

5 – 8 May

Geomeedia
2021

Off the Grid

→ www.geomeedia.uni-siegen.de

Keynotes

CAREN KAPLAN
BERNHARD SIEGERT
NANNA VERHOEFF

Universität
Siegen

SCHEDULE

Wednesday, 5 May

10:00am → 11:15am	OA: Opening Address Conference Stream		
11:15am → 11:45am	CB1: Coffee Break		
11:45am → 1:00pm	T1S1: Mapping Environments <small>THEMATIC PANEL (INDIVIDUAL PROPOSALS)</small> Re-locating the Island: The Smartphone's Revolution <small>RAYNER GARCÍA HERNÁNDEZ</small> Going off grid but staying on track? On the technonatures of 'hike&flyers' in the alpine space <small>KARINA KIRSTEN</small>	Zoom Stream 1 T2S1: Disconnection <small>THEMATIC PANEL (INDIVIDUAL PROPOSALS)</small> Dead Spots <small>LEA PAULA ZIEROTT</small> Incorporating the Swedish tourism sector in crisis management and communication – methods and strategies for preparedness and collaboration in rural areas <small>LENA GRIP, LOTTA BRAUNERHILEM, FREDRIK HOPPSTADIUS, LINDA RYAN BENGTSSON</small> Where do people withdraw from digital media? A Bourdieusian study of the taste for disconnection <small>KARIN FAST, JOHAN LINDELL, ANDRÉ JANSSON</small>	Zoom Stream 2
1:00pm → 2:30pm	LB1: Lunch Break		
2:30pm → 3:45pm	Zoom Stream 1 T1S2: Urban Aesthetics <small>THEMATIC PANEL (INDIVIDUAL PROPOSALS)</small> Tele-Mobilities. TV Circuits in Italian Transportation Hubs: a Route Towards Alternative Media Geographies? <small>EMILIANO ROSSI</small> The Digital Divide <small>JOAO ENXUTO, ERICA LOVE</small> Trash Cacheing: Video Surveillance of Waste Around Palermo <small>JAN STALLINGS DELOZIER</small>	Zoom Stream 2 T2S2: Mobile Socialities I <small>THEMATIC PANEL</small> Digitizing desires: immobile mobility and social media in southeast Turkey <small>ELISABETTA COSTA</small> Mobility Fetishism <small>ERIKA POLSON</small> Communication technologies of work: a question of time and space <small>MAGNUS ANDERSSON</small>	Zoom Stream 3 T3S2: A City is not a Grid?! <small>THEMATIC PANEL</small> Symbols and Spaces: On address grids of computational media <small>RANJODH SINGH DHALIWAL</small> Back to Square One. Urban Modelling and/as Strategic Gaming <small>JACOB BIRKEN</small> Architecture as ideological Service. A special kind of project development at Hermannplatz <small>NILOUFAR TAJERI, DIANA LUCAS-DROGAN</small>

Distributing Smartphones to Homeless People:
A critical view
DAVID LOWIS

Filling the Gaps. Grids as Formats in Urban Planning
Software
SEBASTIAN RANERATH

3:45pm
→ 4:15pm

CB2: Coffee Break

4:15pm
→ 5:30pm

T1S3: Geomedia Histories

THEMATIC PANEL

Zoom
Stream 1

Geomedia Histories

KARIN FAST, PABLO ABEND, SCOTT MCQUIRE, JOLYNNA SINANAN, LARISSA HJORTH,
JOAN RAMON RODRIGUEZ-AMAT, CORNELIA BRANTNER, TRISTAN THIELMANN

The city without qualities: From systems theory to
platform urbanism

SCOTT MCQUIRE

Still at home? Intimate geomedia histories and changing
politics of practice

JOLYNNA SINANAN, LARISSA HJORTH

Geomediatization of public spheres: A space genealogy
for emerging datafied societies

JOAN RAMON RODRIGUEZ-AMAT, CORNELIA BRANTNER

Bundling and unbundling geomedia: An historic
genealogy of a diverse set of cultural techniques

TRISTAN THIELMANN

5:30pm
→ 6:00pm

CB3: Coffee Break

6:00pm
→ 7:30pm

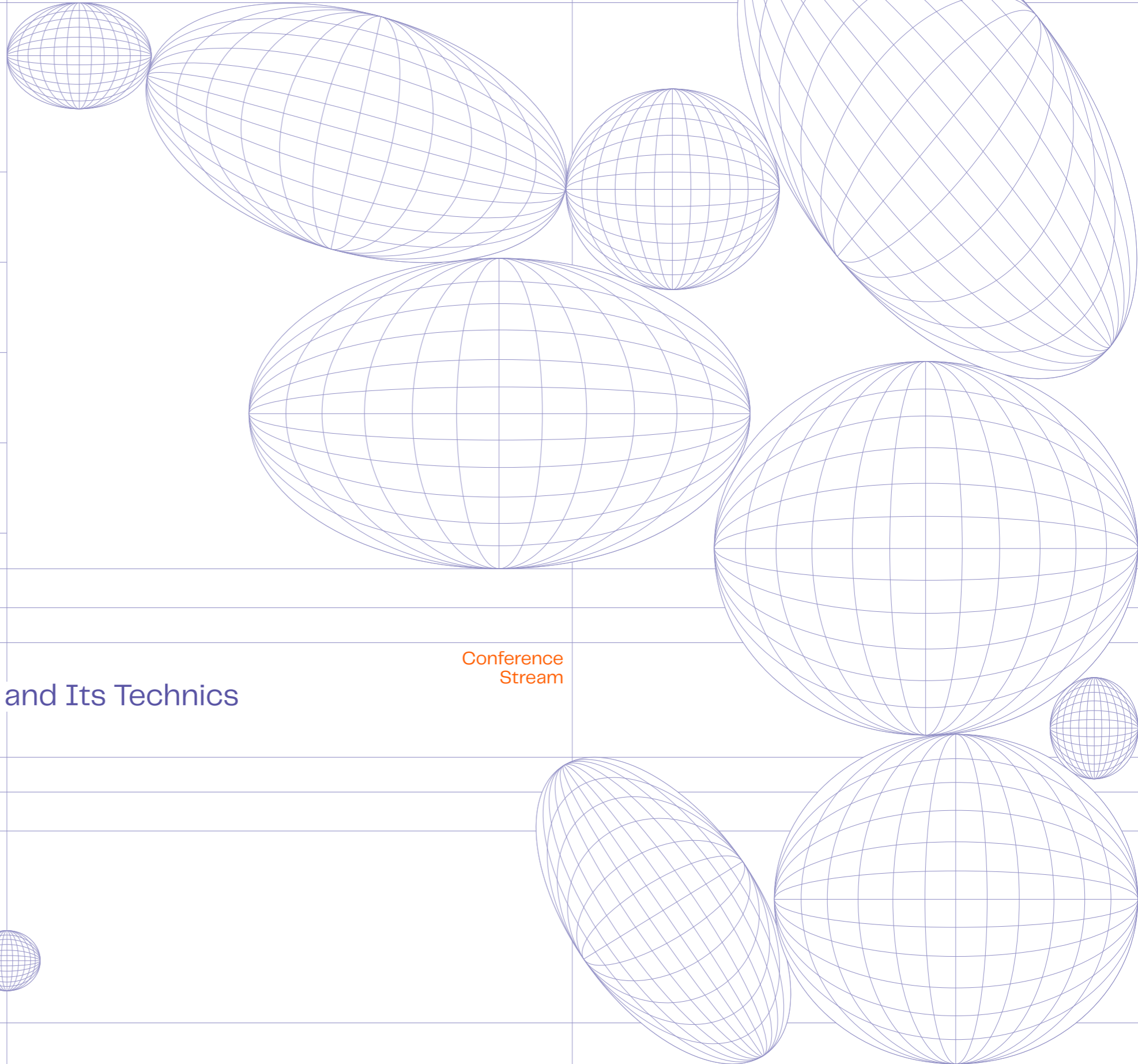
K1: Keynote 1 – Staying with the Grid:
The Limits of Geographical Knowledge and Its Technics

CAREN KAPLAN

Conference
Stream

8:00pm

Informal Get-Together in *SpatialChat*



Thursday, 6 May

10:00am
→ 11:15am

T1S4: Place-making

THEMATIC PANEL (INDIVIDUAL PROPOSALS)

Bohemian lifestyle migrants, sustainability and the making of places off the grid
EMILIA LJUNGBERG

Contested meanings in entangled spaces: The insitu perception of public places by social media users
KATJA KAUFMANN, TABEA BORK-HÜFFER, ANDREAS KOLLERT, NIKLAS GUDOWSKY, MARTIN RUTZINGER

I'm here! Conspicuous geomeia practices and the reproduction of social positions on social media
JOHAN LINDELL, ANDRÉ JANSSON, KARIN FAST

Zoom
Stream 1

T2S4: Mobile Socialities II

THEMATIC PANEL

Imagining Everest: Locative media and the work of tourism
JOLYNNA SINANAN

Moving without: Figures of (im)mobility without mobile media
MAREN HARTMANN

Transported Immobility
ANNETTE HILL

Third Space Walks. Flanerie in virtual and material spaces of cities
MIRJANA MITROVIC

Zoom
Stream 2

T3S4: Locating Media: Ethnography as Practice

THEMATIC PANEL (INDIVIDUAL PROPOSALS)

Field Research Off the Grid
JUDITH WILLKOMM

Recording studio as inscription device
JOOHON CHAE

Research without language
ANDREAS WAGENKNECHT

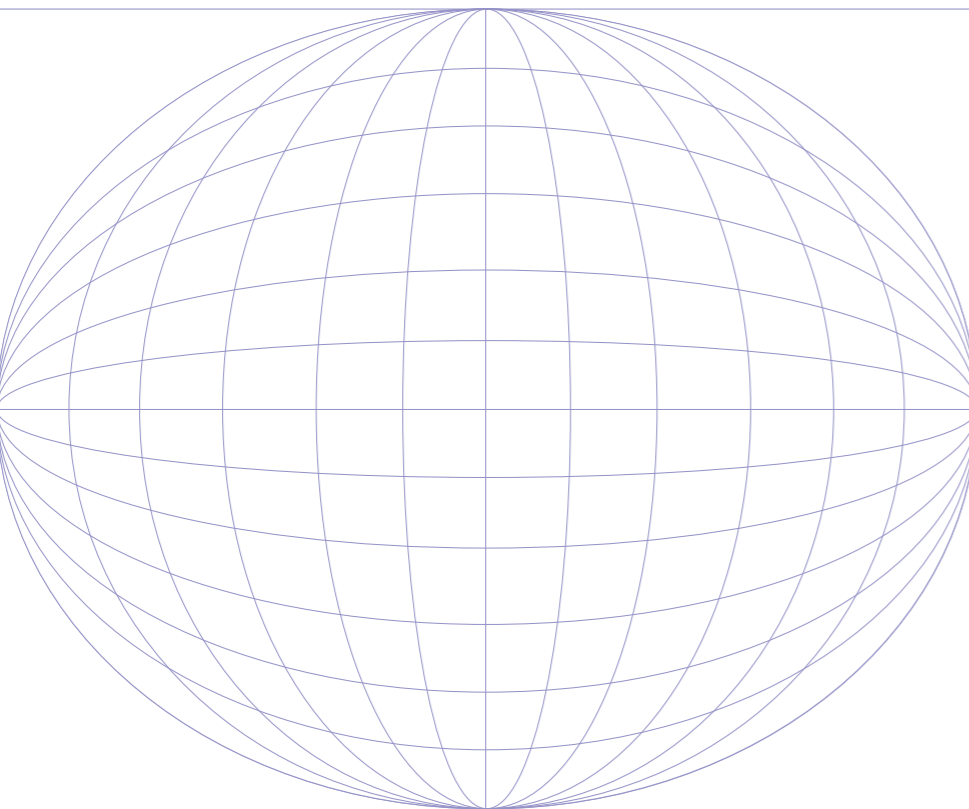
The camera as a focusing medium: On developments of the Finnish passport without language
ASKO LEHMUSKALLIO

Zoom
Stream 3

11:15am
→ 11:45am

CB4: Coffee Break

11:45am
→ 1:00pm



T2S5: Local spaces of play: Geographies of sexual social media

THEMATIC PANEL

Cinnamon buns and bruises: Play on the edge of a Swedish web-based kink community
JENNY SUNDÉN

Estonian libertines' kinky locations and digital placemaking practices
KATRIN TIIDENBERG

Pine trees, saunas and penises: Naked Finland as geomeia
SUSANNA PAASONEN, MARIA VIHLMAN

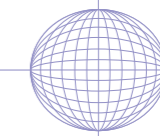
Zoom
Stream 2

T3S5: Locating Media: Practice+ Approaches

DISCUSSION FORUM

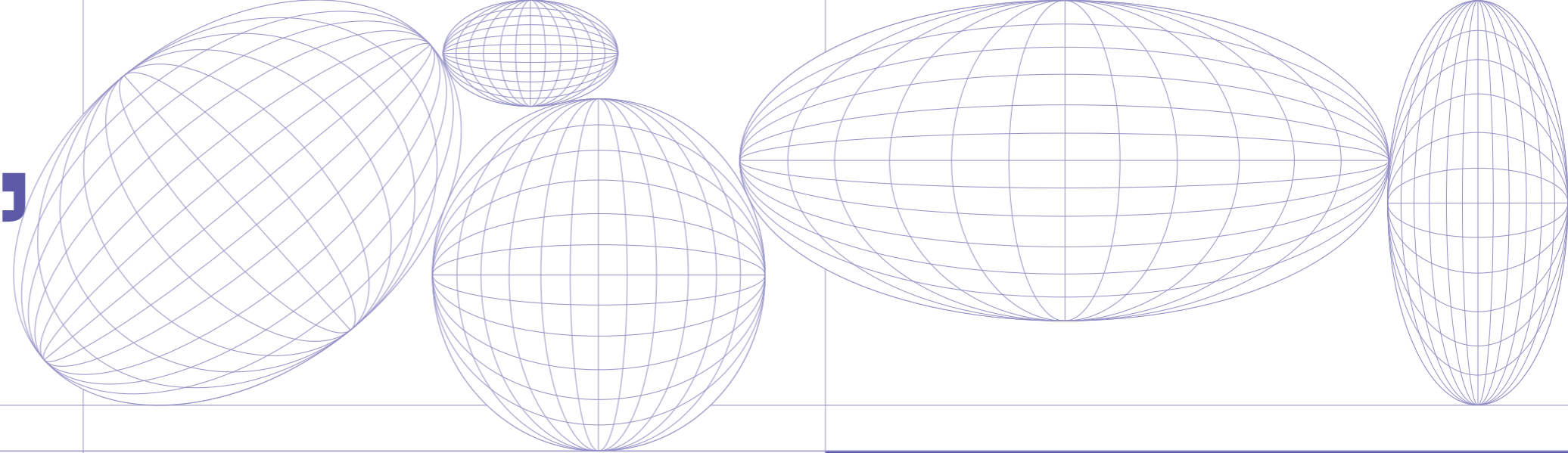
Off the Grid? Into the Wild? The Possibilities of Practice Beyond Praxeology
SAM HIND, DANIELA VAN GEENEN, ANA OCH, HANNAH NEUMANN, MAGDALENA GÖTZ, TATJANA SEITZ, DANNY LAMMERHIRT, SEBASTIAN RANDEPETH, CHRISTOPH BORBACH

Zoom
Stream 3



1:00pm → 2:30pm	LB2: Lunch Break		
2:30pm → 3:45pm	<p>T1S6: Theoretical Engagement With the Grid THEMATIC PANEL (INDIVIDUAL PROPOSALS)</p> <p>Infrastructure as ritual RONJA TRISCHLER</p> <p>Mesh as/versus the Grid: Digital Infrastructural Entanglements RORY SOLOMON</p> <p>The persistent appropriateness of grids for geomedial ERIC LOSANG</p> 	<p>T2S6: The Pandemic and the Grid THEMATIC PANEL (INDIVIDUAL PROPOSALS)</p> <p>“Switching Grids” – Young Adults’ Practices of Mediating Life During the COVID-19 Pandemic CHRISTOPH MICHAEL STRAGANZ, BELINDA MAHLKNECHT, KATJA KAUFMANN, TABEA BORK-HUEFFER</p> <p>“This is already completely impossible”. Polish students on attempts to limit media technology usage in the tenth month of the pandemic KATARZYNA KOPECKA-PIECH</p> <p>Contested urban places: The “Andräviertel” in Salzburg between lock-down, insider’s tip and overtourism CHRISTINE LOHMEIER, HELENA ATTENEDER, MICHAELA JAHN</p>	<p>T3S6: Locating Media: Socio-Informatics THEMATIC PANEL</p> <p>The Practice Turn and its Relevancy for Research in Socio-Informatics VOLKER WULF, GUNNAR STEVENS, VOLKMAR PIPEK, DAVID RANDALL, KJELD SCHMIDT</p> 
3:45pm → 4:15pm	CB5: Coffee Break		
4:15pm → 5:30pm	<p>T1S7: Critical Making as Off-the-Grid Pedagogy DISCUSSION FORUM</p> <p>Chair RORY SOLOMON</p>	<p>T2S7: Geomedial Communities THEMATIC PANEL (INDIVIDUAL PROPOSALS)</p> <p>Escaping and embracing ‘social grids’ through TikTok ANDREAS SCHELLEWALD</p> <p>Geomedial communities: cultures of enthusiasm and poly-mediated practice MIKE DUGGAN, CRISTINA A. G. KIMINAMI</p> <p>Modifying the Grid – Community Map-Making in Online Games ARVID KAMMLER</p>	<p>T3S7: Locating Media: Linguistik THEMATIC PANEL</p> <p>Praxeologien: Sprache in den Medienwissenschaften – Medien in den Sprachwissenschaften STEPHAN HABSCHIED, ERIKA LINZ, MARK DANG-ANH, TIM MORITZ HECTOR, MATTHIAS MEILER</p> 
5:30pm → 6:00pm	CB6: Coffee Break		
6:00pm → 7:30pm	<p>K2: Keynote 2 – Doing the Distance: Screening Mobility, Performing Presence, and Designing Contours of Connection in (Post-)Pandemic Cities NANNA VERHOEFF</p>		<p>Conference Stream</p>
8:00pm	Film Screening “The Price of Paradise” via Vimeo	→	9:45pm Discussion with director Bettina Borgfeld in Zoom

Friday, 7 May



10:00am
→ 11:15am

T1S8: Touristic Media | Mediated Tourism

THEMATIC PANEL

Practices of dis-connecting. Tourism off the grid

GABRIELE SCHABACHER

Anchoring Fiction in Place

ELISABETH SOMMERLAD, JULIA VAN LESSEN

In-Game Tourism. Exploring the geography of digital games

PABLO ABEND

Zoom
Stream 1

T2S8: Politics of Geomeia

THEMATIC PANEL (INDIVIDUAL PROPOSALS)

Bodies that Betray: EU's Corporeal Borders

AZADEH AKBARI

The political performances of mapping media: Considerations of participatory mapping from an Object-Orientated-Ontology perspective

FRANCIS HARVEY

Zoom
Stream 2

T3S8: Locating Media: Ethnology

Locating Shamanism I

THEMATIC PANEL

Who owns shamanism?

