Road, 11, 13.  
23 E.g., the enormous demand for labor force needed for the construction and expansion of such large-scale projects also caused waves of labor migration.  
24 TIR stands for “Transports Internationaux Routiers,” a multilateral organization established soon after the end of Second World War to simplify and harmonize the administrative formalities of international road transport.  
knots are established by the tactics of individuals to fulfill their everyday needs in transit. Nodes and knots can be independent from one another, but they are not always distinct; they often overlap, when existing nodes are used for the individuals’ practice of knotting. With reference to Lefebvre’s “Rhythmanalyses,” these nodes and knots represent “polyrhythmic” ensembles of (post-)urban architecture, mobile objects, and individuals that are dependent on rhythmic flows of traffic that fluctuate on a daily, weekly, or seasonal basis, only to contract again, challenging the traditional notion of public space.32

Mobilizing Ourselves by the Mobile Lab

Investigations of such places, constituted by polyrhythmic flows of people and vehicles, obviously also mean driving these routes and following the fluid characters from one stop to the next. In response to the call from Mobilities Studies protagonists for “mobile methods,”33 we proposed a mobile ethnography enabling us to become physically immersed in mobile activities while simultaneously working on material and visual representations of networked mobilities.

The core elements of investigation were to be intensive research trips along the geographic triangle of Vienna, Tallinn, and the Bulgarian-Turkish border (fig. 4). Hence, we wanted to rent a small van to pull a trailer that could be used both as a mobile toolbox and a fold-out display for producing large-scale mapping exercises in our projected field of research. However, we came to learn that there was no chance of renting any vehicle to drive to high-risk areas like the Baltic states, Romania, Serbia, or Bulgaria due to potential car theft. So we needed to purchase a secondhand vehicle ourselves. But after a desperate search we could not find any smaller car for a reasonable price, outside of a large Ford Transit transporter van (fig. 5).

The van also helped us to assimilate into the field of research: it looked like so many other vans driving the very same routes. And when waiting at one of the nodes, nothing helps you strike up a little conversation more easily than talking about your own experience with the vehicle itself, the items loaded, the workload of the driver, the route, the rhythm, the trouble with police and border controls, or the transport business in general. Transporter vans like ours are an attractive choice for professionals to escape the strict regulations and control mechanisms imposed on drivers of full-size trucks. They offer the opportunity to drive seven days a week around the clock and bypass the long waiting queues of border controls for heavy trucks to transport goods and people—with or without proper papers. Transporter vans of this type are the favorite vehicles for fitters and market vendors. Thus, we eventually decided to follow their routes from wholesale markets to open-air markets and vice versa.

But actually, we were also stopped to purchase road tax discs close to each border station, to refill our gas tank every 650 kilometers at reliable-looking gas stations, to go to toilet, or to eat and drink what we considered “authentic” local or truck drivers’ food. We had some areas in mind where to stay overnight—but we wanted to keep the freedom of choice where exactly to stop. So each day when the sun started to set we would go in search of cheap motels with parking lots, large enough to park our 14-meter-long van and trailer combination. The more LGV trucks and vans like ours, the safer we felt protected against car theft and street robbery. But unlike truck drivers, we decided not to sleep in our van. Checking into motels, having a beer at night and breakfast in the morning seemed more promising for triggering additional chances for conversations and interactions with experts working at these nodes of transnational mobilities! To anticipate potential stops, we traced our route on printed maps beforehand, attentively observed street side building types and signs, and stopped at gas stations with Wi-Fi access to google overnight accommodation we could reach before it got too dark. And—in case of emergency—we even asked a driver of another van with a regional number plate for advice, who personally guided us to the motel of a friend or cousin.

Of special interest to us had been the variety of highway service stations, and especially TIR stops, parking lots and service facilities specialized in HGV trucks and their drivers. While at newly constructed highway intersections national or private operator companies and professional gas stations are used to offering modern and well-serviced parking facilities for HGV trucks at a predefined distance to each other, along the many other roads which are not yet modernized, the quality of built infrastructure and services, the social status of operators and visitors—but also the visual language, communicating toward the road—differs radically: we stopped at super modern TIR stops with huge illuminated displays visible from a long distance, and with all kinds of facilities such as toilets, showers, laundry machines, special lounges for drivers, separated parking for small trucks,
standard HGV trucks, and refrigerated vehicles, even offering power supply jacks for their cooling units, because otherwise these vehicles have their engines running throughout the night. Many of these modern stations, built or modernized with European Union infrastructure funds, might at first sight match Marc Augé’s perception of anthropological non-places, a-historic and highly regulated by predefined paths, regulations and barriers, and plenty of signs and billboards, control and surveillance technologies.