Mimetic Cooperation between El Loko and Joseph Beuys

ANNA BRUS

Locating American Shamanism. Spirit Mediums and 'so-called shamans' between regeneration and violence

GORA BENDER

Honest Liars. About the Ambivalences of Magical Trickery and its Exposure

EHLER VOSS

Zoom
Stream 3

11:15am
→ 11:45am

CB7: Coffee Break

11:45am
→ 1:00pm

T1S9: Imaginaries

THEMATIC PANEL (INDIVIDUAL PROPOSALS)

Imagining 'Off the Grid'

CLARA MARIE WIEGHORST

On the Road, and Off the Grid: Escapism, Transgression and Identity in the American Road Movie

JOERN LANGHORST

Space, Memory and Branding in Disneyland

ANA CAROLINA ALMEIDA SOUZA

Zoom
Stream 1

T2S9: Algorithmicity

THEMATIC PANEL (INDIVIDUAL PROPOSALS)

Spatial construction and algorithmicity – The method of hashtag analysis in spatial education

CHRISTIAN DORSCH, CHRISTINA REITHMEIER

The algorithms behind geomeia technologies: a field between movement and social mobility

INGA GRYL, HELENA ATTENEDER

Whose Love is AI for? The networked body and multiple masculinities in Chinese child-rearing robots

YAN YUAN, LIN ZHU

Zoom
Stream 2

T3S9: Locating Media: Literaturwissenschaft

THEMATIC PANEL + INDIVIDUAL PRESENTATION

Das Ende des Goldenen Zeitalters

PHILIPP GOLL, JOANNA VICKERY-BARKOW, ROSA EIDELPES, FREDERIC PONTEN

Zwischen Sitzordnung und Automobilität. Bildungslandschaften der Gegenwartsliteratur

GREGOR KANITZ

→ This session will extend into the lunch break and end at 1:30pm

Zoom
Stream 3

1:00pm
→ 2:30pm

LB3: Lunch Break



2:30pm
→ 3:45pm

T1S10: Portals, Patterns, and Private Spaces: The Platformisation of Automobility?

DISCUSSION FORUM

Discussants

STEPHANIE SHERMAN, SILKE ZIMMER-MERKLE, LUIS ALVAREZ LEÓN, DEBBIE HOPKINS, WEIQIANG LIN, ROWAN WILKEN

Chairs

SAM HIND, MAX KANDERSKE, FERNANDO VAN DER VLIST



Zoom Stream 1

T2S10: Disruption/Resistance

THEMATIC PANEL (INDIVIDUAL PROPOSALS)

Off the Grid: Media Scarcity in an Age of Media Abundance

GREG ELMER

Black Box vs. Black Bloc

RENÉE RIDGWAY

Disrupting the Grid: Geomedia Innovators of Burma

YUNG AU, KO HTWE

Zoom Stream 2

T3S10: Locating Media: Ethnology

Locating Shamanism II

THEMATIC PANEL

Drawing on Drums.

Michael Oppitz in Dialogue with Philipp Goll

MICHAEL OPPITZ, PHILIPP GOLL

(Dis)Entangling Spider Dances

ANJA DRESCHKE, MICHAELA SCHÄUBLE

Zoom Stream 3

3:45pm
→ 4:15pm

CB8: Coffee Break

4:15pm
→ 5:30pm

T1S11: Affective Geomedia

THEMATIC PANEL (INDIVIDUAL PROPOSALS)

Blurring the grid: high-resolution sensibilities and fuzzy urban practices towards alternative urban commoning

LUCIA JALON OYARZUN

Interfacing the affective city. Urban affective sensing between algorithmic governance and data activism

TIMO KAERLEIN

Oculus Insight, and taking VR 'off the grid'

BEN EGLISTON, MARCUS CARTER

Stockholm as Affective Media Landscape in the 19th Century

HENRIK ÖRNEBRING

Zoom Stream 1

T2S11: Infrastructure

THEMATIC PANEL (INDIVIDUAL PROPOSALS)

Neoliberal cartography: A visual-semiotic analysis of three navigation apps

IGAL BAUM, RIVKA RIBAK

Privacy after Infrastructure

SAM HIND, ALEX GEKKER

The Error at the End of the Internet. Coordinates of geo-media

PETER KRAPP

Zoom Stream 2

T3S11: Locating Media: Theory

DISCUSSION FORUM

Discussants

JULIA BEE, CAROLIN GERLITZ, TILL HEILMANN, CHRISTIAN MEYER, JENS SCHRÖTER

Chair

SEBASTIAN GIESSMANN

Zoom Stream 3

5:30pm
→ 6:00pm

CB9: Coffee Break

6:00pm
→ 7:30pm

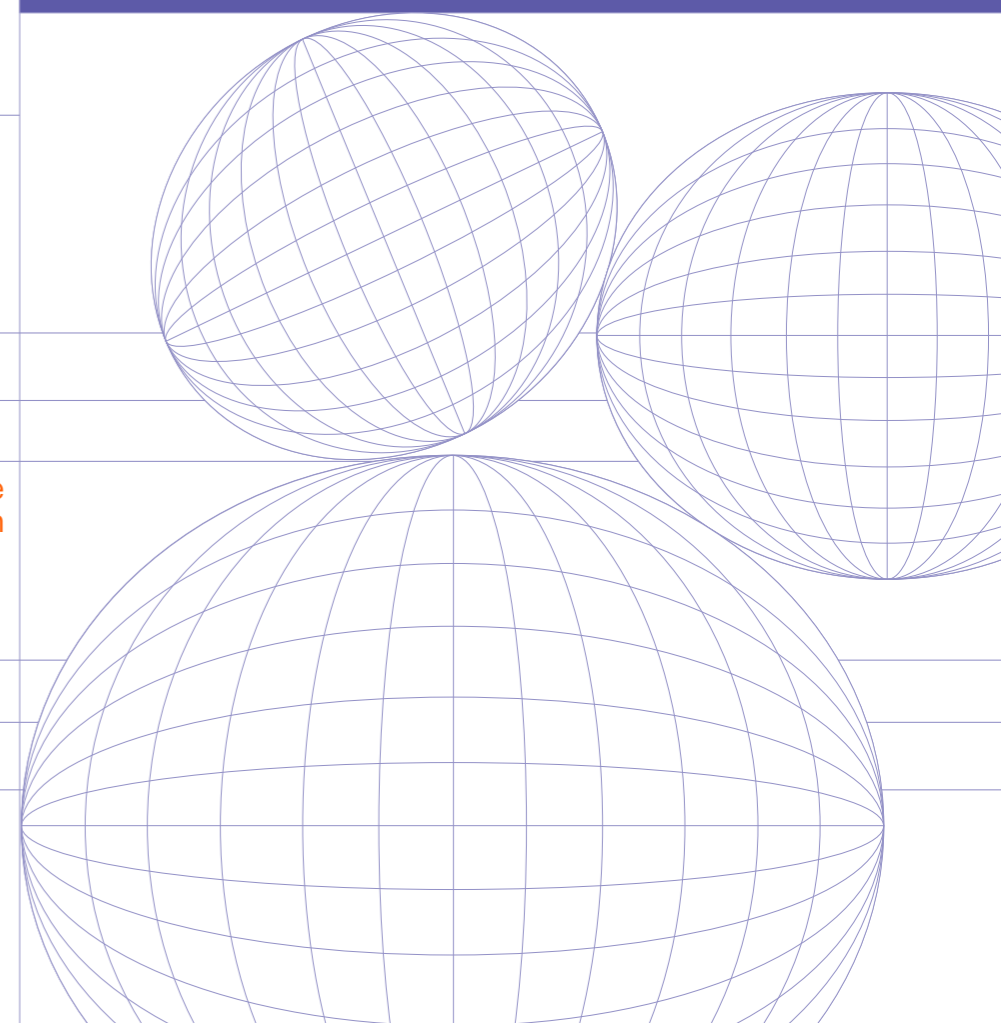
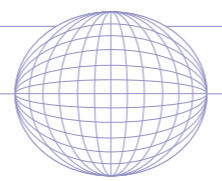
K3: Keynote 3 – “The map is the territory” (II): Smithson’s Geomedia

BERNHARD SIEGERT

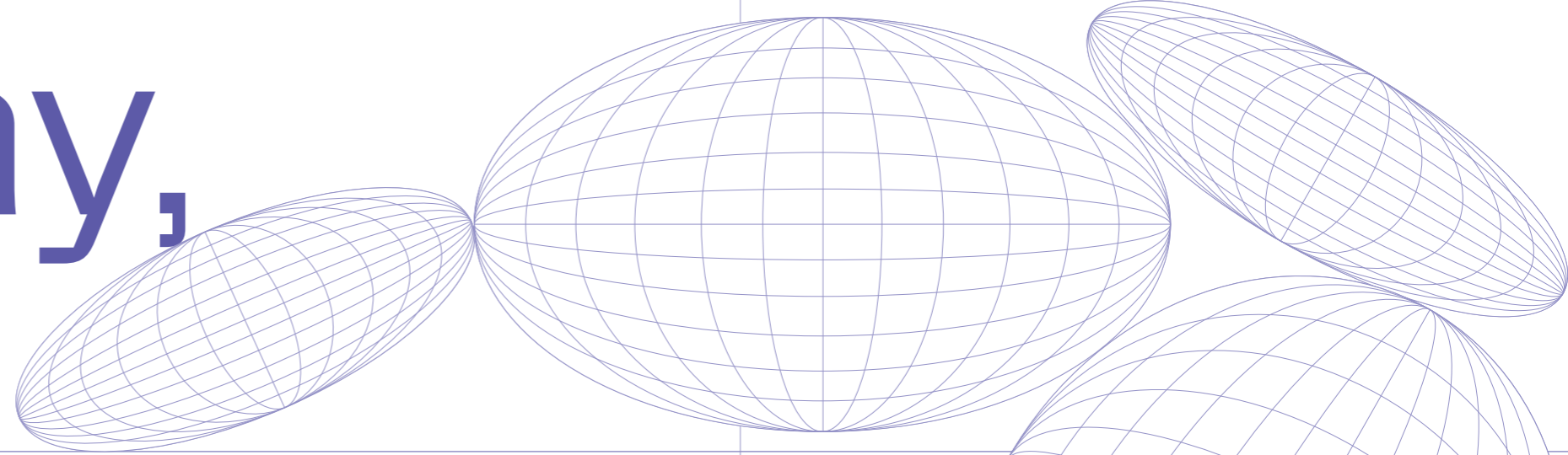
Conference Stream

8:00pm

Conference ‘party’ in *SpatialChat*



Saturday, 8 May



10:00am
→ 11:15am

B1: Book Presentation

Conference
Stream

Book presentation panel: "Digital Geographies Handbook"

TILL STRAUBE, HENNING FÜLLER, TABEA BORK-HÜFFER, PABLO ABEND, HELENA
ATTENEDER, FRANCIS HARVEY, ANDREA MÖSGEN, UWE SCHULZE

11:15am
→ 11:45am

CB10: Coffee Break

11:45am
→ 1:30pm

P1: Geomeia Methods: A Plenary Panel

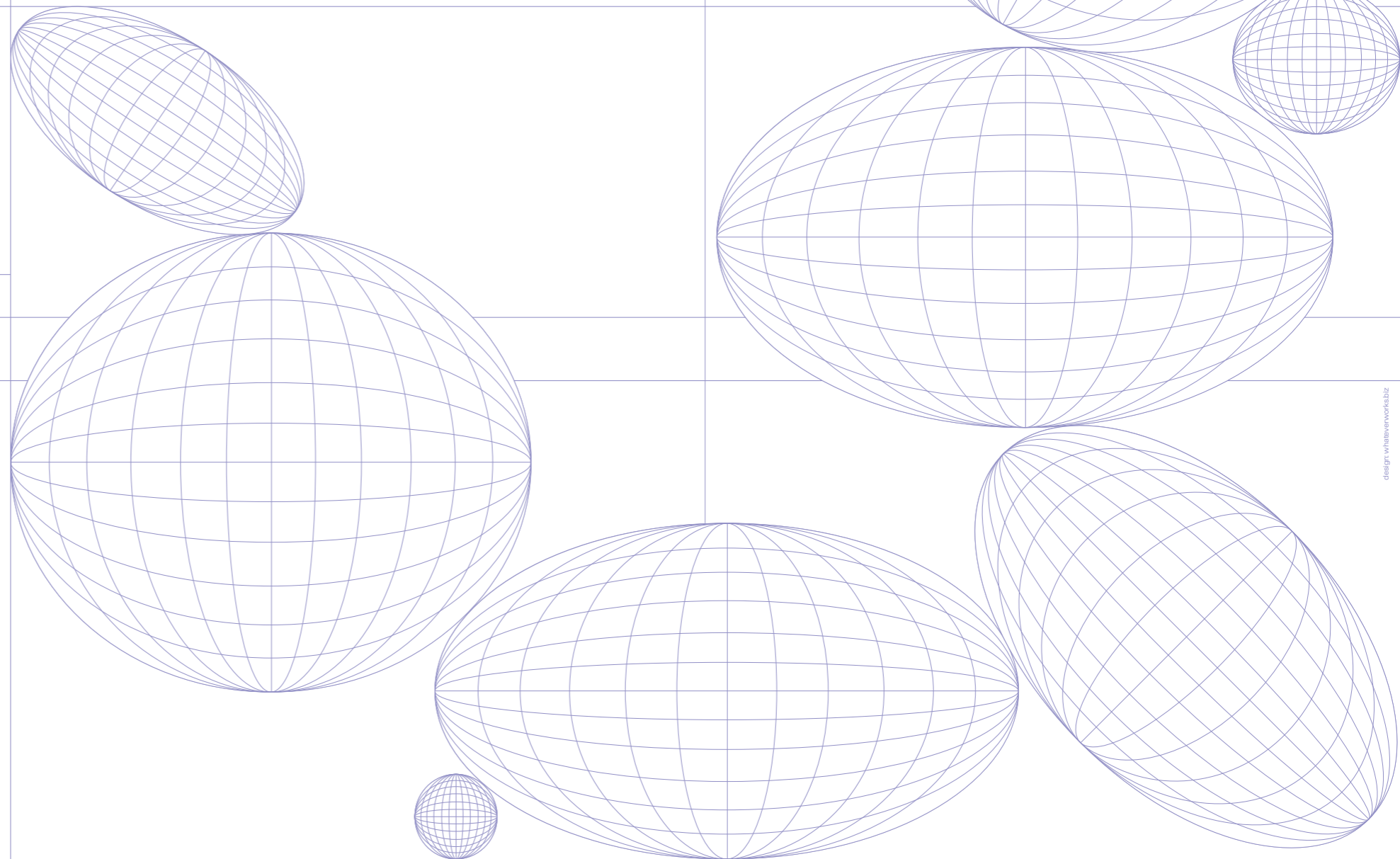
Conference
Stream

Speakers

ANNE KAUN, JAMES ASH, CORNELIA BRANTNER, JOAN RAMON RODRÍGUEZ-AMAT

Chair

JENNY SUNDÉN



1:30pm
→ 2:00pm

CA: Closing Address

Conference
Stream



5 – 8 May

Geomeedia
2021

Off the Grid

→ www.geomeedia.uni-siegen.de

Keynotes

CAREN KAPLAN
BERNHARD SIEGERT
NANNA VERHOEFF

BOOK OF ABSTRACTS

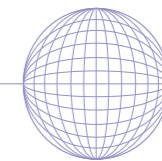
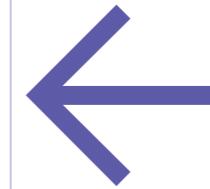
Universität
Siegen

Going “off the grid” is often seen as a renunciation of the conveniences of the late capitalist (media) world in the hope of a slower, less stressful, and eventually less superficial life – as inspired by the transcendentalism of the likes of Henry David Thoreau and Ralph Waldo Emerson. But with so many people relying on the grid for purposes of work and entertainment in recent times, what does this mean for our relation to geomeia? What does going off the grid look like now? A great number of people, for instance, do not get to choose to decouple from the grid – a fact that speaks to questions of access to the socio-material infrastructures underpinning geomeia and associated communities and practices.

Arguably, practices of surveillance and countersurveillance shape participation in corresponding infrastructures. In this, surveillance is wrapped up with profit-seeking practices, and the extraction of value from the “data fumes” of platform users, who enter a form of “cooperation without consensus” as they stream movies, hire taxis, host videoconferences, ride public transport, or go on dates. In these various iterations, surveillance might look different, and/or be practiced in distinct ways to traditional forms of state or corporate surveillance, increasingly dependent on technological protocols and standards that not only underpin the grid but also govern our use of geomeia. One consequence is that the relation between private and public spheres is transformed, and introduces new questions of governance, exploitation, and marginalization.

Yet the grid is not all-encompassing, nor all-powerful. Whilst countersurveillance efforts resist, fight back and oppose, alternative geomeia projects imagine the grid differently – sometimes even plotting its demise. Through these efforts, organizers and participants question the foundations of our collective social and technological infrastructures, redefining what it is to care, share, distribute, cultivate or reallocate funds, resources, opportunities and ideas – bringing new geomeia, and new imaginaries of hope (or perhaps fear), into existence.

The 4th international Geomeia Conference is the first to be hosted by Locating Media graduate school and the Media of Cooperation SFB at the University of Siegen, Germany. It is organized in collaboration with the Geomeia research group at Karlstad University, Sweden. The first three iterations of the Geomeia Conference were held at Karlstad University in 2015, 2017, and 2019.



Wednesday, 5 May

OA: Opening Address

Conference
Stream

TRISTAN THIELMANN, PABLO ABEND

University of Siegen, Germany

“Locating Siegen”: A Data Collage

HENDRIK BENDER, DANIELA VAN GEENEN, SAM HIND, TIMO KAERLEIN,
MAX KANDERSKE

University of Siegen, Germany



The notion of the grid evokes expectations of completeness and structural uniformity. It is generally imagined as a universal spatio-temporal model, pulling together heterogeneous phenomena in a consistent ordering framework. Taking the semi-urban space of the city of Siegen as a focal point, the individual contributions to this panel aim to complicate this general image by pointing to a plurality of parallel initiatives to map, archive, and project urban data. The examples range from historical efforts to connect Siegen to dominant traffic infrastructures like the state railway and the ‘Autobahn’ network, contemporary municipal ‘smart city’ projects, hobbyist projects (i.e. drone pilot communities, urban explorers, local historians) to participatory urban sensing initiatives, often with a focus on environmental data.

Together, the mapping efforts of these initiatives do not add up to create a homogenous data space, but form a collage or semi-lattice (Alexander 1965) of partially-overlapping micro grids. Not only do the various data-driven projects represent different spatial approaches to capture urban phenomena on multiple scales and with varying intentions, they also differ in their temporal orientation: some of them work with historical records, some attempt ‘real-time’ sensing of dynamic urban processes, some point to the prospected future of a sovereign data citizenship. In order to study processes of urban datafication, “Data Walks” have been proposed as educational means and methodological strategies. Data Walks are deployed to engage with municipal political matters and issues (Powell 2018) and as creative and embodied modes of understanding and interfacing with how we as human subjects are ‘datafied’ in and by urban environments (Van Es & De Lange 2020). This panel makes an effort to explore ways of ‘walking through the city’ (borrowed from Michel de Certeau 1984) by means of comparatively exploring diverse relevant data practices, while being faced with the challenges of bodily displacement and distance that a virtual conference confronts us with. By discussing a number of local urban data projects in quick succession, the panel serves to put Siegen on the mental grid of conference participants while simultaneously generating a more complex Moiré effect of heterogeneous and often incommensurable urban data practices.

10:00am
→ 11:15am

11:45am
→ 1:00pm

T1S1: Mapping Environments

THEMATIC PANEL (INDIVIDUAL PROPOSALS)

Zoom
Stream 1

Re-locating the Island: The Smartphone’s Revolution

RAYNER GARCÍA HERNÁNDEZ

independent, Germany

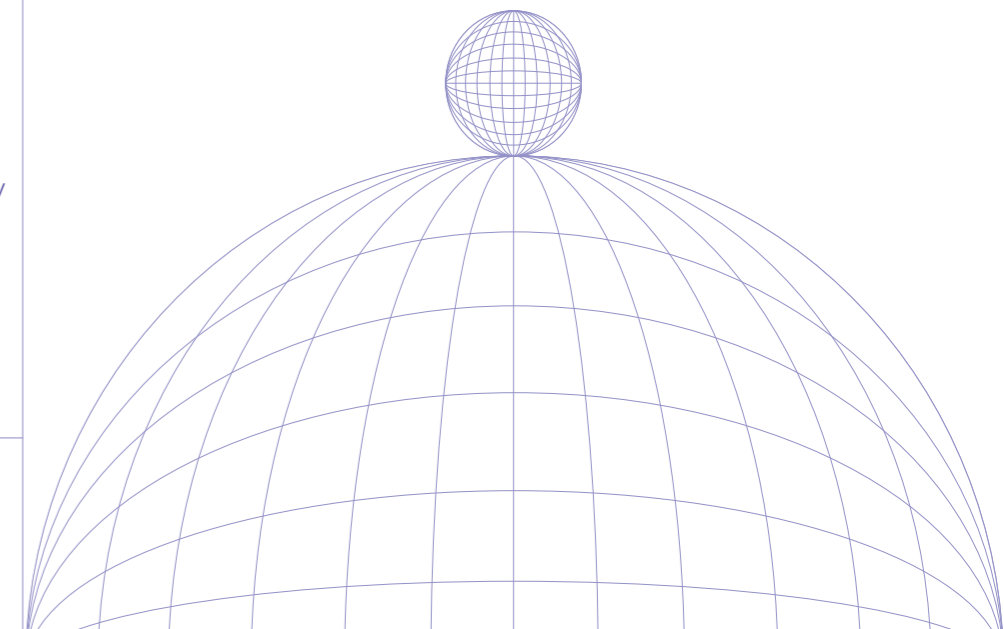
From a cultural-technical perspective, one can argue that the sharing system of the Smartphone describes a techno-social ecology, that modifies the habits of consumption and the user’s behavior towards the development of cultural techniques. Through the expansion of a technical altered sociality, users intervene in even more diverse fields of the infosphere and with the help of increasingly complex technologies, they participate in the negotiation of cultural, political and social meanings. Thus, by using different media formats, users react to the effects and challenges of a higher-order information sphere –such as the Internet and its services– and contribute to its spread with their actions in the digital milieu. The Global South integrates into this dynamic with its genuine and heterogeneous social, economic and political factors. The media expression of transformation processes and the reactions to media changes are also characteristic of the Southern states or alliances of states within the world market, in which diverse social meanings for phenomena such as depoliticization, deglobalization and a new definition of citizenship emerge. This dynamic finds an example in Cuba. The use of the Smartphone has catalyzed a cultural revolution. The access to other information spaces has become more relevant for the users, whilst the usage of digital devices and the consumption of digital content has increased exponentially. Thus, the cultural dimension of technical infrastructures –understand as a complex and asynchronous process– affects not only individuals and social groups behavior, but transforms social conditions, material environments and sociocultural practices in different ways. In this paper, I intend to argue that with Internet access the Cuban users exercise their digital rights and carry a digital responsibility. Culturally, they develop a new form of literacy –such as reading, writing and navigating a network of information resources– by expanding their digital skills throughout the spread of a media-based communication. In economic terms, these media practices are based on a technical infrastructure which, in addition to the telecommunication network provided by the Cuban state, coexists as independent business start-ups and models for digital commerce.

Going off grid but staying on track? On the technonatures of ‘hike&flyers’ in the alpine space

KARINA KIRSTEN

University of Siegen, Germany

‘Hike&fly’ connotes the combination of mountaineering and paragliding. Although it is still a marginal phenomenon in the alpine sports sector due to the complexity of the geographic skills and flying techniques it requires, hike&fly athletes form an ever-growing community. Geomedia technologies play an important role here, as more and more digital tools, wearable devices, and small GPS-tracers facilitate alpine tours. Moreover, these technologies allow athletes to go off the grid by escaping places of mass tourism and overcrowded hotspots. Hike&flyers seek not only to encounter the wild territory of high mountains, but do so mainly on their own. However, as they track, record, and share their tours on social media platforms, they do not remain alone as such. Furthermore, the alpine nature they seek does not remain untouched either, but rather evolves into a technonatural environment. In preparation for an upcoming field study, this paper explores a theoretical framework for studying hike&flyers by expanding the idea of ‘technonatures’ and extending it to the high territories of alpine space. The term ‘technonatures’ refers to complex constructions and entanglements of technologies, natures, and social life. It indicates that the technological and natural are not a priori distinct but rather co-constituted in relation to each other. This co-constitution is material as well as semiotic. As this paper will show, hike&flyers not only encounter alpine nature through geomedia technologies and practices, but also engage in a long-standing tradition of cultural imaginaries of the Alps, which have always been entangled with both technological innovation and social self-affirmation.



11:45am
→ 1:00pm

T2S1: Disconnection

THEMATIC PANEL (INDIVIDUAL PROPOSALS)

Zoom
Stream 2

Dead Spots

LEA PAULA ZIEROTT

University of Hamburg, Germany

Dead spots are most of the time considered as problematic, as something not only the telephone companies want to get rid of. What happens when we look at the non-problem-driven side of dead spots? Seeing disconnection as a positive practice and not a deficit (Karppi 2018), opens up not only new perspectives on practices of disconnection but also a new form of spatiality. Being off the grid in a dead spot does not mean to completely detach from it but be dependent on the same material infrastructures. As such, disconnection is more than the opposite of connection and an own form of organizing and structuring social space and everyday practices (Stäheli 2014). Taking for example apps like White Spots that help you to find the nearest dead spot to your location. At the same time, places without WIFI or phone connection are becoming extremely rare. Those who consider themselves hypersensitive to electromagnetic waves need to actively produce dead spots through practices of shielding. Being often temporary and fleeting, dead zones have their own spatiality. Due to this notion of space, there is the potential to become places of possibility, utopian places to disappear and not to be seen, like the artist Hito Steyerl shows in her work. This at the same time challenges existing concepts of network logics (Mejias 2013). This project is an attempt to see dead spots as fields of disconnection with a new form of spatiality, practices, and infrastructure.

References:
Karppi, T. (2018). Disconnect: Facebook's affective bonds. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press. Mejias, Ulises Ali: Off the Network. Disrupting the digital world. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2013.
Stäheli, U. (2014). Aus dem Rhythmus fallen. Zur öffentlichen Entnetzung. In A. Nassehi (Eds.), Privat 2.0 (pp. 66–77). Hamburg: Murmann.
Steyerl, Hito. (2013). *How Not to Be Seen. A Fucking Didactic Educational .MOV File* Accessed April 21, 2020. <https://www.artforum.com/video/hito-steyerl-how-not-to-be-seen-a-fucking-didactic-educational-movfile-2013-51651>.

2:30pm
→ 3:45pm

T1S2: Urban Aesthetics

THEMATIC PANEL (INDIVIDUAL PROPOSALS)

Zoom
Stream 1

Tele-Mobilities. TV Circuits in Italian Transportation Hubs: a Route Towards Alternative Media Geographies?

EMILIANO ROSSI

University of Bologna, Italy

“Go–Television” commonly refers to video–communication systems located within high–flow mobility terminals (railway and underground stations, airports, waiting shelters, highway rest areas), both in metropolitan and suburban contexts. Outcome of this research is a mapping of the major cases detectable on the Italian territory, with a focus on tv–like circuits acting as public media and designed for captive audiences mainly composed of passengers, commuters, as well as city dwellers. Such networks, often as integral parts of urban furnishing, still constitute an under–studied perimeter of real–time broadcasting (literally “off–the–grid”), and their commercial features are necessarily tempered by informative and institutional purposes. Accordingly, not only are specialised firms involved in this market, but transportation companies and local authorities are likewise included in the production and distribution chain of such dedicated contents. The inquiry combines a “behind–the–screens” approach – referring primarily to media industry scholarship – with the traditional toolkits of television studies, on the premise that editorial and business–related dynamics need to be examined also in the light of professional practices. In Italy, lastmile television implemented for such liminal venues typically appears as hybrid media aggregators, opening to brand urbanism and geolocalised marketing strategies. Ultimately, in–transit televisual apparatuses well exemplify contemporary trends of contextual video transmissions, resulting in the transformation of transport vehicles into media of communication: in this wake, the geographical interstices taken into account act either as container of site–bound audiovisual interfaces (differing from pure mobile locative e–platforms) or as displayed in–motion contents, thus re–mediating the experience of mobility itself also on a diegetic level.

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Incorporating the Swedish tourism sector in crisis management and communication – methods and strategies for preparedness and collaboration in rural areas

LENA GRIP, LOTTA BRAUNERHILEM, FREDRIK HOPPSTADIUS, LINDA RYAN BENGTTSSON

Karlstad University, Sweden

Our changing climate foretells a future with continued large forest fires and extreme weather events, such as devastating storms, heavy rainfall, flooding, heat etc. This project focuses on preparedness for these kinds of events in relation to nature–based tourism and the often uncertain numbers of visitors – sometimes very many– that are spread–out and roaming the Swedish countryside. A crisis can be devastating in nature tourist areas. In parallel, the Swedish tourism sector is constantly growing, with new trends as “vacation at home” and increasing numbers of international tourists visiting Swedish nature. Tourists are a vulnerable group in crisis situations, since they are not acquainted with neither the place nor how to find information about the crisis and how to keep themselves safe. The conditions for crisis communication is changing with social media, apps and digitalization of information, at the same time as nature tourists can be involuntarily or voluntarily off the grid. Obstacles and possibilities for digitalization in the tourism sector in relation to the specific conditions of nature–based tourism therefore needs more attention. The aim of this study is to generate new knowledge and methods for incorporating the Swedish countryside tourism sector in crisis management and communication. Crisis management and risk preparedness and awareness are in focus together with collaborations between the tourism sector and other crisis management actors (municipalities and public authorities), as well as the nature tourists themselves.

Where do people withdraw from digital media? A Bourdieusian study of the taste for disconnection

KARIN FAST, JOHAN LINDELL, ANDRÉ JANSSON

University of Oslo / Uppsala University / Karlstad University

In a growing spectrum of contexts, digital disconnection is recognized as an empowering asset rather than a flaw to be fixed. As media become ubiquitous in public as well as private places, people are encouraged to (re)take control of their lives and create temporal and spatial zones void of (certain forms) of media. While such norms of everyday discipline and self–realization could be crucial for fighting dependence and addiction, they also represent socially shaped value structures and notions of ‘good taste’. There are, we argue, good reasons to assume that disconnection practices – like media practices at large – are socially stratified and might serve as means of distinction. Based on data from a national Swedish survey (2019), this paper applies correspondence analysis and a Bourdieusian theoretical framework to chart to what extent different social groups prioritize to disconnect in different places and forms of digital unease associated with smartphone use. Such preferences are mapped onto a social space constructed around the distribution of economic and cultural capital in the Swedish society. The analysis reveals that the handling of digital (dis)connection (in different places) play into overarching patterns of taste and cultural distinction. As such, disconnection manifests in affluent societies as an emerging symbolic battleground, whose moral geographical implications are likely to multiply as digital media become more immersive, and more intrusive.

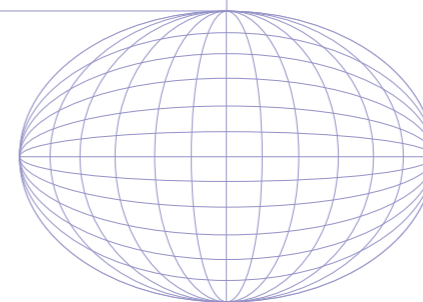


Trash Cacheing: Video Surveillance of Waste Around Palermo

JAN STALLINGS DELOZIER

University of California Los Angeles, USA

Stemming from the Latin vastus “uncultivated, unoccupied,” definitions of waste suggest an idling “away” and a “completion” of use or an “end” of a particular cycle. These semantic attempts accumulate to categorize “waste” by an underlying loss in productivity. Shifts from useful to wasteful, farmland to wasteland, are further documented in media where waste transitions from invisible/non–valuable to visible/valuable. Video surveillance particularly interrupts the invisibility of waste to display trash previously considered to be “gone” or “away.” This essay will address two surveillance videos of trash practices around the city of Palermo, Italy to analyze how media sustain the reputation of Sicily as a “wasteful” and “backwards” region of Italy. “Garbage Rubbish Roads. Ballestrate, Sicilia, Italy” (2019) and “Lotta ai furbetti dei rifiuti a Bagheria” (2020) document and survey in order to isolate the public presence of waste and use social media networks to provoke participatory condemnation. In a recursive fashion, this paper interrogates what surveillance of waste documents, how the function of documentation operates on both a social and narrative level and offers alternative methods of nation–building waste practices, such as the municipal adoption of the ZeroWaste movement, that function to outplay waste media and surveillance.



T2S2: Mobile Socialities I

THEMATIC PANEL

Zoom
Stream 2

Through culturally and socioeconomically diverse case studies, the two proposed panels explore 'mobile socialities.' This is a currently emerging framework, which builds upon work in mobilities, mobile communications, and social interactions to capture contrary experiences of media. The main argument of the mobilities paradigm – that mobilities are becoming the dominant factor shaping social relations – includes only weak connections with media/communication studies. We will instead bring this connection to the forefront. The additional differentiation between mobility and motility (the capacity and capability to move) invites questions of who moves and who doesn't, as well as questions of power. By exploring sociality and antisociality in articulation with immobile mobility, tourism, and digital work/labour, this panel also interrogates how everyday mobilities and immobilities are articulated in relation to various dialectical socialities: sociality and solitude, self and community, work and leisure, absence and presence. Knitting these papers together are threads of space, place, and time in the fostering of mobile socialities, particularly considering the changing spatial nature and fluctuating tempos of practices in relation to institutions such as home, workplace, community. This collection of papers explores diverse media, mobile, and social experiences suggestive of the flow and stillness of media technologies and lived realities, and power dynamics of emerging forms of 'the social' in mobile times.

Digitizing desires: immobile mobility and social media in southeast Turkey

ELISABETTA COSTA

University of Groningen, the Netherlands

In Mardin, a medium-sized town in southeast Turkey, young homebound women from conservative families escape into the place of social media to create and maintain new forms of social relationships they cannot have offline. They commonly use social media to engage in personal communications and interactions with strangers, friends, and sweethearts they never meet face to face. I define this movement from offline to online, 'immobile mobility' (see also Wallis 2011; 2013 and Ureta 2004). This concept captures the (im)mobility from the offline physical place of the home to the online digital place of social media, and also the human agency enacted through this movement. The mobility away from the constraints imposed by social norms ruling offline relationships takes place together with the reproduction of the public normative understandings of social and family relations. Online socialities do not challenge or transform social norms, but are rather a way to actively inhabit the social restrictions that limit women's lives. This paper shows that a 'mobile socialities' approach allows us to shed light on questions of human agency, which have been at the core of social science's concerns for many decades.

Distributing Smartphones to Homeless People: A critical view

DAVID LOWIS

Berlin University of the Arts, Germany

Owning, or having access to, a smartphone has rapidly become a precondition for participating in many aspects of society. This extends to homeless people, who are nonetheless often lacking said access. One attempt at remedying this mobile device access chasm is the dedicated distribution of smartphones to homeless people in order to meet their digital needs; an idea which the Covid pandemic lent more urgency to. In this presentation, I will talk about these in-kind smartphone distributions. In this context, I will also discuss the efforts of a Berlin-based NGO to use one such smartphone distribution as the launching pad from which to develop a digital ecosystem for homeless people – which has proved difficult, since many homeless people for a variety of reasons place a premium on privacy. With many homeless people to some extent choosing an "off the grid" lifestyle, this raises the question whether integration into a tailored digital ecosystem is a feasible, or even desirable goal – a question which I will aim to draw some preliminary conclusions about in this presentation.