But by driving the roads and stopping at nodes, we at least attributed specific meanings to these places in the context of this travelogue. And depending on the time spent there and the interest we showed, they were transformed into spaces of aesthetic, gastronomic or social experience. Here we either observed, directly encountered, or recorded the individual experience of others, owning these spaces, working there or passing by. By means of participant observation, conversations—and the method of live mapping—or online research for gaining further information, what had been non-places before for others, soon became deeply loaded with history and histories to us.
And although the combination of the geopolitical sphere, the specific landscape, the many signs and billboards, and the design of buildings and vehicles, and the service advertised there, are far from being neutral, these elements constitute an emotional semiotic appeal. And to be frank, we often enjoyed stopping out of pure aesthetic interest and anthropological curiosity, triggered by the attraction of this visual language (figs. 6–13). For instance, we encountered such picturesque attractions as an old low-bed truck parked by the road carrying an even older municipal bus with signs on the windows advertising the services of a rather informal looking TIR stop on a vacant derelict industrial estate beyond it (fig. 14). Or we visited a graveled site by the roadside, where a local farmer was trying to capitalize on his piece of land, simply with a mobile toilet and three small containers for the security guard, a bar, and a prostitute offering her services. Prostitution had been present almost everywhere, mostly offered by ethnic minorities, while watchdogs and guards, went about their job of controlling each of the TIR stops and motels, some motorized and wearing up-to-date professional uniforms, others looking scary in their paramilitary combat dress—and baseball bats.

Mapping, Collecting, and Exhibiting as Forms of Participative Knowledge Transfer

At these nodes and knots, it seems, human forms of mobility are inseparably linked with nonhuman and immaterial forms, and cartographic techniques seem to provide the most appropriate tools for the analysis and representation of such multilayered, dynamic networks and hierarchies, as Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari and Bruno Latour have argued.34 We are, of course, aware that maps have had a hard time in the context of Marxist, poststructuralist, and postcolonial critique. David Harvey’s analysis examined the role of global images in the expansion of European colonial powers.35 Denis Wood employed semiotics to persuasively argue that the power of maps lies in the interests they represent. Mapping in this light always has a political purpose, and this “interest” often leads to people being pushed “off the map.”36 However, the very same arguments empowered the strategy of counter-mapping in critical geography, arts, political, and urban activism, making visible who and what had been underrepresented thus far or entirely repressed from representation and revealing the networks of established power structures. While the world has been increasingly redefined in terms of dynamic and complex networks of mobilized and demobilized people, objects, and capital, “mapping has become a way of making sense.”37

Following Deleuze and Guattari’s and Bruno Latour’s enthusiasm for the capacities of mapping, we argue to view maps (the noun) not only as an appropriate device for the representation of mobility patterns, but moreover live mapping (the verbal noun or action) as a great relational tool for stimulating interaction.

---

with mobile actors en route and for the evaluation of research findings. These attempts are explained in detail in our contribution to JAR 14.39

Purchasing a van had a strong impact on the design of the study. This meant we were not only able to drive more often and be much more flexible according to the routes and rhythms of our trips, but because of its large size we were able to transport building material for artistic interventions on site, much larger pre-produced maps, and indeed also collect significant everyday life objects during our trips, additional “actants,” with reference to Latour’s actor-network theory39 and even art pieces—items we found relevant to combine with the materials from interviews, observations, and the artistic representations. Therefore, in addition to the combination of the immersive mobile method, being on the ground and witnessing what is going on there, and the method of live mapping on route, “collecting” and hence “exhibiting” (the actions rather than the nouns) became core strategies for disseminating, rearranging, and reevaluating interim research findings.