Mobility Fetishism

ERIKA POLSON

University of Denver, USA

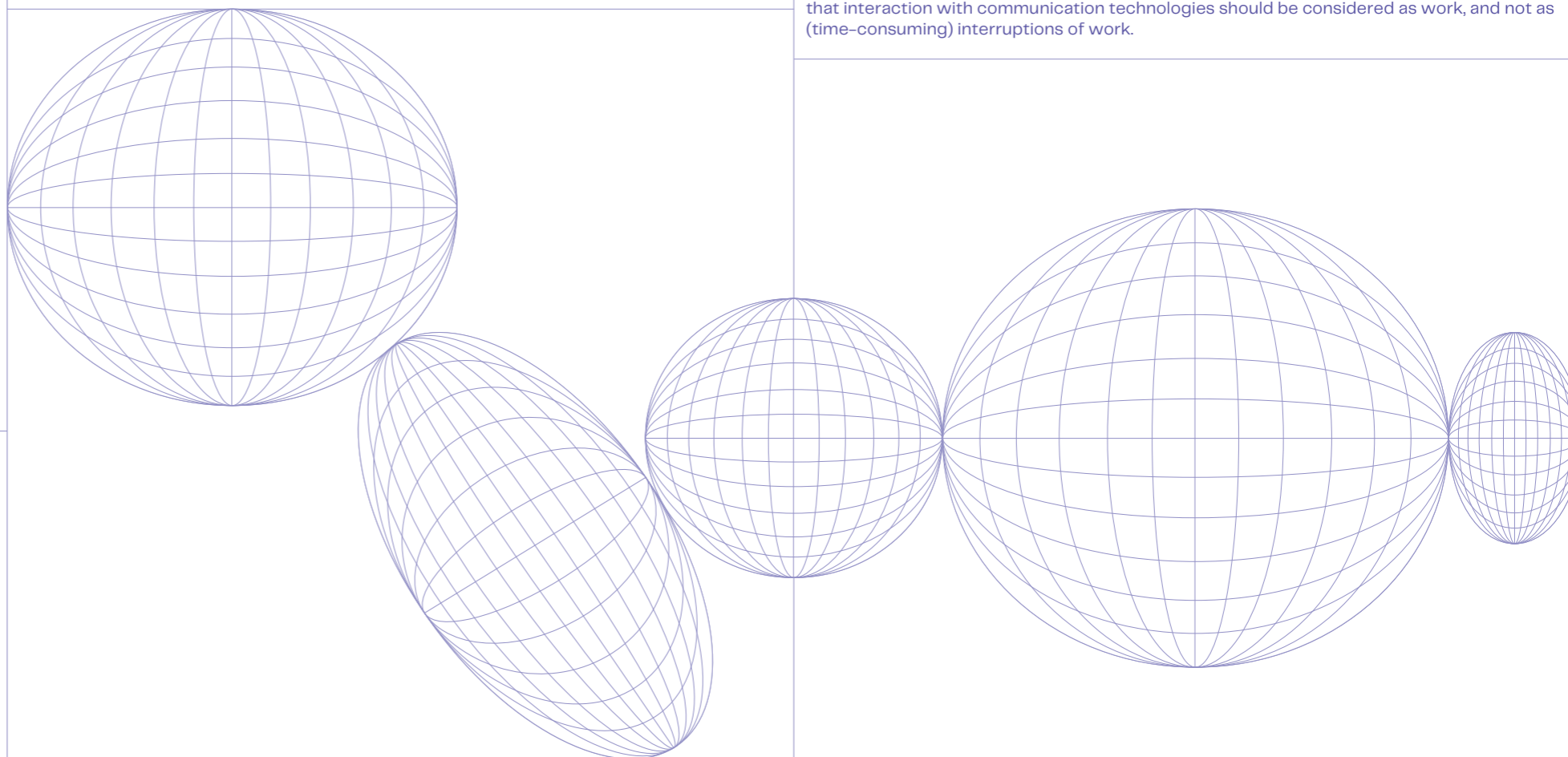
This paper draws from empirical research on tourism and travel to demonstrate how pro-mobile discourses obscure the social relations of mobility, and reflects on the relationship that mobile devices (and the socially and spatially networked communication they enable) have in this process. Starting with the political economic critique that commodities are often imagined as having an inherent value, through ideological means that naturalize their worth and obscure the labor underlying their production (Buchanan, 2018), I consider how a related fetish may be applied to mobilities. As has been much discussed in the past ten months, the social and economic gap between those who may choose either mobility or immobility has been laid bare through the various forms of quarantine and shutdowns that have greatly altered spatial practices during Covid-19. Although the fact that mobility (and elective immobility) is a resource to which not everyone has equal access has become increasingly clear in a time period where some are taking advantage of the opportunity to travel while working remotely and others risk their (and their families') health to do the in-person jobs needed for basic survival, the idealization of mobility itself is infrequently called into question. Here, I analyze travel related ad campaigns, journalism, and social media posts during the coronavirus pandemic to make a larger argument about how mobility is fetishized through discourses that naturalize mobile socialities and other mobile practices while obscuring how the value gained through these practices "depends upon the exclusion of others" (Ahmed, 2004: 152).

Communication technologies of work: a question of time and space

MAGNUS ANDERSSON

University of Lund, Sweden

The pandemic has made very clear that communication technologies are an important aspect of all kind of contemporary work. Zoom, Microsoft Teams and Skype Business have become taken-for-granted elements in the working life of white-collar workers. For other groups, like food couriers (who never before have had as much work), certain apps are indispensable for the performance of their work. Communication technologies of work are about a lot of things, although in this paper I want to highlight their significance for time and space management; their meaning for organizing and synchronizing spatial and temporal structures. Of particular interest is workers' agency in relation to these structures. My point of departure in this explorative paper is on the one hand the work of food couriers work in a gig economy (Andersson, in press), and on the other hand my own rich experience of mediation through zoom at work during the ongoing pandemic. The importance of time and space for both these work positions will be elaborated in the paper, but can still be illustrated by following examples: The food courier are informed by an app that s/he is supposed to bring food from A (the restaurant) to B (the customer), and hence s/he has to navigate the urban geography in shortest possible time, since her/his performance is monitored and rated. The homeworking university teacher is physically immobile, but virtually hypermobile, leaping from the one communicative context to the other: a supervision session on zoom, a lecture, a staff meeting, some mails again, etc. It underscores Wajcman and Rose's (2011) argument that interaction with communication technologies should be considered as work, and not as (time-consuming) interruptions of work.





2:30pm
→ 3:45pm

T3S2: A City is not a Grid?!

THEMATIC PANEL

Zoom
Stream 3

In urban planning and representation within late capitalism, grids have a twofold meaning: 1) Grids are visual formats in which objects, data and urban goods are symmetrically arranged. 2) In urban planning, grids are used synonymously with urban networks and infrastructural policies (Easterling 2014). While visual grids seemed to fail in 20th centuries urban planning (Siegert 2015: 102ff.), they have become formats for the data modeling in digital planning software, urban modeling, topologies of computation and a subject for counter-mapping. Thus, the panel offers critical perspectives on the history and contemporary practices of digital technologies and urban planning – ranging from the concepts of addressability in computation and urban planning (Ranjodh Singh Dhaliwal), the grid as a paradigm of strategic simulations (Jacob Birken), architectonic visibilities and the right to the city (Niloufar Tajeri & Diana Lucas-Drogan), and grids as formats for the capitalization of space (Sebastian Randerath). The panel thereby criticizes and counters the role of grids as technocratic formats in regard to policies of capitalist infrastructural space, coming from interdisciplinary backgrounds including media studies, –history, STS, architecture theory and –history.

Symbols and Spaces: On address grids of computational media

RANJODH SINGH DHALIWAL

University of California, USA

The relationship between symbols and physical spaces is an integral conceptual lynchpin holding together Geo-media. This talk brings together approaches from media studies and STS to outline a brief history of addressability, the mechanical regime that is a common base for computation and urban planning. Seriously considering the geographies of urban spaces alongside intra-machinic topologies of computation, I think about the politics of such historical sociotechnical developments. For example, if the early modern cities were encoding political subjectivities through their use of numerical addressing techniques, what forms of political subjectivities undergird our computational city-grids today, grids that are not distinct from, but instead deeply entangled with, the grids inside/through computers. Intervening into recent work on the politics of infrastructural systems, I argue that new forms of address lead to newer forms of the addressees while unifying grids become, in the neoliberal era, a floating techno-political medium unto themselves.

Back to Square One. Urban Modelling and/as Strategic Gaming

JACOB BIRKEN

University of Cologne, Germany

Strategy starts with a grid. In gaming, it's 8 x 8 squares with an alternating pattern: The chessboard as a predecessor of 18th century war-games and their various digital descendants. Early war-gaming meant to transcend the metaphorical representation of conflict the chess set offered – to make war measurable, analytic, manageable and teachable (Pias 2000; Allen 1987). Thus, the ubiquitous square or hexagonal grid in strategic gaming is more than a legacy from 'pre-modern' gaming, but much rather a helpful means of bringing order into complexity and chaos. With the advent of PC gaming at the end of the 20th century, the grid re-emerged as a paradigm for the 'strategic' – now encompassing more 'civil' applications like 1989's SimCity. Yet, behind the quaint tiles of this early city management game lie similar concepts of order and didactic representation as in 18th century war-games – now, (super)powered by new methods of computed modelling (Baker 2019). In this talk, I want to discuss the different roles of the grid as metaphor and ordering system in both gamified and applied urban modelling, and the hybrid leg

Architecture as ideological Service. A special kind of project development at Hermannplatz

NILOUFAR TAJERI, DIANA LUCAS-DROGAN

Braunschweig University of Technology, Germany

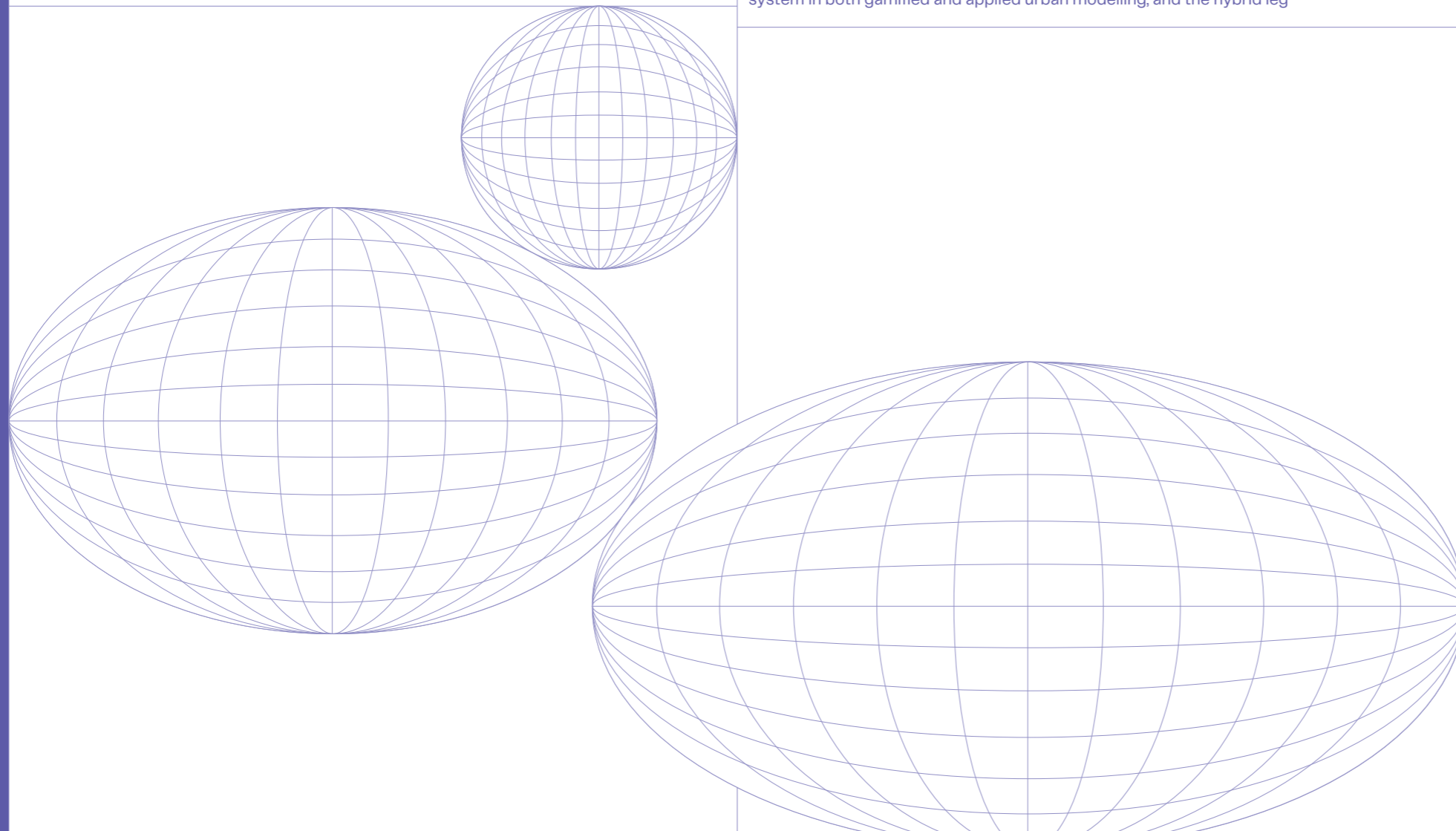
The dialogical input is a critical-diagrammatic portfolio recording of Signa Holding GmbH as mechanism of urban exploitation based on the effected work of the Hermannplatz initiative, Berlin. The recording and the dialog reflects on the violations of a pluralistic right to the city and visibilities on the ground of architecture as part of a global market.

Filling the Gaps. Grids as Formats in Urban Planning Software

SEBASTIAN RANDERATH

University of Siegen, Germany

With an increase of smart cities and infrastructural space, urban planning has become a mere economic practice (Easterling 2014). Whilst 20th century urban planning has turned away from cities as visual grids (Siegert 2015: 102ff.), contemporary urban planning software seems to re-establish visual urban grids as planning media of a capital extension of smart cities (Bratton 2015: 143). Alphabet's recently developed urban planning software 'Delve', which uses machine learning to generate scenarios for urban planning (City of the Future 2020), shows this shift to 'grid planning'. While 'Delve' claims to shape interoperability between urban planners and financial or economic decision-makers (Delve 2020), the software takes 'visual formats' from economic tables (Krajewski 2007) and applies them to the planning of urban grids. Thus, urban grids become products of calculative grids and modules. Based on the example of 'Delve' as a modular planning and design software (Russel 2012), the talk argues, how grids have become formats for the capitalization of design and infrastructural space. Hence, it shows, how 'visual grid formats' enable interoperability between urban planners, designers and financial stakeholders by leading to modularity and an expansion of urban grids.



T1S3: Geomedia Histories

THEMATIC PANEL

Zoom
Stream 1

What is the historical backdrop of today’s place-aware geomedia technologies? Who were the early adopters, producers, advocates, or stakeholders of geomedia? How can we account for contemporary power geometries by glimpsing at yesterday’s landscape of geomedia technologies, practices and cultures? While the majority of work in the field of geomedia studies focus on contemporary developments, papers included in this panel address the nexus of geography and media from a historical perspective. Such a perspective serves to counterbalance dominant discourses – produced not least by ICT companies and policy makers but also by academics – about the “revolutionary” traits of new location-aware media. The objects of study are geomedia (e.g. Thielmann, 2010; Lapenta, 2011; McQuire, 2016; Abend, 2017; Fast et al, 2018). Here, geomedia qualifies as an umbrella term used for assemblages of technologies, processes, operations and practices that socio-technologically reorganize our encounter with space and place (Döring/Thielmann, 2009). This includes localizing technologies, augmented-reality applications, and data practices. In addition, geomedia can be used as a concept for describing the state which media is currently entering. Seen this way, geomedia is not referring to a bundle of specific types of media, but rather serves as a label for the particular condition(s) brought about by location-aware and location-based technologies in interplay with wider social, economic, cultural or political trends. Certain trajectories such as convergence, ubiquity, location-awareness, and real-time feedback can be followed, with geomedia sitting at the intersection of these developments (McQuire, 2016). Therefore, the panel is interested in investigations into the starting points of these trajectories.

The city without qualities: From systems theory to platform urbanism

SCOTT MCQUIRE

University of Melbourne, Australia

In this paper I want to examine the origins of smart city approaches as a major exemplar of contemporary geomedia. The first part of the paper will trace the migration of systems analysis and computational modelling from the RAND Institute’s pioneering nuclear war scenarios in the 1950s to their application in relation to a broader set of social and urban problems. This saw the emergence of influential data-driven approaches to urbanism and urban planning such as those established by the Urban Institute (Washington D.C, 1968) and the New York City-RAND Institute (1969). Subsequent developments, including the growing use of GIS software in urban planning from the 1980s, confirmed the dominance of data urbanism and the marginalisation of other approaches and forms of urban knowledge. By the 2000s, the urban setting emerged as the centrepiece for innovation in ‘big data’ applications under the ubiquitous heading of ‘smart’. While parts of this story are fairly well-known, it has remained fragmented, and there has been no systematic attempt to critically situate this trajectory in relation to contemporary debates about the rollout of urban digital infrastructure. For this reason, the second part of the paper will focus on conceptual issues related to understanding this history. Statistical approaches to social issues clearly originated much earlier than electronic and digital computational technologies (see for instance, Hacking 1990). While those such as Beniger (1986) and Robins and Webster (1999) have argued for a broadly continuist assessment of the ‘information revolution’, in which digital computation is figured as the fulfilment of an earlier rationalising and managerial logic, I will argue instead for adopting a socio-technical approach that treats conceptual, institutional and technological domains as co-constitutive. This will provide a productive lens for better articulating the history of urban computation with contemporary debates about the ‘platformization’ of urban digital infrastructure (see for example, McQuire 2018; Plantin et al 2019; Gekker & Hind 2020).

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McQuire S. 2019. ‘One map to rule them all? Google Maps as digital technical object’, *Communication and the Public* 4 (2): 150-165
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Robins K and Webster F. 1999. *Times of the technoculture: from the information society to the virtual life*, London & New York, Routledge.

Still at home? Intimate geomedia histories and changing politics of practice

JOLYNNA SINANAN, LARISSA HJORTH

University of Sydney / RMIT University

Geomedia studies has emphasised the relationship between geography and media, space and temporality and their implications for being present/ absent, here/ there and subject/ object (Thielmann, 2010; McQuire, 2016; Fast et al, 2018). The complimentary area of locative media scholarship has drawn attention to the production of location through mobile media and the social relations that emerge or are transformed as a result (Farman, 2012; Wilken, 2019). However, there has been less consideration of the ways that practices relate to privacy, intimacy and surveillance from the relationships that geomedia contexts produce. In this paper, we contribute to these areas by focusing on locative media in the home and their impacts on care, intimacy and the emotional geographies of family relationships. We draw on case studies based on qualitative, ethnographic research in Melbourne, Australia that explored locative media in the household and the introduction of the COVIDSafe app by the Australian government during the COVID-19 pandemic. Our case studies reveal that contemporary geomedia imaginings and practices around intergenerational care and surveillance often re-enact practices and histories within family relationships. We theorise these practices as digital kinship: the ways in which care as proximity and intimacy is navigated, enacted and contested through geomedia (Hjorth et al, 2020). We conclude that the pandemic circumstances—where the home is the centre of the configuration of being public (through working, parenting and socialising from home)—highlight the politics of practice that have been established within the histories of households and offers a rethinking of geomedia as mediated emotional geographies.