For this purpose, we rented a stationary project-space in an old warehouse at Vienna Nordwestbahnhof (Vienna’s northwest station), a former railway station close to the city center. This huge compound is still in operation today as a road-to-rail cargo terminal run by the national railway company, a logistic hub for many smaller hauling companies and a parking lot for coaches of a major bus company also operating transnationally. Therefore, this site was a perfect location with practical connections to the subject matter along with a special aesthetic quality, “authentic” atmosphere and a great deal of mobility expertise. After testing relational assemblages of research material in the field of research, at smaller workshops and exhibitions in Tallinn, Sofia, and in our project space in Vienna beforehand, we opened a comprehensive exhibition at the large exhibition halls of the Academy of Fine Arts in Vienna in September 2016. Like all other exhibitions, this show was intended for the dissemination of research methods and core strategies for disseminating, rearranging, and reevaluating interim research findings. The exhibition had a total of 3,400 visitors. Michael Zinganel and Michael Hieslmair, “Stop and Go,” JAR Journal of Artistic Research, no. 14 (2017), https://www.researchcatalogue.net/view/330596/330597 (accessed January 15, 2018).

As shown in the various exhibitions that we organized throughout this research project, the aesthetics of roads, vehicles, and roadside infrastructure has inspired many visual artists in a variety of ways. To “frame” this publication we selected works from two of the involved artists: The photos of art installations by Sonia Leimer at the very beginning of this book show “cutouts” of asphalt road surfaces, which literally “register” the traces of their use (figs. 1–3). These pure material appropriations are combined with steel elements, which refer to construction site barriers; both isolated fragments are open to multiple interpretations on archaeological, psychoanalytic, political, and poetic levels. At the very end of the book we present another artist’s approach: Johanna Kandl’s contrasting descriptive “travelogue,” reflecting upon her own travel experiences in Eastern Europe, critically juxtaposes handwritten neoliberal slogans with paintings of the everyday life at nodes of transnational transit such as gas stations, bus-stops, and open-air (car) markets (figs. 69–71). It also introduces the types of vehicles that are key “actants” driving these corridors and thereby interconnecting the very nodes and knots with different velocities and rhythms.

The main case studies in this publication not only represent the effects of the transformation of nodes and knots in different geographic and geopolitical locations and different push-and-pull factors driving mobilities and migration, they also illustrate different scales of investigations, ranging from distanced views of transcontinental networks to close-ups of very specific nodes, while in each case study the methods we applied were adapted to the specific needs and opportunities.

We start back in the history of the Cold War and with the largest geographic scope of road networks, crossing not only the borders of a nation and/or the permeable Iron Curtain, but also the borders of the European continent. In the 1960s and 1970s the volume of overland cargo transport in transit between Western Europe, COMECON countries such as Bulgaria, and the developing countries of the Middle East region, the Arabian Peninsula, and North Africa—most notably Iraq, Iran, Jordan, and Libya—increased significantly.41 The state monopolist of cross-border heavy goods traffic in socialist Bulgaria, SOMAT (International Road

Transport Corporation), took on critical importance: Thousands of heavy trucks driving for the communist state enterprise had been crossing the borders of the Iron Curtain.

Emiliya Karaboeva investigates the overlapping interdependent networks established first by transnational transport organizations TIR, then by the former monopolist for transnational transport in Bulgaria SOMAT, and by the individual truck drivers working for the state-owned company during the times of Cold War, who had largely benefited from all kinds of legal and illegal side business during their extensive tours. Thanks to the Bulgarian photographer Nikola Mihov, we were able to find a vast array of visual material in the SOMAT archive, which enabled us to set up a workshop and exhibition in the “social condenser” of the truck drivers’ canteen at SOMAT’s former headquarters in Sofia. These events successfully triggered feedback from local experts, which supported us in expanding the scope of research from the communist history of SOMAT to the legacy of SOMAT service stations today.

In the second case study, the geographic scope of the network is smaller, but the focus on specific nodes is more intense and the zoom-in more detailed: Michael Hieslmair analyzes the history and legacy of Vienna International Busterminal. The traffic network of transnational bus routes that start or intersect here reflects the interconnections of destination and departure regions of tourists, former guest workers from Yugoslavia and Turkey (since the 1960s) and their relatives, commuters, and legal and illegal labor migrants from Eastern Europe (since the fall of the Iron Curtain). The bus terminal has suffered from an unfavorable reputation, being primarily associated with the influx of Eastern European migrants, and has therefore fallen victim to urban gentrification and displacement—with the result that today the current station, hidden under a motorway bridge, resembles one of the many gray infrastructural spaces usually associated with the former East of Europe.

In order to investigate the routes and nodes of the buses, driving with our van and exploring the terminals during our trips did not seem to be the appropriate means: instead, we visited the Vienna bus terminal several times and at different seasons, days of the week, and times of the day. We organized public excursions and also joined a bus trip on one of the most popular bus lines connecting Vienna and Sofia. But in fall 2015, at the midpoint of our research project, the perception of this route changed drastically: During the “wave of refugees” the Austria-Hungary border station of Nickelsdorf was reactivated as a key site for the management of the massive flows of migration, and buses became the preferred means for their mobilization. We expanded and adapted our research to include the new nodes and modes of mobilization.

For the third case study, we chose the special example of two interconnected harbor towns, which are penetrated by major road corridors: Today between Tallinn in Estonia (part of the Soviet Union prior to the fall of the Iron Curtain) and Helsinki in Finland (part of the capitalist West) a continuation of the Pan-European road corridors is in place in the form of a highly efficient, regular ferry connection. The driving force for the enormous volume of passengers between Tallinn and Helsinki is the radical difference in wages and the price of services and consumer goods in both countries. While 15 percent of the Estonian population try to make their fortune as labor migrants in Finland, groups of Finns travel as tourists to Tallinn to consume and shop cheaply—above all, for alcohol. Pedestrians, cars, buses, and lorries are transported across the Baltic Sea in huge ships that leave every three hours. In both cities three major highways arrive at large terminal complexes, which represent bottlenecks that narrow traffic to the limited capacities and decelerated speed of the vessels. The vehicles are delivered over to the harbor on the opposite side of the Baltic, where they are redirected to the road corridors once again.

As a means of disseminating our interim research findings and gaining further feedback for our research, we realized a large network diagram in the public space in front of Tallinn’s Ferry Terminal D. The installation also contained audio tracks, which told of the experiences of individuals, of the variety of routes and the motives of passengers, Finnish tourists and Estonian labor migrants alike, or the staff of the ferry line itself. The chapter begins with these transcribed audio tracks based on a series of interviews conducted on site at the port and on board the ferries. Then Tarmo Pikner consciously takes the linear path of a typical ferry passenger, traveling from the Port of Helsinki to Tallinn, following the beaten paths of tourists through Tallinn, so as to structure his memories and descriptions of urban transformation—from the communist period up to today—and show how the rhythm and capacities of this ferry line affects the city.

The very choice of our research vehicle—a Ford Transit—inspired three smaller case studies: transporter vans like ours are the favorite vehicles for fitters and market vendors, so we decided to follow their routes from wholesale bazaars to open-air markets and vice versa. At the first open-air market we visited in Tallinn we learned from Russian vendors that they usually purchased their goods at Wólka Kosowska on the southern outskirts of Warsaw, today the largest Asian wholesale and retail market in Eastern Europe. When passing by Warsaw on our next trip, we took the opportunity to visit this market. Katarzyna Ośiecka and Tatjana Vukosavljević investigate the market’s history going from a single wholesale hub for Chinese vendors to a multiethnic village structure representing a constitutive part of a transnational trade network.

43 Research conducted for this chapter was also supported by the Estonian Research Agency grant IUT3-2: Culturescapes in transition.
The van also shifted our interest toward a specific kind of market. The availability of transporter vans like ours is a precondition for the development of small and medium-scale trade. As purchasing power had been rather low during the period of transition, huge markets for secondhand cars imported from the West emerged all over Eastern Europe, like the one in Marijampolė, Lithuania, famously described by Karl Schlögel in support of his thesis of a European East-West integration starting from below.44 In my essay I compare the transformation of the structure of the Marijampolė market with that of Dimitrovgrad, Bulgaria, as I do their different rhythms and “staged informalities.”

And while driving or stopping on our trips we encountered so many minivans transporting migrant workers between the East and West of Europe—predominantly women whose modestly paid work facilitates the above-average quality of every-day life for Western Europe’s middle class in the first place. We felt that these vehicles, their rhythm and mode of transport, and the people driving and being transported should not be missed in this publication. For this reason, we added an excellent reportage by the journalist Juan Moreno, who celebrates a Romanian minibus driver as a hero of European integration.