Geomediatization of public spheres: A space genealogy for emerging datafied societies

JOAN RAMON RODRIGUEZ-AMAT, CORNELIA BRANTNER

Sheffield Hallam University / Karlstad University

The theory of the public sphere succeeds at philosophically providing the back story that links democracy to the media. From the start, it carried the assumption that a shared communicative space was a necessary precondition to explain the link between media and democratic governance. The geomedia refresh—and make accountable—the relevance of space for government. However, the nuances and limitations of geomedia and geodata still require a critical discussion and a prudent approach. This paper deconstructs geomedia as an epistemic assemblage of practices, norms, data, and tools, rather than considering it a single technology. The operation enhances the historical framework by tracing longer temporal lines that show how efforts to politically value places were key for governance even before the commodification of GPS data and locative technologies. A reconciliation with previous social research will help understand the full breadth of the value of the geomedia for democracy today. This paper is organized into four parts: after an initial conceptual review, the paper explores the prehistory of place making by linking the understandings of space with the creation of symbolic places for governance. The following section on the modernity of media location deals with the dual role of mapping and universal location as tools for identity building and governance strategies. The paper concludes with a discussion of the geomedia(-ted) public sphere(s) by considering technological policies (from GPS-enabled mobiles to geodata and the internet of things) and the geopolitical implications of such geomedia assemblages on the legitimate governance of communicative spaces.

← Chairs

KARIN FAST
Karlstad University, Schweden

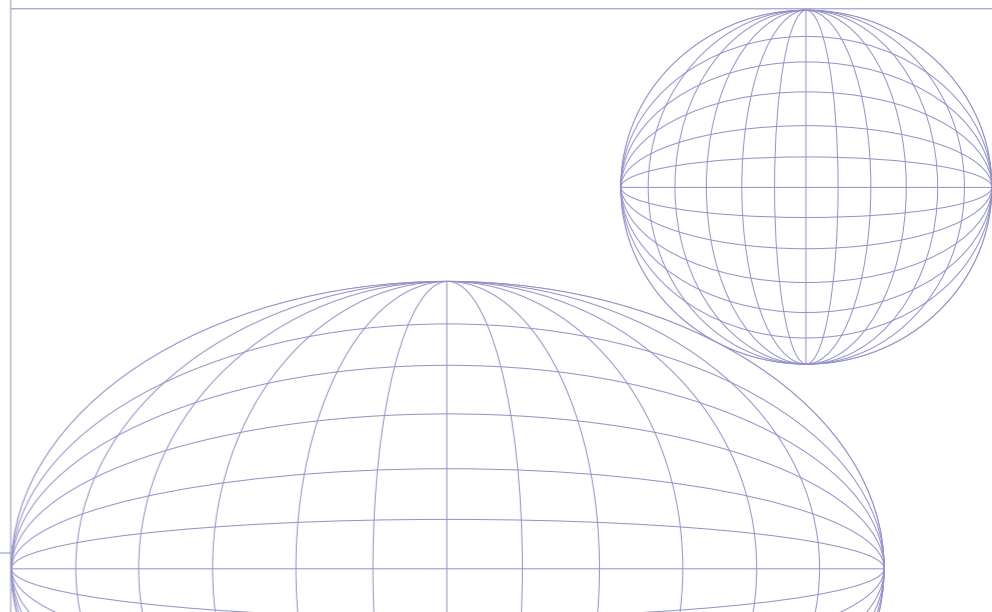
PABLO ABEND
University of Siegen, Germany

Bundling and unbundling geomedia: An historic genealogy of a diverse set of cultural techniques

TRISTAN THIELMANN

University of Siegen, Germany

In order to better understand the fundamental ontogenetic qualities of contemporary geomedia, it’s necessary to have a look at their diverse historic trajectories that are nowadays amalgamized, but still bundle different cultural techniques like map matching, augmenting imaginaries, or location-based tracking. This paper traces the development of historic geomedia technologies that were invented with the spreading of new cultural forms of mobility that emerged in the late 19th century, especially with tourism and individual travel. Above all, the advent of cycling outlined: Being awheel, being on the move and making space accessible visually and cartographically are closely linked to each other; they take place in one and the same procedure, as part of the joint practice of surveying. It is not digital technology, alone, that has resulted in a new awareness of geomedia, but changed forms of mobility, which each draw together different assemblages of media and cultural techniques, and therefore each reflect the locations that they pass through in a different fashion. Today, the quiddity of what can be called a “digital place” is interpreted by an array of different media technologies, like drones, smart phones, etc., that have simultaneously established different mobility concepts that shape the understanding of how these devices see the world based on their sensory perception. This paper takes this contemporary understanding of place as a starting point for outlining how different historic mobile devices (connected to vehicles) shaped the understanding of place; and how these places also emerge through the (geo-)media that pass by, via the reflexive mapping and documenting of infrastructural conditions, as we move along together with geomedia. In this manner, the paper differentiates historical geomedia on the basis of their different techniques, operations and spatial understandings. This concerns a) geomedia of localization (as geopoints), b) geomedia at a distance and of distance measurement, c) geomedia as traces, and d) geomedia of optical bearing and with augmented realities. This results in the final synthesis, that historical (analog) geomedia rely on other structural couplings of cultural techniques than contemporary (digital) geomedia. However, as this paper will demonstrate, digital geomedia have not established any principally new social or cultural techniques or even a new kind of geomedia practice that would not follow a long historic trajectory.





6:00pm
→ 7:30pm

K1: Keynote 1

KEYNOTE

Conference
Stream

Staying with the Grid: The Limits of Geographical Knowledge and Its Technics

CAREN KAPLAN

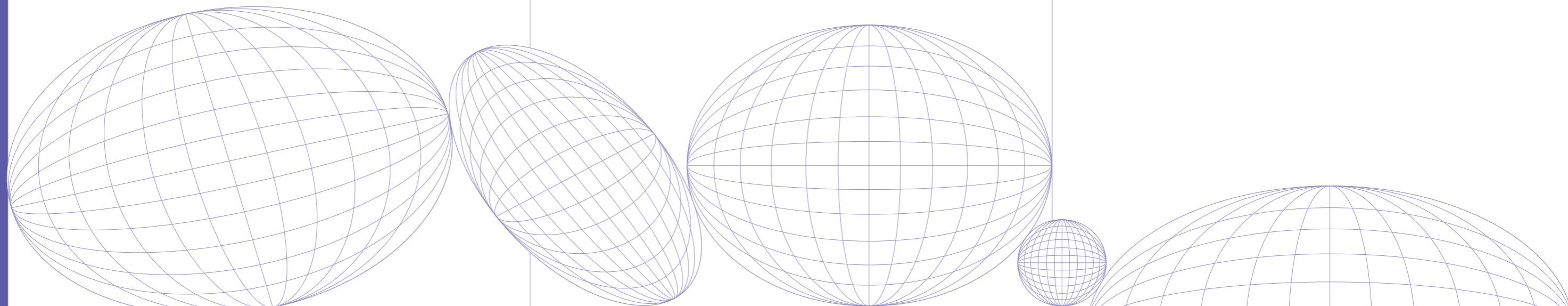
University of California at Davis, USA

How do we make possible social, political, economic, and cultural change, particularly in the face of resurgent authoritarian and fascist movements globally? In this effort, it is tempting to identify the *bête noire* in our discipline (whether it is the map, the grid, the nation, the police, patriarchy, etc.) and try to imagine or enact an “otherwise” or “elsewhere.” Technologies are often identified as the culprit – if we could only eliminate one or more of them, we might regain a lost way of life. Or, perhaps we could recuperate specific technologies from rapacious capitalism or military use for more morally beneficial ends. In this paper I will argue that many efforts to “go off the grid” can reinforce and even romanticize colonial tropes and territorialization. While mapping technologies are always already historical and contingent, their hegemonic penetration of geographical knowledge can be deconstructed but not escaped. This conclusion is not defeatist or pessimistic. Rather, an anti-racist, anti-misogynist politics that does not reproduce empire cannot form or thrive without this refusal to engage the history of geographical knowledge and its technics.



Caren Kaplan is Professor of American Studies and affiliated faculty in Cultural Studies and Science and Technology Studies. She is also affiliated with the Humanities Innovation Lab, the Mellon Research Initiative in Digital Cultures, and the IFHA on Gamification. She is the author of *Questions of Travel: Postmodern Discourses of Displacement* (Duke 1996) and the co-author/editor of *Introduction to Women's Studies: Gender in a Transnational World* (McGraw-Hill 2001/2005), *Between Woman and Nation: Transnational Feminisms and the State* (Duke 1999), and *Scattered Hegemonies: Postmodernity and Transnational Feminist Practices* (Minnesota 1994) as well as two digital multi-media scholarly works, *Dead Reckoning* and *Precision Targets*. She is completing a book on aerial views and militarized visual culture.

→ www.arts.ucdavis.edu/faculty-profile/caren-kaplan



Thursday, 6 May

10:00am
→ 11:15am

T1S4: Place-making

THEMATIC PANEL (INDIVIDUAL PROPOSALS)

Zoom
Stream 1

Bohemian lifestyle migrants, sustainability and the making of places off the grid

EMILIA LJUNGBERG

Karlstad University, Sweden

In this conference paper I propose to discuss the place-making practices of “bohemian lifestyle migrants” (Korpela 2020), using the example of a specific community for alternative lifestyles and sustainable living located in a small town in mid-Sweden. A central aspect of their lifestyle is the idea of going off the grid, by rejecting urban life and mainstream culture to seek out other ways of life. Questions of sustainability is central to them, as they present a sustainable lifestyle in a wider sense. The community is part of a (predominantly white middle-class) global network, while having an uneasy relation to the nearby local community. How do they romanticize the non-urban in their constructions of sustainability? Paradoxically the local place is at the heart of their work but at the same time disappears in their romanticizing of the non-urban. The small town is giving meaning by being non-urban rather than being a specific place, which is a form of erasure. I ask if they are not to some extent reinforcing the urban norm (and the privileges of mobile middle-class elites) rather than challenging it. In my analysis, I use theories about placemaking and the romanticizing of the rural, together with previous research on lifestyle migration and specifically what Korpela (2020) calls bohemian lifestyle migration. My material consists of interviews with people involved in the alternative community, in combination with social media posts made by the community.

Contested meanings in entangled spaces: The insitu perception of public places by social media users

KATJA KAUFMANN, TABEA BORK-HÜFFER, ANDREAS KOLLERT, NIKLAS GUDOWSKY*, MARTIN RUTZINGER

University of Innsbruck / *Austrian Academy of Sciences

For many people nowadays, being off the grid happens only deliberately in rare moments. Eager users of smartphones and wearables live a mobile always-on lifestyle and increasingly experience their quotidian spaces as entangled, conflating ones. With the conflation of offline and online spaces, however, the perception of public places becomes prone to being affected in an immediate manner by digital content. Yet, until now it remains unclear what effect entangled spaces, locative media and augmented reality actually have on the in-situ perception of these places. The paper presents first results from an interdisciplinary mixed-methods project, which combined qualitative interviews with georeferenced mobile eye-tracking to study the perception of public parks by individuals consuming selected social media content in-situ. Data collection took place with 20 young adults in two Austrian cities in summer 2020. In a quasi-experimental set-up, the perception of parks with and without media consumption was measured while participants walked along fixed paths in the parks. While in these walks the parks were perceived by the participants as peaceful, well-maintained spaces of urban green, the social media content drew attention to both the positive and the hitherto unnoticed ‘dark sides’ of the parks, making the participants scrutinize their current perceptions. Overall, the results suggest that media content on mobile and augmented reality devices can have unsettling effects on the insitu perception of physical public places. Simultaneously, our study reflects that the young people seek keeping a critical distance towards media content and rely on their own power of judgement.

I’m here! Conspicuous geomeia practices and the reproduction of social positions on social media

JOHAN LINDELL*, ANDRÉ JANSSON, KARIN FAST

*Uppsala University / Karlstad University, Sweden

“Checking in” at or “tagging” oneself to various places on social media constitute online representations that contribute to the classification, or “making”, of places. At the same time, users are also classified based on what they (show that they) do where. In this paper, we deploy Bourdieusian cultural sociology to the realm of place-exposing geomeia practices to understand social reproduction on social media. The study uses multiple correspondence analysis on a national survey deployed in Sweden (n=3,902). Various place-exposing practices are analyzed in relation to the contemporary Swedish class structure. Results reveal a connection between various forms and volumes of capital and the places that people visit and chose to put on display for online audiences. We are thus able to verify how the socio-technological regime of geomeia, with its new arenas for online exposure, extends deep-seated dynamics of sociocultural reproduction and even reinforces the classificatory linkages between spatial appropriation and social identity work.

T2S4: Mobile Socialities II

THEMATIC PANEL

Zoom
Stream 2



Through culturally and socioeconomically diverse case studies, the two proposed panels explore 'mobile socialities.' This is a currently emerging framework, which builds upon work in mobilities, mobile communications, and social interactions to capture contrary experiences of media. The main argument of the mobilities paradigm – that mobilities are becoming the dominant factor shaping social relations – includes only weak connections with media/communication studies. We will instead bring this connection to the forefront. The additional differentiation between mobility and motility (the capacity and capability to move) invites questions of who moves and who doesn't, as well as questions of power. By exploring sociality and anti-sociality in articulation with mobile work, immobility and the limits of connection, this first panel interrogates how everyday mobilities and immobilities are articulated in relation to various dialectical socialities: sociality and solitude, self and community, work and leisure, absence and presence.

Knitting these papers together are threads of space, place, and time in the fostering of mobile socialities, particularly considering the changing spatial nature and fluctuating tempos of practices in relation to institutions such as home, workplace, temporary accommodation. This collection of papers explores diverse media, mobile, and social experiences suggestive of the flow and stillness of media technologies and lived realities, and power dynamics of emerging forms of 'the social' in mobile times.

Imagining Everest: Locative media and the work of tourism

JOLYNNA SINANAN

University of Sydney, Australia

Recently improved mobile infrastructure in the largely remote and underdeveloped Mount Everest region has coincided with an increase in the number of tourists arriving between 2016 and 2018 (Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation, 2017). The increase in tourists has influenced the demand for workers in the region's tourist industry. Contrary to the visibility of Khumbu Sherpa who have been traditionally associated with Everest mountaineering, significant numbers of guides and porters are from the Tamang and Rai ethnic groups, populations from other parts of Nepal who have historically been at the economic margins of Nepali society (Nepal, 2005). These workers are mostly young men who leave their families for weeks a time to work for international and Nepali tourist agencies. This paper draws on the emerging framework of mobile socialities by examining locative media within socialities created by new forms of labour. I investigate the relationship between mobile media in shaping the meanings of Everest and its impact on the routine practices of minority workers. I employ Olwig and Sorensen's conceptual framework of mobile livelihoods (2002) to highlight the ways that social knowledge produced by affiliations with different relationships and expanded, digital coordination shapes how labour in the Everest tourist industry is practiced. The Everest tourist encounter: tourist experiences and mobile livelihoods are dependent on configurations of fixed, dispersed and mobile telecommunications infrastructures, to varying extents. The paper speaks to the conference theme "off the grid" by exploring the relationships between physical and relational geographies of infrastructure, geomedias and practices in the Global South.

Moving without: Figures of (im)mobility without mobile media

MAREN HARTMANN

Berlin University of the Arts, Germany

While movement has increasingly become intertwined with digital media, this presentation focusses on two instances where this is more complex: on the one hand, we have the mobile figure of the wandering craftsperson who travels for several years in search of work, but without mobile media, on the other hand, we have the roofless person, who has often travelled far to find him-/herself in search of work and without a home, but limited in movement as well as in access to mobile media. They both – albeit for rather different reasons – are on the move as well as disconnected. In the realm of the wandering craftsperson, disconnectivity is a choice. It is a precondition for the travel that these young people undertake. By now, it has also become a special quality of these wandering years and is sometimes sold as an extended digital detox exercise. Roofless people, on the other hand, are much more diverse. Hence disconnection is not an attribute that applies to all of them (or even the majority). However, research underlines that having connectivity and upholding it is indeed much more difficult when you are roofless. These two (im)mobil figures will be explored and presented with reference to an ongoing research project on rooflessness and media use in Berlin. The focus lies on the connection between (non)movement and (dis)connectivity.