44 Karl Schlögel, Marjampole oder Europas Wiederkehr aus dem Geist der Städte (Munich: Hanser, 2005).


Networking Eurasia
Bulgarian International Truck Drivers and SOMAT in the Cold War Era

Emiliya Karaboeva

Fig. 15
SOMAT Archive, 1984
Poster representing the geographic scope of SOMAT, the Bulgarian state-owned company’s transnational transport activities; used as teaser for workshops and exhibitions, for instance at Red House Sofia and in the SOMAT canteen in April 2015 as well as at the final exhibition in Vienna in 2016
Network upon Network

To a certain extent, Bulgarian drivers’ extensive networks and access to various kinds of scarce products and services in their own country were a result of the privileges they enjoyed as a professional group within the framework of the socialist planned economy and the restrictive Cold War-era border regime. Above and beyond that, they were able to exploit their privileged occupational status abroad, and thereby develop far more elaborate and lucrative networks that even the best blat connections at home would not allow.

As employees in international road transport, the drivers became part of at least two intertwined and heterogeneous transnational networks: TIR and SOMAT. I argue here that the TIR system is not just a set of rules for standardizing and coordinating the machines used in road transport along with all the attendant details of documentation, legislation, rates, insurance policies, and containerization policy, etc., but should also be considered a network in its own right. For when one considers that TIR consists of various interconnected elements and actors, such as road infrastructure and the International Road Transport Union (IRU), it does evidently qualify as a heterogeneous and complex network. IRU is the institution that issues TIR carnets and administers secure payments and all signatories to the TIR system are therefore automatically IRU members. Border checkpoints and customs systems can likewise be seen as nodes in this network of intersecting flows, for that is where TIR procedures and rules are carried out and monitored. These heterogeneous elements compose a complex infrastructural network, the legislative and material basis upon which subsequent transport networks were built.

The TIR system is also a device for European governance that “takes place through a process of negotiations in network settings that link public and private actors of different levels (regional, national and European) and dimensions (legislature, judiciary and executive) of government. In such contexts, political power is exercised by sharing and pooling resources through the establishment of networks.” The TIR system created favorable conditions for intensifying the trade and other contacts, and for the transportation needed

38 Emiliya Karaboeva, “Borders and Go-Betweens: Bulgarian International Truck Drivers during the Cold War,” East Central Europe 41, nos. 2–3 (2014).
Transnational network of SOMAT (around 1980), connecting over twenty foreign partner businesses on the three continents of Europe, Asia, and Africa. Map, reproduced on the basis of an undated original found in the SOMAT archive.
Corridors into Vienna and Beyond
The Bus, the Terminal, the Border
Infrastructural Publics and Politics
Vienna International Busterminal today: the point of arrival and departure for regular service transnational coach connections is strangely located underneath a highway bridge.

1970s to 2000s—attached to the Südbahnhof railway station, using the station’s facilities

From 2007 onward—wedged underneath a highway bridge and connected to the subway station Vienna Erdberg
Passenger entrance
Waiting room
Ticket counters
Toilets
Mobile coffee-to-go stand
Hotdog stand
Sheltered waiting area
Coach wash
Entry gate with barrier
Exit gate with barrier
Additional coach stops

Bus terminal underneath a highway bridge
Subway station
Park and Ride
Subway tram shed
Vienna Transport Authority
ÖAMTC—Automobile Association
National Archives
Asylum-seekers’ hostel
Vienna Municipal Utilities (Stadtwerke)
Wien Energie
Sports facilities
Danube channel
A23 motorway

0 2 km
0 50 m
Harbors and Practiced Lines
Evolving Mobilities between Tallinn and Helsinki

Tarmo Pikner

Fig. 48
The Old Harbor of Tallinn in 1923, when railroad tracks passed the inner city to the north and their routes structured the fanfolded position of limestone-built warehouses and harbor basins with loading docks
The author's path driving on and off the ferry in Helsinki and Tallinn and walking with the flow of tourists from Tallinn harbor to the city center and back, intersecting and mingling with diverse fluxes of tourists, opening up new vistas and trajectories, which evoke memories and reflections and also structure his narration on the transformation of the city.
Corridors Rerouted and the Choice of Vehicles
Purchasing a secondhand car for our research trips to Estonia and Bulgaria turned out to be a difficult task. In the entire metropolitan area of Vienna all secondhand cars suited for fitters and vendors had already been sold to, or reserved for, car dealers from Eastern Europe. They have established a network of scouts who drive around the Western countries and purchase almost every suitable car, which is either still drivable or usable as a source of spare parts. The scouts usually pay cash on site and take the certificate of approval with them. Later their buddies pass by with car trailers to pick up the cars and export them to markets in their former homelands. Also we were considered to be car dealers, who are not interested much in details but in the prize. And, obviously, we always arrived far too late to each of the vendors. Even when we expanded our search radius to more than one hundred and fifty kilometers we failed. Coincidentally, we passed by a rural gas station, where several Ford vans were parked. The owner, a motocross racing driver, had spent the time in hospital after a bad accident. His wife told us he urgently needed to sell one of his vans to refinance spare parts for his bike. We took our chances! When we returned a few days later to pick up the van, we learned that several Serbian car vendors had already asked for it.

Purchasing a car is far from being a rational act. A car is expected to be a reliable companion in good and bad times—a business partner and family member. And—at least for men—each type of car inevitably evokes different kinds of memories: in Britain a mighty Ford Transit van, like ours, had been a minor national institution, the by far best-selling transporter van and minibus, so beloved by tradesmen and small-business owners—but also by sports clubs officials, fire and policemen, campers and many more. It had been a rather sad day for many when in June 2013 the last of seven million Transit vans rolled off the company’s Southampton production line, bringing forty years of automobile history to an end. In continental Europe the Ford Transit is also strongly associated with the many families of Turkish guest workers who would pass in huge convoys through Germany, Austria, former Yugoslavia, and Bulgaria, driving an average of four thousand kilometers from their German place of work to their Turkish home region during school and factory holidays in the 1970s and ‘80s. Therefore, we were pretty happy with this make of car, whose name, Transit, fitted so perfectly to the topic of our research.

But later during our research trips we soon learned that the connotations of a specific type of car are read differently in distinct geographic, social and ethnic milieus: a Ford Transit can also be considered a less reliable British car produced in Turkey today and driven mainly by Turks on the Balkan routes. And Turks are not very popular due to the contested history here. The first choice for vendors in Slavic countries is clearly a German Mercedes Sprinter, a car considered to be indestructible, no matter how old it is. On the other hand, the bad reputation of our car turned out to be lucky turn of fate for us: a Ford Transit would not be stolen that often, Slavic experts told us.
A. Open-air car market
B. Sport stadium
C. Athletic sports track
D. Car parking
E. Landscape park
F. Bridge across River Mariza
G. Main road
H. Edge of prefab slab housing development
I. Single family housing/allotment gardens

1. Main entrance
2. Snack stands and barbecue
3. Pet market
4. Stalls
5. Toilets
6. Spare parts area
7. Flea market (in park area)
Beginning in the late 1980s, a network of wholesale markets operated by different migrant groups developed gradually in post-communist Eastern Europe providing local markets with affordable Asian goods. This network expanded from assemblages of informal structures, bazars—Jarmark Europa—to a commercial complex, Wólka Kosowska, with an annual turnover of several millions of euros. Today Wólka Kosowska, located on the southern outskirts of Warsaw is one of the biggest Asian wholesale and retail markets in Central and Eastern European Countries (CEEC). Over nearly thirty years, the market, partly thanks to the resourcefulness of the entrepreneurs who sold and supplied there, and partly through significant infrastructure spending, grew from a single distribution hub to a multi-ethnic village structure. We will argue that together with the other Asian trading clusters Wólka Kosowska can be seen as a foundation for increased economic integration between CEECs and China: “New Silk Road” project. Wólka Kosowska can be regarded as a dynamic hub, part of a larger social and economic network.