Transported Immobility

ANNETTE HILL

Lund University, Sweden

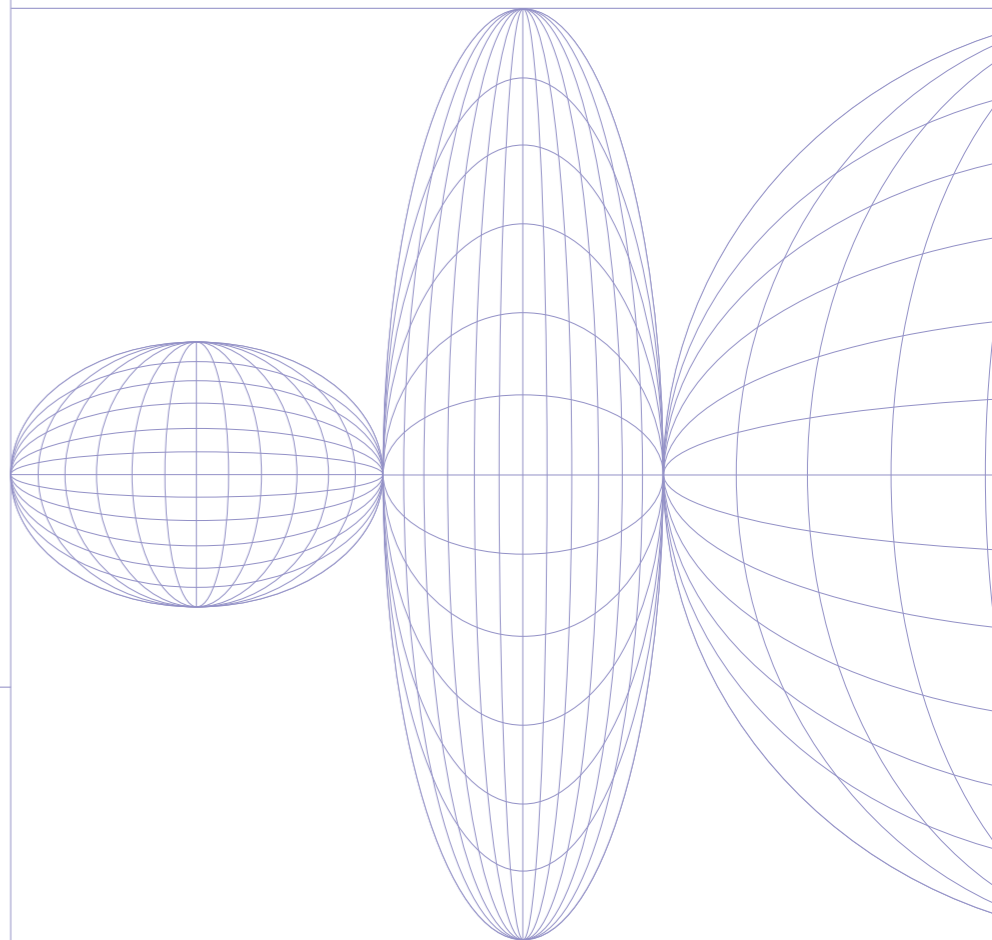
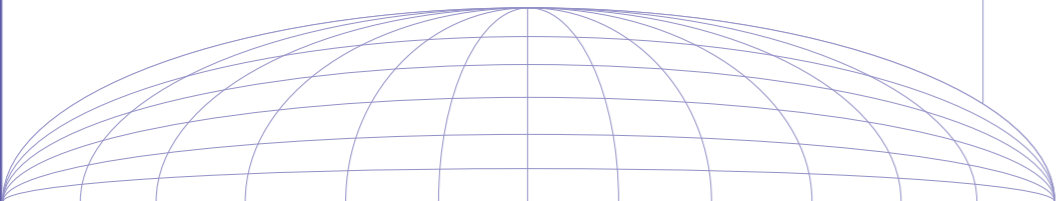
This presentation takes inspiration from Roland Barthes' concept of transported immobility to understand the contrary experience of living in a digital media blackout zone. By using Barthes' protocol of attention to contingency in everyday life, I explore the Wi-Fi tethering experience in the Swedish forest, where I am tethered to a particular indoor and outdoor place and dependent on intermittent digital media connection. Such tethering fixes me to a place in the rural forest that enables Wi-Fi, provides access and a flow of communication in that moment of connection, and is a source of frustration as rural infrastructures and inclement weather routinely affect the experience. The presentation reflects on a double meaning of tethering: in the context of media there is the action of staying fixed in one place so your telecommunications devices can enable data movement, a fixity and flow in the media environment; and in the context of mobility, there is the tethering of a human, non-human, or object where there is the action of restricting or disabling movement, a regulation and constraint in everyday life. This tethering experience brings into relief assumptions we make about normative digital media experiences. These other stories of the media and its social and technical affordances compels us to review assumptions about digital society – this is a particular rural experience at the margins of socio-technical visions and dominant media theories. Such an experience signals the mirage of a digital society for particular rural citizens in a topography where media breakdown is a routine feature of daily life.

Third Space Walks. Flanerie in virtual and material spaces of cities

MIRJANA MITROVIC

Berlin University of the Arts, Germany

The interaction between technologies and societies shape everyday life in urban spaces as the boundaries between virtual and analog worlds seem to dissolve. A new hybrid space, characterized by mobility and constant networking, has emerged. Still, this space is often thought in dichotomies such as online and offline, which diminish our understanding of cultural and social changes in today's cities. This paper shows how concepts like "hybridity" applied by Haraway and "Third Space" according to Bhabha create a possibility to overcome these separate imaginations as these concepts work beyond dichotomies and instead bring the newly emerging space into focus. Thinking virtual and physical spaces together permits a new perspective to understand, influence and debate current and future dynamics of digitalization. To walk this new space, this paper presents a new method of flanerie, based on Walter Benjamin and established theories of walking, such as psychogeography or strolology, but including feminist, intersectional and postcolonial perspectives. This method understands flanerie not only as walking, but also as collecting impressions and presenting – even if perhaps fragmented – conclusions. Practicing flanerie with the awareness of moving in a third space makes it possible to walk, while also resisting predetermined logics such as algorithms. It is thereby a walk "off the grid". Through this method and the focus on the trinity of digital technologies, bodies and spaces, the third space and its current formations of mobile socialities can be analyzed.





T2S5: Local spaces of play: Geographies of sexual social media

THEMATIC PANEL

Zoom
Stream 2

Contributing to the swiftly emerging field of the geographies of digital sexualities, this panel explores the geosocial dimensions of digital sexual cultures by zooming in on the connections between sexual practices and locally embedded social media platforms devoted to sexual expression. As sexual content is increasingly pushed out of large, U.S.-owned social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and Tumblr, we turn to local and (to some extent) "off the grid" alternatives. Drawing on case studies of a Swedish platform for kink and BDSM, an Estonian platform used by swingers, and a Finnish platform for nude self-expression, we show how these contribute to and shape sexual geographies in digital and physical registers. On the one hand, these platforms operate as spatialized tools which put bodies in motion in the interest of hooking up, by orienting sexual desires in material spaces. On the other hand, these platforms also assemble localized online spaces for flirtation, imagination, visibility, and appreciation (as well as sexism and harassment), which interlink bodies with visual pleasures of seeing and being seen. We approach questions of geomedias both through the regional and linguistic boundaries within which these platforms operate, as well as through our participants' sense of comfort and investment in the local as a space of sexual play. Through Nordic and Baltic contexts, we contribute to studies of geosocial hookup apps and research of sex and sexuality in social media by accounting for the importance of location and language in a research context largely dominated by Anglocentric approaches.

Cinnamon buns and bruises: Play on the edge of a Swedish web-based kink community

JENNY SUNDÉN

Karlstad University, Sweden

This paper builds on an ethnographic, interview-based study of Darkside (est. 2003), a Swedish independent web community for kink and BDSM with around 200,000 members. In stark contrast to large corporate social media platforms, Darkside is virtually non-profit and as such offering an alternative, off the grid option for non-normative sexualities in times of increasing de-platformization of sexual expression. As a space for social and sexual play, Darkside provides a jumping off point for physical encounters, its calendar function giving the members the coordinates of clubs and events difficult to find otherwise, a local compass of desire which orient bodies in physical spaces of play. The calendar is also a window to kink activities in all of Sweden, highlighting an urban concentration, while also giving ample evidence of for example countryside rope gatherings, or a discreet BDSM get together for 'fika' in a small-town pastry shop, subtly re-arranging urban/rural relationality. Darkside is certainly also a community space for flirting and socializing in its own right, bringing circles of friends, play partners, and lovers together in shared admiration over pictures of bruises, or by appreciation for diary entries chronicling how kink intervenes in everyday lives, such as through secret play sessions at Ica (Swedish grocery store). By balancing on the edge of imagination and corporeality, Darkside affords a way of thinking sexual geomedias as an interweaving of the digital and the physical in ways that highlight the importance of proximity between bodies.

Estonian libertines' kinky locations and digital placemaking practices

KATRIN TIIDENBERG

Tallinn University, Estonia

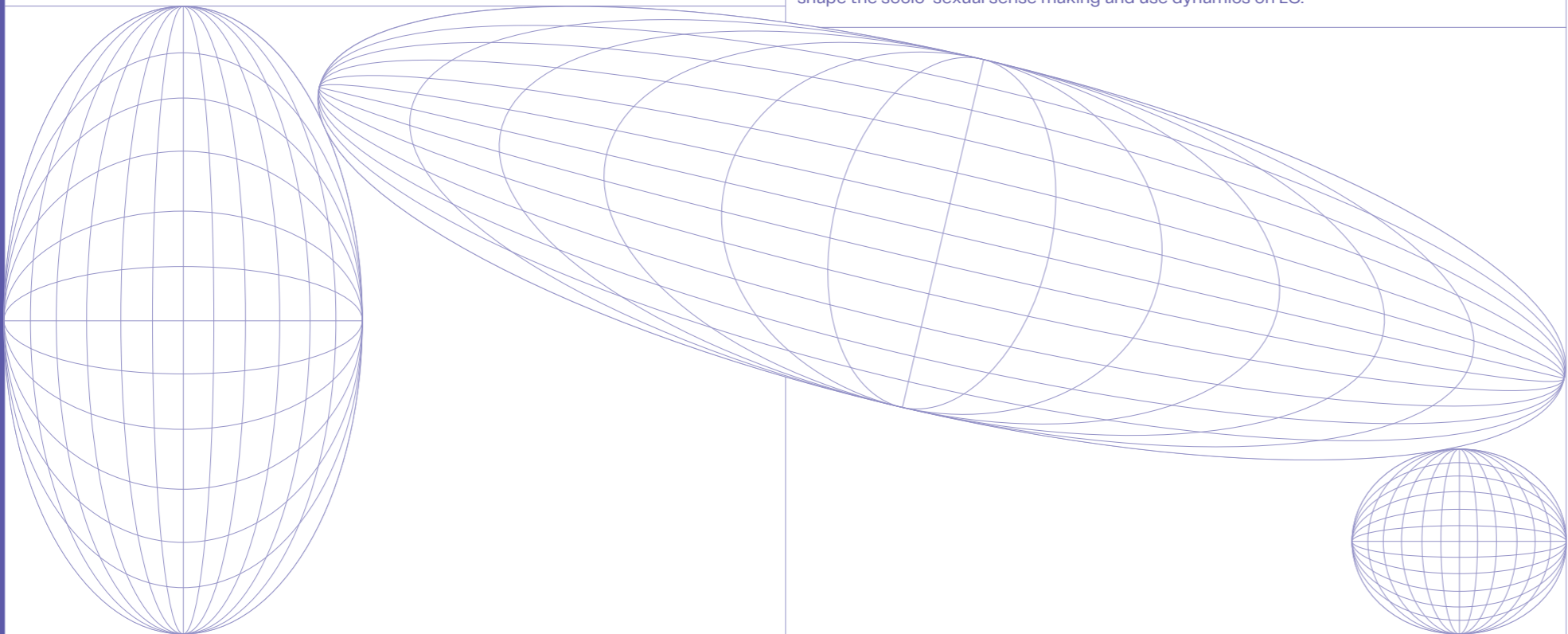
LC is a "social media network for open-minded adults" founded two years ago by Estonian swingers and currently has ~50,000 users. Based on platform walkthrough, ethnographic observation and interviews with platform founders and users, this paper explores how LC mediates geography. Specifically, it focuses on (1) the platforms' perceived geo-sexual affordances, and (2) users' geo-cultural imaginaries that shape how they make sense of and use LC. Swingers and those interested in group sex are the preferred and predominant user group, which both the founders and the interviewed users interpret as suggesting that LC is primarily a tool for finding, filtering and selecting peers for physical meetings. LC has a variety of location-centric rules and features as location is a mandatory category in the profile. Users' on-platform practices, too, have significant geo-cultural dimensions. Group-chats are the only feature allowing collective interaction on site and often center on geographic locations, or create lifestyle-specific digital and physical places. Thus, group chats have been set up for "Estonian nude beaches," "Costa del Sol Lifestyle," and "Gloryhole meetings in Tallinn," but also for "Spa and Sauna lovers," "X club goers," "webcammers," or users of other sexual social media platforms. Finally, geo-cultural generalizations – this may include statements deeming Estonian users more attractive or more introverted than Finnish ones, Estonian clubgoing men as having bad sexual etiquette compared to the French, or comparing the sexual adventurousness of Estonian "lifestylers" to the usual clientele of French swinger resorts – shape the socio-sexual sense making and use dynamics on LC.

Pine trees, saunas and penises: Naked Finland as geomedias

SUSANNA PAASONEN, MARIA VIHLMANG

University of Turku, Finland

Alaston Suomi ("Naked Finland", est. 2007) is an online image gallery and social networking site with over 100,000 registered users. Initially advertised as "IRC Gallery for adults", it borrowed its format from IRCgalleria (est. 2000) that dominated the Finnish social media landscape before the rise of Facebook. The overall rationale is simple: to establish connections through personal profiles showing off the users' naked bodies. Based on observational analysis of the site and preliminary interviews with users, this paper examines Naked Finland as geomedias assembling visually mediated locations, hook-up options, and networked means for social exchange. Sexually explicit photos taken in forests, at summer cottages, in saunas, urban locations, by the lake and the sea (these comprising 7,5% of the 1,600 photos analyzed for this paper; the majority of posts focusing on bodies and domestic settings only), allow for cultural recognizability through quotidian iconography of "Finnishness". Both specific and generic in their local referents, such visual performances support, as well as document, possibilities for hooking up with those close-by. Regional specificity is also pronounced the site operating in Finnish, despite the multiple language options on offer. For our study participants, this linguistically limited reach translates as culturally bound sense of safety, familiarity and controllability that extend to the platform's uses for sexual display and exchange detached from physical contact.



T1S6: Theoretical Engagement With the Grid

Zoom Stream 1

THEMATIC PANEL (INDIVIDUAL PROPOSALS)

Infrastructure as ritual

RONJA TRISCHLER

Goethe–University Frankfurt, Germany

Going off the grid might be considered a ritual in an anthropological sense: a ceremony, possibly a ritual purification, a rite of passage – to opt out temporally or permanently. By contrast, from a microsociological perspective, Goffman’s interaction rituals mark these little moments of successful everyday interaction, when an interaction order takes its course – and its norms, rules and moral implications are being met. In the context of infrastructure, this refers more to (successfully) acting off the grid than to single moments or periods of social withdrawal.

In my theory–centered paper I explore and discuss different concepts of rituals in the context of digital infrastructure: How can infrastructure be understood through the idea of rituals? How can different understandings of rituals be of use to differentiate modes or ways of using infrastructure? Contemporary studies share a notion of rituals being situated socio–material forms in their own right. Particularly Goffmans concept stresses the ritualized, coordinated expression and movement of human bodies in situated everyday interaction (originally conceptualized to understand situations of physical co–presence – where actors were always already off the grid.) Thus, looking at the ritualistic elements of infrastructures foregrounds (a) infrastructure as a mode of collectivity and (b) its performative bodily realization and (c) its normative implications.



T2S6: The Pandemic and the Grid

Zoom Stream 2

THEMATIC PANEL (INDIVIDUAL PROPOSALS)

“Switching Grids” – Young Adults’ Practices of Mediating Life During the COVID–19 Pandemic

CHRISTOPH MICHAEL STRAGANZ, BELINDA MAHLKNECHT, KATJA KAUFMANN*/**, TABEA BORK–HUEFFER

*University of Innsbruck / **Austrian Academy of Sciences & University of Klagenfurt

In times of the COVID–19 pandemic the afforded “anytime, anyplace connectivity” (Vanden Abeele et al, 2018:6) of social and mobile media has become even more essential during social distancing measures Off the Grid – Geomedia 2021 – ConfTool Pro Printout <https://www.conftool.pro/geomedia-2021/index.php?page=browseSess...> 12 von 25 19.04.2021, 21:37 and lockdown periods. In 2020, the closing of educational institutions to slow the spread of COVID–19 and shift to distance learning affected 90 percent of all young people (1.5 billion) globally (UNESCO, 2020). The research project COV–IDENTITIES has accompanied pupils and students in Tyrol (Austria) from spring 2020 onwards using a qualitative longitudinal multi–method design combining written narratives with mobile smartphone methods. The insights reflect how pupils and students’ reflexively “switched grids” throughout the course of the pandemic: Based on the current, frequently changing official pandemic measures they alternated between transferring more of their diverse everyday practices (work, learning, socializing, sports, hobbies) online and retreating back into socio–material space where– and whenever possible. Rather than repeating the popular call of the pandemic as a one–way shift in digital transformation, we reflect on the entanglements and intra–actions of both, the material and digital, as part of the global COVID–19 pandemic.

Mesh as/versus the Grid: Digital Infrastructural Entanglements

RORY SOLOMON

The New School, USA

The digital and the off–grid are often seen as directly countervailing. With its highly discrete data tables and pixelated screen interfaces, the digital is often hailed as the modality of the grid par excellence. Much digital media theory (Lev Manovich, Matthew Fuller, Tara McPherson) argues that grid–like formations such as hierarchy, modularity, and striation are the constitutive technics of digitality, and the recent turn toward the infrastructural in media studies (Lisa Parks, Nicole Starosielski) frames digital objects as always dependent on vast infrastructural grids. In this paper however, I argue that the digital and the off–grid are not diametrically opposed, but rather deeply entangled and even co–constitutive, by examining mesh networks: a class of digital communications infrastructure reticulated through physical peer–to–peer links, championed as community–oriented, decentralized alternatives to modern, large–scale, grid–based apparatus.

Sharing findings from ethnographic research working with mesh network developers over the last four years, I show that the off–grid imaginary of these technology activists is deeply enmeshed in digital promises of seamless connectivity and communications, even away from the infrastructures of modern life. I link this material to historical research with the papers of internet pioneer Paul Baran, best known as the inventor of packet switching and the decentralized network. Examining archival materials from Baran’s 1980s venture, presaging smart– and micro–grids, to create a mesh network to automate monitoring the electrical grid, I argue that even as the digital emerges out of highly gridded epistemologies and infrastructures, it simultaneously orients activity toward post–grid imaginaries and grid displacement.

The persistent appropriateness of grids for geomedia

ERIC LOSANG

Leibniz Institute for Regional Geography, Germany

Over centuries people locate themselves in space and geographically. While often this was to answer questions like “where am I”, “how far am I away from others”, “what is the relationship of x to y” or “how big is the place I’m living in”. Grids, map coordinate systems, projections, even latitude and longitude help to answer these questions. The basic question remains “what grid is appropriate for purpose xx?” or “what is the relationship of this grid to another?”. Where the latter tends to raise more geodetic considerations, the former points to the plethora of approaches since Ptolemy, Gauss and Krüger and, more recently, from Christaller to Woronoi. Geographers, mathematicians and politicians have waged battles over the appropriateness of spatial grids in different contexts. This presentation focusses on the potentials today of grids for the development of spatial ordering. It focuses on questions of their use and usability with considerations of their methodical strengths and shortcomings. The breadth of contexts is also decisive. Historical research involving placenames or question of accuracy will benefit from different grids and a better understanding of grids. This will point to questions of “gridding” as a modelling method that constrains geomedia with emphasis or erasure of geographic matters.