Jarmark Europa: Prehistory of One of the Most Significant Post-socialist Trading Nodes

When discussing the trading cluster of Wólka Kosowska it is crucial to explore its origins and its predecessor: Jarmark Europa (Europe’s Fair), a huge bazaar located near the city center of Warsaw, was one of the biggest informal markets in Central and Eastern Europe. The market was born in 1989 on the site of Stadion Dziesięciolecia (10th-Anniversary Stadium)—one of the main landmarks of socialist Warsaw. The 10th-Anniversary Stadium was built between 1953 and 1955 from the rubble of the destroyed city. It was one of the largest stadiums in Poland and constituted the principal venue for Party and state festivities. The 10th-Anniversary Stadium was built between 1953 and 1955 from the rubble of the destroyed city. In 1983 the stadium was abandoned due to technical problems and began being used as a flea market. It was known as the “Russian market.” In the early days, customers came largely from the Eastern European countries and the former Soviet Union. After 1989, the government sports agency (Centralny Ośrodek Sportu) leased the site to Guangdong Migrants’ Transnational Trade from Guangdong to Wólka Kosowska.
Figs. 61–64
Katarzyna Osiecka, Michael Hieslmair, and Michael Zinganel, *Everyday routine in the endless aisles inside the market halls at Wólka Kosowska*, 2016
Johanna Kandl offers a basically descriptive "travelogue," reflecting upon her own travel experiences to Eastern Europe. In her paintings she critically juxtaposes banal handwritten text lines and often emphatic, neo-liberal slogans with the everyday life at nodes of transnational transit in locations that have undergone post-socialist transformation but remained of unspectacular appearance: for instance gas stations, bus stops, and open-air (car) markets. The final image focuses on a filling station just across the Austrian border in the Czech Republic. The statue of the knight advertises a shopping experience in an outlet ambience—Excalibur City—a mock medieval theme park in the no-man’s-land between borders, which is even linked to Vienna by shuttle bus. In the paintings selected for this "travelogue," she also introduces the types of vehicles that are key “actants” driving these corridors and thereby interconnecting the very nodes and knots with different velocities and rhythms. (Michael Hieslmair and Michael Zinganel)

Fig. 69
Johanna Kandl, The Bus Leaves, 1999
Fig. 70
Johanna Kandl, Untitled (... change comes), 2014
Fig. 71
Johanna Kandl, Modernize or Die!, 2002
Biographies

Michael Hieslmair studied Architecture at the Graz University of Technology and Delft University of Technology. He was fellow at Künstlerhaus Büchsenhausen Innsbruck and taught at various universities such as University for Art and Design Burg Giebichenstein Halle an der Saale, Innsbruck University, Graz and Vienna Technical Universities. He collaborated on the research project “Crossing Munich, Places, Representations and Debates on Migration in Munich” (with Sabine Hess) which culminated in an exhibition at the Rathausgalerie. In 2012 he co-founded the independent research institute Tracing Spaces, also producing and curating the art in public space project City on the Move—a Farewell to a Logistic Area (with Michael Zinganel). From 2014–16 he was research associate at the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna and co-head of research of “Stop and Go: Nodes of Transformation and Transition” investigating the production of space along Pan-European Traffic Corridors in East Europe.

Johanna Kandl lives in Vienna and Berlin. For years she has been a critical observer of the economic and social situation of our time. In her artistic works she often combines concrete persons, places, and events with quotations and slogans from the economic world. In connection with her artistic and curatorial projects, she traveled to many regions in transition, such as Georgia, Azerbaijan, Ukraine, Russia, Poland, Romania, Lithuania, former Yugoslavia, and the Czech Republic. Since 1997 she has regularly realized research and participatory projects with her husband, Helmut Kandl.

Emiliya Karaboeva is a historian and received her PhD (Candidate of Ethics) for a dissertation on Gender Social Research at Sofia University. She is currently studying for her second PhD in anthropology and history of technology at Eindhoven and Plovdiv Universities, and conducting research into the topic of “Mediating East-West. International Bulgarian Truck Drivers during the Cold War Era.” She is a professor at the National College of Ancient Languages and Cultures and part-time lecturer in the Faculty of Cultural Studies at Sofia University.

Sonia Leimer lives and works in Vienna. She studied architecture at the Technical University in Vienna and the Academy of Fine Arts, where she taught from 2012 to 2016 under Martin Guttmann. From 2007 to 2012 she ran the radio program Image and the City. Her installations examine the individual historical and media-influenced patterns of perception and experience as a result of the transformation of spaces and objects. These have been exhibited at international galleries and museums, most recently at the Leopold Museum and the Galerie nächst St. Stephan in Vienna, at the Ludwig Forum for International Art in Aachen, and the Barbara Gross Gallery in Munich.