“This is already completely impossible”. Polish students on attempts to limit media technology usage in the tenth month of the pandemic

KATARZYNA KOPECKA–PIECH

Maria Curie–Skłodowska University, Poland

The aim of study was to determine whether Polish students implemented media technology management strategies in their lives (including limitation strategies), both before and during the pandemic. The other question was: how they assess their effectiveness and feasibility in this respect and how they approach the new reality and evaluate their own performance. The study was carried out in December 2020, i.e. in the tenth month of the pandemic and at the same time of the next lockdown in Poland, as well as in the second semester of remote learning at universities. Four focus group interviews were conducted with a total of 24 participants. Each time, 6 students participated in the interview: 3 women and 3 men, aged 19–26 years, studying at Polish universities. A spectrum of types of pandemic users was defined. Categories and evaluations of young users’ methods of managing media technologies were identified. Additionally, methods to support the management of this sphere on a daily basis were detected. The survey indicated, inter alia, that the population of Polish students is heterogeneous. In many cases, lockdown has not led to an increase in the amount of time spent with media, or the number of devices, apps, etc. used, but only changed the proportion between them due to the purposes of use. On the other hand, for some students, the pandemic has forced radical changes in this regard. The main conundrum was that limiting media technologies in the current media environment is no longer possible.

Contested urban places: The “Andräviertel” in Salzburg between lock–down, insider’s tip and overtourism

CHRISTINE LOHMEIER, HELENA ATTENEDER*, MICHAELA JAHN

University of Salzburg / *University Duisburg–Essen

Technology in general and geomedia technology in particular are both product and producer of an ongoing socio–technologically induced re–organisation of place and media. Against this backdrop, we investigate how place–making practices affect the development of the “Andräviertel”, a district in Salzburg, Austria. The Andräviertel is considered as “hip” and “trendy” and characterised by a high degree of of multiculturalism. It has a small but steadily growing creative industry. It offers alternative “special interest” shops, bars, cafés and restaurants.

Whereas (self–appointed) representatives of the “Andräviertel” try to promote its identity towards alternative forms of tourism to set a counterpoint against mass tourism and maintain uniqueness and authenticity, an increasing number of property developers and high–income property buyers also have a stake in this part of Salzburg. Following an unregulated market logic, this leads to higher real estate prices and consequently to a harsh competition for working and living space.

Our guiding research questions aim to understand processes of digital place making for the Andräviertel. In the proposed presentation, we employ the understanding of place and media as multi–layered constructs, to

- (1) explore the various stake holders involved and
- (2) analyse points of friction and collaboration through technology, (social–) (inter–)action, post–human decisions/agency and spatio–material determination (for example infrastructure). The Corona–induced lock–downs imposed in Austria led to an exaggeration of these processes and will be considered accordingly in our research.

4:15pm
→ 5:30pm

T1S7: Critical Making as Off-the-Grid Pedagogy

DISCUSSION FORUM

Zoom
Stream 1

In Spring 2021 I will be teaching a course titled "Digital Media Off-the-Grid" at The New School in the Code as a Liberal Art program: a computer science curriculum adapted for the arts, humanities, and social sciences. In this class I will be working with 20 undergraduate students in a hybrid theory / practice seminar, teaching an introduction to critical making, hardware hacking, and circuit building using the open source Arduino platform, combined with textual engagement in fields including media studies, infrastructure studies, gender studies, critical race theory, and the environmental humanities. We will read classic off-the-grid texts (Thoreau) as well as histories of off-grid countercultural communities (Fred Turner), feminist separatist groups (bell hooks), urban informality in South Asian slums (Ananya Roy), and privileged off-gridders in North America (Vannini and Taggart). The hands-on work will offer students insight into some of the digital techniques and devices used (or lacking) in these off-grid situations. Our course goals include investigating social, cultural, and political questions around off-grid discourse; thinking critically about what the existence of these practices imply about our society; and looking at how off-grid narratives apply differently to people with different subject positions and backgrounds considering the off-grid as both normative ideal and structural failure. With this Discussion Forum, I propose a panel to give these students the opportunity to present their work from this semester. (Alternatively, I would be happy to structure this as a Thematic Panel in which I would give an overview to the course and students could present their projects, or as a Mini-workshop if there might be other attendees interested in presenting examples of off-the-grid pedagogy.) Our class will be culminating the week of the conference, with students completing final projects based on their work throughout the semester. I would select high quality student projects from the class and coach them in preparing for their first academic conference, creating an incredibly valuable opportunity for these undergraduates.

Naturally I cannot precisely specify what their projects will be as the semester has just begun, but possible topics may include:

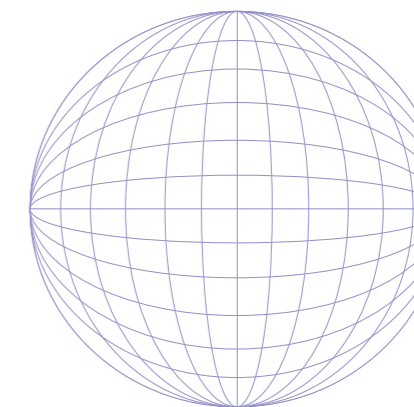
- an environmental sensor device to monitor light, temperature, or air quality;
- experiments in solar power or other off-grid electricity generation;
- a crystal radio that can be tuned to nearby AM signals without any electricity use; or
- other experiments in wireless communication.

This panel will highlight:

How hands-on teaching techniques can provide new insight for students about the significance of off-the-grid practices and imaginaries, and how the off-grid can provide a productive vantage point from which to give students a position of critical distance toward the infrastructures and socio-cultural formations of our time. (I would be happy to share the syllabus for the course on request.)

← Chair

RORY SOLOMON
The New School, USA



4:15pm
→ 5:30pm

T2S7: Geomedia Communities

THEMATIC PANEL (INDIVIDUAL PROPOSALS)

Zoom
Stream 2

Escaping and embracing 'social grids' through TikTok

ANDREAS SCHELLEWALD

University of London, UK

Widespread states of lockdown have been characterising everyday life over the course of the past year. A condition in which many have been dislocated from the structures of daily social encounters that had previously brought a sense of 'ontological security' to their lives. Reporting on a year-long ethnographic investigation of young adults living in the UK, the paper discusses how TikTok was utilised as a response to this condition. In particular, two contradictory observations will be outlined. First, the observation of TikTok opening an escape route from the anxieties induced by the pandemic and to disconnect from other digital platforms inducing a sense of pressure to constantly interact. Second, that of people facilitating such online social interactions through sharing 'relatable' TikTok content with trusted peers to maintain relationships whilst at a distance. Doing so, the paper closes in arguing that singular and essentialised understandings of 'the grid', be they academic or otherwise in their form, are misleading in fully understanding how meaningful forms of human experience unfold. Instead, the paper proposes a more processual understanding of space, focussing analytical attention on the moments and ways in which people get off and on such grids.

Geomedia communities: cultures of enthusiasm and poly-mediated practice

MIKE DUGGAN, CRISTINA A. G. KIMINAMI

King's College London, UK

In this paper we use the conference theme of 'off the grid' to focus our attention off and away from the cartesian grid of geomedia, and towards the communities and cultures of practice that come together to produce it. Using ethnographic observations, interviews and documentary evidence from a recent online summer school on the theme of locative media art, climate change, (im)mobility and Covid-19, we highlight how geomedia projects are bound up in socially contingent and poly-mediated practices that shape how they develop. In particular we discuss how the affordances of WhatsApp, Zoom and Trello, which were used throughout the summer school alongside and on the periphery of the locative media platform that was central to the course, shaped a culture of enthusiasm and a milieu of socio-technical practice from which particular kinds of locative media work emerged. Our analysis is by no means representative of all geomedia projects or communities, but rather intends to shed light on the ways that it is situated within and amongst wider social and media ecologies. The paper contributes not only to our understanding of geomedia communities, but also to our wider understanding of the off-the-cartesian-grid practices of geomedia.

Modifying the Grid - Community Map-Making in Online Games

ARVID KAMMLER

University of Siegen, Germany

The role of maps and their function in digital games is very diverse; historically as well as genre-specific: while 'Doom' offered a map as an overlay onto the game world to help players navigate the maze-like architecture, the always visible minimap established itself as an integral part of interfaces in first-person shooters and other genres. Hybrid forms emerged, such as strategy games, in which map and game space can be said to coincide. In contrast, online games such as 'Eve Online' sometimes offer extensive possibilities for communities to access dynamically generated game data. Thusly, cartographic and play practices emerge that are no longer limited to either the on- or offline-space of games. In this context, the community maps of 'Eve Online' in particular do not remain static entities, but show what is going on in the game in real time. These maps do not only serve to make game data available externally, off the gamegrid, but are also integrated back into the practice of play. Utilising the examples of 'Elite Dangerous' and 'Eve Online' in particular, the talk aims to explore the expansion of the gamespaces beyond their audiovisual representations programmed by their developers via the practices of making and utilisation of community maps in online games. In this regard the talk also explores the notion that community maps not only depict spatial relations, but also economical, political and social relations of players and other entities in the game. However, these relations seem to be always spatially coded by the scaffolding of the gamespaces that make play feasible in the first place. Is it possible to go off the grid in the game?



K2: Keynote 2

KEYNOTE

Conference
Stream

Doing the Distance: Screening Mobility, Performing Presence, and Designing the Contours of Connection

NANNA VERHOEFF

Utrecht University, Netherlands

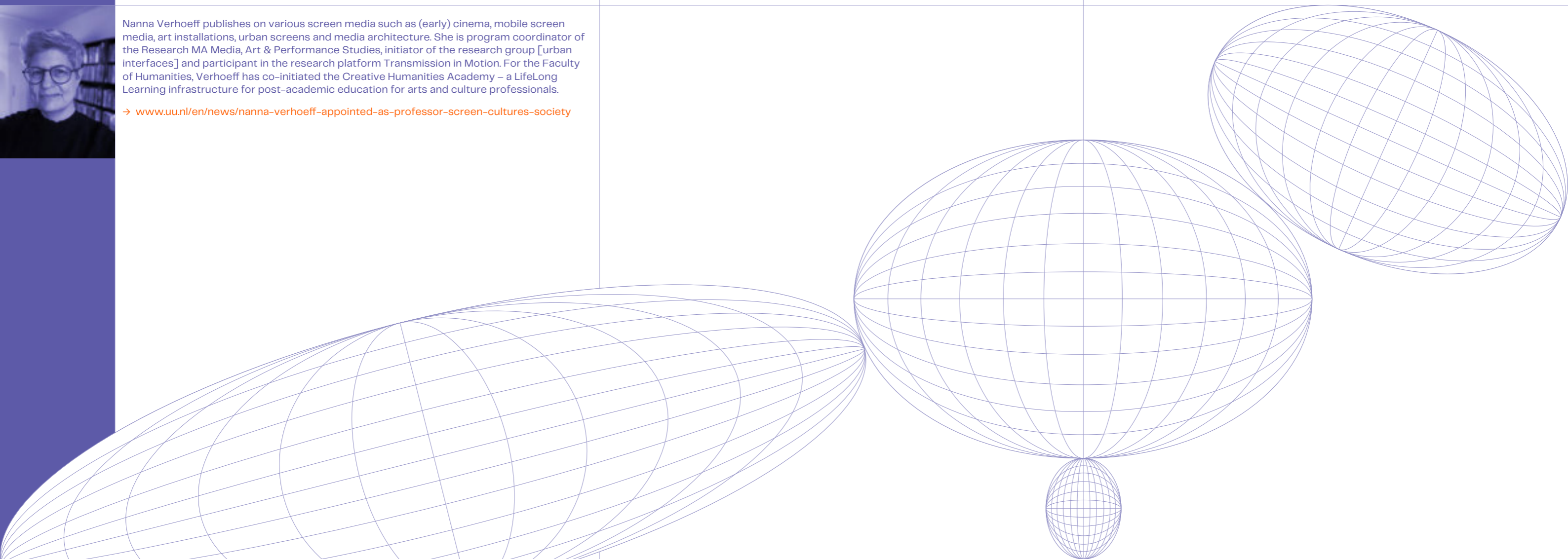
This talk is firmly situated in the current moment; a time when we are going in and out of states of lockdown, our movements suspended, rerouting our passages in public space, and reshaping and reflecting on our new/old habits of connection. This moment perhaps asks not so much the questions of if, or how to go off the grid, but rather of how to re-enter or remain on it. Or rather: how can we actively, productively, and response-ably “do the distance”?

In an effort to respond to the pandemic situation in which rules for distance intervene in our personal and public spaces, as well as the spaces for scholarly work and exchange — like this online conference! — I will suggest some conceptual coordinates that together offer a creative humanities perspective (Bleeker et al. 2020; Verhoeff and Van der Tuin 2020) on the shaping of shared spaces for mobility, presence, and distance. This perspective brings together new materialist thinking and media, art, and performance studies, in an attempt to understand and contribute to the distance designs that are always-already developed at the intersection of cultural theory and artistic design.



Nanna Verhoeff publishes on various screen media such as (early) cinema, mobile screen media, art installations, urban screens and media architecture. She is program coordinator of the Research MA Media, Art & Performance Studies, initiator of the research group [urban interfaces] and participant in the research platform Transmission in Motion. For the Faculty of Humanities, Verhoeff has co-initiated the Creative Humanities Academy – a LifeLong Learning infrastructure for post-academic education for arts and culture professionals.

→ www.uu.nl/en/news/nanna-verhoeff-appointed-as-professor-screen-cultures-society



Friday, 7 May

Zoom
Stream 1

T1S8: Touristic Media | Mediated Tourism

THEMATIC PANEL

The talks in this panel focus on the relationship between media and tourism. It offers three starting points for exploring this nexus: "Practices of dis-connecting" focusses on two practices established touristic practices of dis-connecting. It compares digital detox tourism with modes of living off the grid against the background of their paradoxical embeddedness into supply infrastructures. The second talk "Anchoring Fiction in Place" takes a look at forms of media-induced tourism and elaborates the strategies used to anchor fiction within processes of placemaking using three popular examples. The last talk "In-Game Tourism" introduces in-game tourism that takes place exclusively in virtual worlds and works out design principles for affording such modes of play. We thus move along a continuum between touristic media and mediated tourism, between the embeddedness of tourism in media infrastructures and forms of tourism that are induced by or happen with media. On either end, the relationship between geography and media are constantly renegotiated. The theme of the conference is reflected in all facets: in a tourism that aims at the conscious uncoupling of technological networks, in the anchoring of fictional content as placemaking in everyday life locations, and in forms of virtual tourism that conversely ask how virtual environments turn into explorable touristic landmarks.

Practices of dis-connecting. Tourism off the grid

GABRIELE SCHABACHER

Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz, Germany

The paper focuses on a relationship between media and tourism that is characterized by a specific negativity. It examines two meanwhile established practices of dis-connecting: on the one hand, the so-called digital detox tourism, which aims to detoxify from digital consumption, and on the other hand, a mode of existence called living off the grid, which is also shaped by tourism, and which aims to make the (temporary) return to archaic practices tangible. What both forms have in common is that the tourist-preferred quality of place presents itself as a deprivation: The place of desire renounces the connection to supply infrastructures such as telecommunications, water, or electricity. While digital detox is a form of dietetics with respect to digital consumption, living off the grid is a return to a subsistence lifestyle. The paper discusses the relationships between connectivity and disconnectedness, between the digital and the analog, between place and path, and between transport and transformation. The propagated ideas of dis-connectivity promise a form of unmediatedness (i.e., of the non-media) that tourism, as an organized, networked infrastructure, always undermines. The focus is thus on a relation of media and tourism that does not refer to the enrichment of travel with images, for example, but rather to its media-infrastructure conditions of possibility. The contemporary examples show themselves as an extension of a paradoxical constellation that has characterized tourism from its beginnings – from the tourist accessibility of 'untouched' places to the networks that offer dis-connection.

Anchoring Fiction in Place

ELISABETH SOMMERLAD, JULIA VAN LESSEN

Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz, Germany

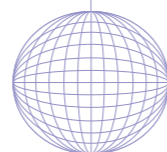
The desire to discover and experience fictional places for oneself is a common phenomenon: "The locations in which our most beloved fictional tales take place often leave the pages of a book or scenes of a movie and become wonder within us. We long to see those places, experience life like our favorite characters did" (<https://www.lifehack.org/articles/lifestyle/50-fictional-places-you-can-actually-visit.html>). From a (media)geographical perspective, this phenomenon raises the question of how fictional places are produced at everyday life locations through placemaking. We argue that media-related experience can take place when the fictional content is or can be fixed to a location by anchors. Therefore, anchoring is an element of attributing meaning – a crucial element for placemaking (Tuan 1977, Agnew 1987, Cresswell 2015). This paper tackles anchoring fiction within placemaking processes using three examples: We examine the region of Hunsrück, which is associated with Edgar Reitz's film trilogy "Heimat". In this case, filming locations and amateur actors are important anchor points. Our second example, "Anne of Green Gables," shows how museum-like settings on Prince Edward Island and a strong connection to the author of the fictional story can serve as anchors for experiencing fictional places. Our third example, "Harry Potter," involves places around the world where the fictional story is anchored. Through these three very diverse examples we show that there are specific mechanisms and dimensions of anchoring fiction in placemaking processes.

In-Game Tourism. Exploring the geography of digital games

PABLO ABEND

University of Siegen, Germany

The talk takes the spatiality of digital games as the starting point for an investigation into potential design strategies to include touristic practices in digital games. In times of pandemic immobility, digital games offer the opportunity to feel present in remote locations. But for some time now, a way of use of digital games has been emerging that can be described as in-game tourism. Comparable and yet quite different from older notions of the armchair traveler, in-game tourism involves applying the tourist gaze on the medium itself from within the medium. The emergence of such cultural practices is supported through the integration of photo cameras and special game modes and becomes visible in virtual travelogues and in-game photographs. The talk gives an overview over these practices and offers some theoretical implications for designing and fostering practices of in-game tourism. It argues that, on the level of representation, one strategy is to visually reference concrete places. This usually leads to hybrid geographies in which geographical landscapes are combined with fictional architectures to create imagined geographies. The design fuses computer-generated imagery with digital photogrammetry and 3-D scanning technologies. But more important seems to be a practice-centered approach to interaction design to fully account for the placemaking capabilities of digital games. This requires to allow the gaze to seek the particular in the game world, while giving the freedom to freely explore the game space offside prescribed narrative and preset goals.