Juan Moreno was born in Spain and lives in Berlin. He studied economics in Constance, Florence and Cologne. After his studies he attended the German School of Journalism in Munich. He worked as a talk show editor for ARD and as a radio presenter for WDR. Since then he has been writing reports for Der Spiegel.

Katarzyna Osiecka is an architect and researcher. She graduated from the Faculty of Architecture at RWTH Aachen. In 2011/12 she was a scholar at the Bauhaus Foundation in Dessau focusing on the mechanisms of global suburbia. She is currently a doctoral student at the Chair of Theory of Architecture at RWTH Aachen. Her doctoral thesis examines the “blind spots” in the late-twentieth-century Polish housing catalogues. She lives and works in Cologne.

Tarmo Pikner holds doctoral degree in human geography from the University of Oulu. His thesis focused on cross-border urban networks in the Baltic Sea area. He currently works as a senior researcher at the Center for Landscape and Culture at Tallinn University. His research topics include environmental, social and cultural legacies, and effects of late modernity. Pikner has published in several peer-reviewed journals and edited books. He also holds lectures on the MA program of Urban Governance at Tallinn University. His current research is part of the ERDF-financed project “SustainBaltic” and the Estonian Research Agency grant IUT 3-2 “Culturescapes in transformation.”
Tatjana Vukosavljević graduated from the Faculty of Applied Arts in Belgrade, Department of Interior Design. In 2011/12 she was a scholar at the Bauhaus Dessau Foundation and received her specialization in the field of urban studies. She is an interdisciplinary artist, exploring and developing specific concepts at the intersection of urbanism, architecture, art, and culture. In her work she promotes new approaches in the field of public open space interventions through interdisciplinary collaboration and participatory co-design. Currently she works as project coordinator at Belgrade International Week of Architecture (BINA).

Michael Zinganel graduated from the Faculty of Architecture at Graz University of Technology and obtained a PhD in contemporary history from the University of Vienna. He was a research fellow at the IFK (International Center for Cultural Studies) in Vienna, taught at various universities and academies, such as the postgraduate academy of Bauhaus Dessau Foundation, AU Klagenfurt, and TU Graz and Vienna. In 2012 he co-founded the independent research institute Tracing Spaces, also producing and coediting Holiday after the Fall—Seaside Architecture and Urbanism in Bulgaria and Croatia (with Elke Beyer and Anke Hagemann) (Berlin: Jovis Verlag, 2013). From 2014 to 2016 he was research associate at the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna and head of research for “Stop and Go: Nodes of Transformation and Transition” investigating the production of space along Pan-European traffic corridors in East Europe.
What a joy to read a text that focuses on rich descriptions of the often hidden lives of people in motion along the routes, corridors, and places that underpin the contemporary world. Stop and Go exemplifies wonderfully what Doreen Massey called the “geographies of responsibility”—the need to understand the underlying infrastructures and extended relations in which we are embedded. The book is beautifully produced and offers the reader wonderfully sensitive descriptions, artistically rendered images and maps, and a sensitivity to subjects in motion.

John Pickles (University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill)

Recent material and juridical emergencies around migration have made us aware of the shift in temporality in the movement of people. This book addresses the complexity of movement: traversing, visiting, languishing, being held and delayed, being turned back and inhabiting without permit. The broad range of knowledges and practices included in Hieslmair and Zinganel’s book densifies our understanding of mobility away from departure and arrival and towards the networked realities of “being in transit” along entangled routes.

Irit Rogoff (Goldsmiths, University of London)

Stop and Go contributes to a re-centering of the cultural geography of the continent in identifying, charting, and conceptualizing the actors and agents in a fascinating network of the transnational exchange of people, goods, and ideas. The volume challenges our understanding of these arteries as primarily resulting from governing bodies and instead uncovers a vibrant net of interaction among often marginalized agents of mobility and exchange in the sense of a vernacular cosmopolitanism. By investigating sites on marginality it both complicates and politicizes simple notions of mobility and transnational migration.

Martino Stierli (The Philip Johnson Chief Curator of Architecture and Design, MoMA)

With contributions by Michael Hieslmair, Johanna Kandl, Emiliya Karaboeva, Sonja Leimer, Juan Moreno, Katarzyna Osiecka, Tarmo Pikner, Tatjana Vukosavljević, Michael Zinganel