10:00am
→ 11:15am

10:00am
→ 11:15am

T2S8: Politics of Geomedia

THEMATIC PANEL (INDIVIDUAL PROPOSALS)

Zoom
Stream 2

Bodies that Betray: EU's Corporeal Borders

AZADEH AKBARI

Münster University, Germany

The European Union has gradually intensified its gathering of biometric data of immigrants, refugees, and asylum seekers, and increasingly makes the resulted data banks available for several immigration-related and Police institutions throughout Europe. Where legal, political, and humanitarian efforts fail, asylum seekers, try to distort their bodies as the source of undesirable biometric data. With methods such as burning fingertips or claiming to be an unaccompanied minor, they attempt to escape the algorithm and defy the problematic Dublin Convention. Consequently, the EU uses technologies such as retinal scans or DNA tests to overcome such attempts. The body is marked with borders and carries the tension of identification: every gesture, breathing rhythm, stammering, and sweating could contribute to constructing the wrong "data double" (Haggerty & Ericson: 2016). This paper scrutinises border control's intensification through bodily practices and the dynamism of bodily resistance against such measures. The research addresses the historical interrelations between surveillance, identification, belonging, and citizenship (Lyon 2010) and highlights the data-based exclusion of unwelcome asylum seekers by forcing their bodies to reveal their deception. The extreme datafication of bodies and the countersurveillance struggles both coerce the material body to disappear so that an agreeable data double can rise.

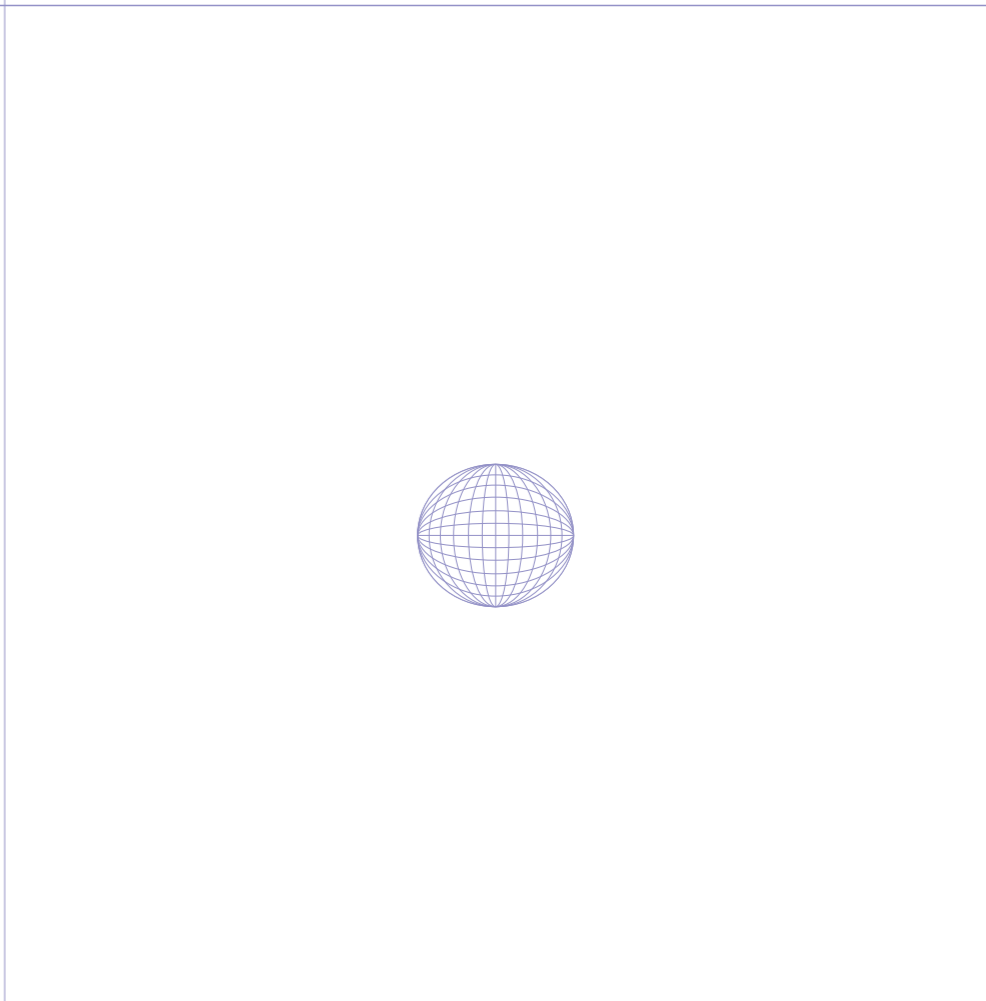
References:
Haggerty K, Ericson, R. (2000). The surveillant assemblage, British Journal of Sociology, 51, 605-622.
Lyon, David (2010): Identification, surveillance and democracy. In Kevin D. Haggerty, Minas Samaras (Eds.) Surveillance and democracy. Abingdon Oxon England, New York: Routledge, pp. 34-50.

The political performances of mapping media: Considerations of participatory mapping from an Object-Orientated-Ontology perspective

FRANCIS HARVEY

Leibniz Institute for Regional Geography, Germany

To better understand the unfolding of the political in participatory mapping, this contribution to Geomedia 2021 suggests taking up elements of the Object-Orientated-Ontology (OOO) philosophy to pursue central performative dimensions of participatory mapping theoretically and methodologically. The increasing penetration of human life by digital media leads to new ways of using maps and map-like representations that this approach can take up. Current practices relying on medial infrastructures have moved far from traditional cartography practices and participatory geographic information system practices (PGIS) (Kurgan 2013). Human/technology hybridisation requires consideration of theoretical approaches that can help researchers better understand the changed practices in their specifics and social-technological integrations. Here, the Object-Orientated-Ontology (OOO) approach, based on hermeneutical, interpretive procedures intermingled with media and other technologies can offer a helpful perspective on political aspects of participatory mapping. In this consideration of OOO philosophy, which is similar in many aspects to the Actor-Network Theory (ANT), the semantic and material-practical production of the political arises through the connection of the viewer/user with the medial object map, with new hybrid objects produced in and for associated performances (Harman, 2018). The dialectical character of this OOO understanding production of objects is expanded, deepened and multiplied in discursive activities. The political dimensions of participatory mapping performance arise from inter-human and non-human ties through its qualities, above all through weak ties that do not have a direct material or short-term effect. Identifying and analysing these aspects of participatory mapping performance from an



11:45am
→ 1:00pm

T1S9: Imaginaries

THEMATIC PANEL (INDIVIDUAL PROPOSALS)

Zoom
Stream 1

Imagining 'Off the Grid'

CLARA MARIE WIEGHORST

Leuphana University Lüneburg, Germany

Following Castoriadis, I suggest that going off the grid is constituted by the imaginary of some state opposed to 'the grid' – be it called 'the offline' or 'the analogue'. By doing a close reading of the book 'The Way Home. Tales from a life without technology' by Mark Boyle (2019), I would like to explore how this state off the grid is imagined and actively produced by the use of old media and technology. For Mark Boyle's life in the woods is by no means a life without technology but his dedication to an analogue life in a digitized world is dependent on engaging affectively with his tools, the use of which is much more cumbersome than using modern technology would be. For instance, Boyle depicts how he loves his scythe and how much time and care he spends on its maintenance. He writes his book with a pencil. Nevertheless, he describes his life as 'simple' opposed to the 'complex' life of industrial civilisation. In my analysis, I would like to explore the following questions: on what kind of (gendered) imaginations of the independent (hu)man does going off the grid rely? Which media-technological efforts does it take to produce the state off the grid? How are the old media and technology in use affectively charged?

On the Road, and Off the Grid: Escapism, Transgression and Identity in the American Road Movie

JOERN LANGHORST

University of Colorado Denver, USA

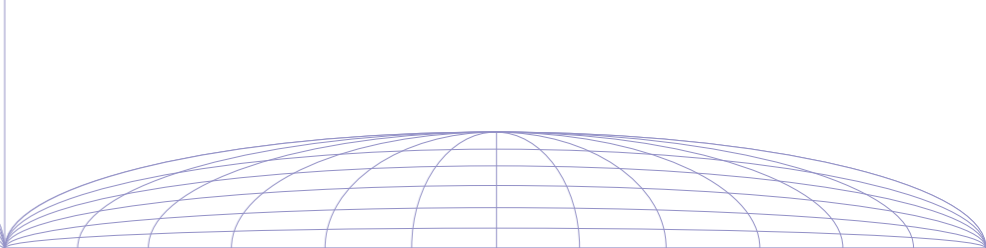
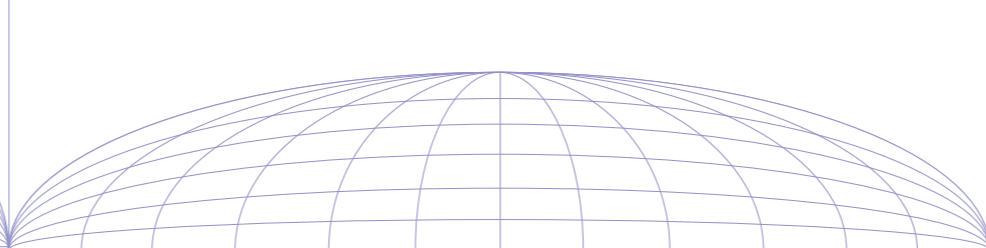
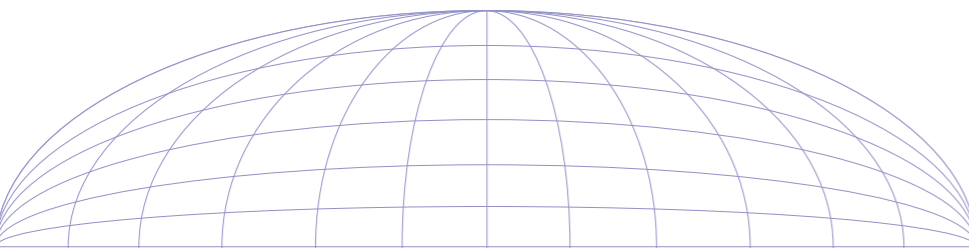
The American Road movie, much like the Western, forms a distinct US-American genre. Both represent, explore, and, to a degree, critique "manifest destiny", as well as a particular form of colonialism. The "grid", uniquely reified in the road system across large parts of the United States, is both symbol and tool of mapping, controlling and civilizing large swaths of territory. This paper will investigate the ambivalent character of the grid and the road: The road can be a means of escape from the confines of an overly controlled civilization on the one hand, and a central part of the infrastructure that underpins that very civilization on the other, or, as Eagleton (2003) suggests, something that both stabilizes and destabilizes, as something that simultaneously facilitates both control and transgression. It is both expression and means of colonialism, and the infrastructure that enables and locates counter-colonial resistance. The paper will look at a selection of movies by the likes of Jim Jarmusch, David Lynch, Wim Wenders, James Benning, Terence Malick, John Ford, Michelangelo Antonioni, Terrence Malik and the Coen Brothers, to explore the ontological, political and sensory dimensions of "hitting the road" as means, metaphor and process. The notion and state of "being on the move" will play a central role in a Lacanian approach to deconstructing formations of self and culture in a world that is characterized by simultaneous (re-)colonization and de-colonization and a norming of possible identities and expressions while "on the grid".

Space, Memory and Branding in Disneyland

ANA CAROLINA ALMEIDA SOUZA

Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais, Brazil & University Jönköping, Sweden

Launched in 1955 the Disneyland park in California is considered "the crown jewel of Walt Disney's legacy" (Lipp, 2014), according to Disney brand itself, and from this idea on, it is observable that the physical space of Disneyland changed in very specific measurements during its 65 years, but the changes were always connected to a larger story that the brand is trying to (re)tell: "The Disney Master Narrative" (Madej & Lee, 2012), in which Mickey Mouse and Walt Disney are the main focus and the values they carry are what support the brand culture as a whole. To this analysis, we understand the theme park as a media and also as a lieu de mémoire (Nora, 1989) in which the experience that is created and also lived is built on both the brand memory and the personal memory highlighted by an embedded engagement (Hill & Dahlgren, 2020) that is particular and capable of creating new territories and experiences. Arguing around the provisory nature of the spaces and the relationships that were registered in it and through it, we can understand that the theme park is a complex amalgam of textures (Jansson, 2013) and rugosities (Santos, 2017). Such, we propose that the Disneyland park is the spatial manifestation of the brand's storytelling overflow, maintained by the people's memories through affection.



11:45am
→ 1:00pm

T2S9: Algorithmicity

THEMATIC PANEL (INDIVIDUAL PROPOSALS)

Zoom Stream 2

Spatial construction and algorithmicity – The method of hashtag analysis in spatial education

CHRISTIAN DORSCH, CHRISTINA REITHMEIER

Goethe–University Frankfurt, Germany

By adding a hashtag to posts on social media, users construct space digitally. Hashtags contain an interpretation of space and eventually attribute a meaning to it. This meaning is volatile and changes through alternative practices and communication. Alongside users, algorithms are another agent interconnecting the creation of a post and its perception. They reduce and structure the flood of information on the internet through automatic decision processes. ICT companies that apply algorithms on their platforms suggest to assist users in distinguishing important from unimportant information. Thus, algorithms interfere massively with the principles of human acting and reduce user’s autonomy. In our presentation, we will introduce an effective tool in spatial education for raising awareness towards manipulation through spatial constructions. For this purpose, we expanded the “hashtag analysis” method by the aspect of algorithmicity to acquaint students with the phenomenon and its consequences. To apply the method, students search hashtags of cities, districts or other specific places on social media platforms. Subsequently, they discuss questions on post authorship, types of illustrations used, manners in which the author constructs space and how algorithms augment or change this construction. Based on examples, we will eventually show that the method helps students to reflect their practices on social media. This is a requirement to act autonomously under the conditions of algorithmicity.

The algorithms behind geomeia technologies: a field between movement and social mobility

INGA GRYL, HELENA ATTENEDER

University of Duisburg–Essen, Germany

This paper seeks to unfold the theoretical framework behind algorithms of various forms of mobility that are technologically spoken based on geodata and reach from basic movement patterns to complex forms of social mobility. From a technical perspective, algorithms can be seen as a sequence of codes that contain precise operations or procedures to solve a problem. Based on geodata and a time stamp, simple movement patterns or navigation queries can be calculated according to further parameters (shortest route, further stopovers, etc.). Apart from such simple queries, due to an enormous increase in processing power in mobile, networked end user devices and a datafication of everyday behaviour, apart from such simple models, a multitude of other parameters can be considered in the model and complex predictions of future actions can be made. The associated lack of transparency of algorithmic systems, i.e. the question of which parameters are considered with which weighting and the reference to past decisions and their plausibility, can lead to an intensification of inequalities and discrimination. In our model we approach the massive social implications that come along with algorithms in everyday and educational settings, we outline a conception of the human being that comes along with that, which is mainly objectivating people and making them predictable, while, at the same time, places algorithms as seemingly deification or fetish. Thus, in algorithms, data and basic geographic data on physical positioning and movement is closely linked to a broader term of social mobility and consequent social implications.

Whose Love is AI for? The networked body and multiple masculinities in Chinese child-rearing robots

YAN YUAN, LIN ZHU

Huazhong University of Science and Technology, Peoples Republic of China

What would happen to the gender politics when AI technology, which is dominated by male scientists and engineers, enters into domestic child-rearing, a social domain that conventionally dominated by women? The rise of child-rearing robots in China since 2016 provided us with a good window to explore this question. This paper use 5 brands of robots as examples to examine the gender bias and gender strategies of this newly emerged technological artifact, following the paradigm of feminist STS and the theoretical approach of masculinity studies. The data come from two aspects: the media representation of the robots and the functions that they embody. By looking at the artifact as a networked body, it argues that, the technology is composed of front, middle, and back platforms, with three different roles respectively: partner, parent, and expert. In accordance to these roles, the robots demonstrate three different masculinities: a naughty boy, a heroic patriarch, and men of reason. Given their differences, they all prove the male bias of the technology against the previously female dominance of its application context. The multiplicity of masculinity of the robots breaks the stereotypes about men at one hand, but reinforces the gender division of labour in domestic child rearing and the superiority of men on the other. As a technological solution driven by the anxiety of dominant masculinity and fatherhood, it may help to produce to certain space to rebuilt the relationship between fathers and children, but by defending the authority of fathers and platforms, it also risks the possibility of devaluing mother's experiences and interest from domestic child-rearing.

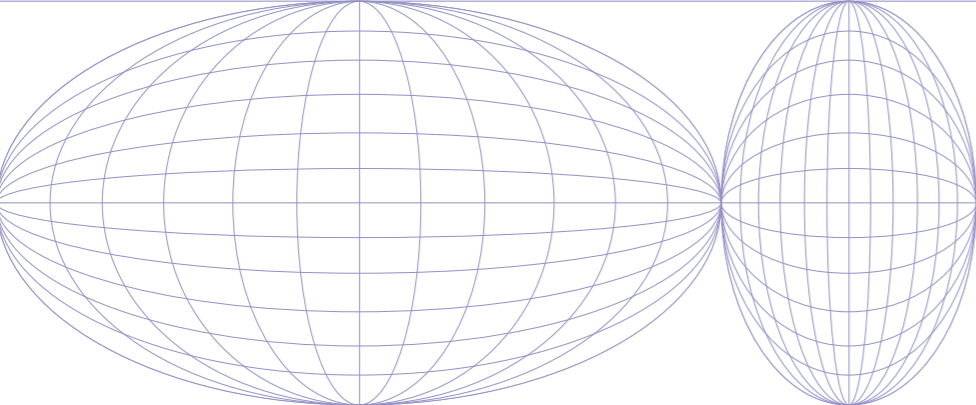
2:30pm
→ 3:45pm

T1S10: Portals, Patterns, and Private Spaces: The Platformisation of Automobility?

DISCUSSION FORUM

Zoom Stream 1

Like just about everything else in the world, are cars also becoming platforms? Whilst terms like 'integrated mobility platforms', 'smart mobility ecosystems', and 'mobility-as-a-service' (MaaS) all point towards the platformisation of mobility and transportation more generally, far less has been said about the platformisation of cars themselves. Why? Is it because cars have always been, or always had, 'platforms' in the form of vehicle chassis? Or because car manufacturers and owners are still fierce proponents of the idea of automotive independence? Despite articles about the 'end of the car age' (Moss 2015), cars continue to play a significant role in everyday life around the world. Indeed, that whilst both car production and car sales have dropped during the pandemic (owing to lockdowns, supply chain disruption, or decreased demand), the value of car use has arguably risen, as people opt for the safe cocoon of a private vehicle. As this panel seeks to discuss, several trends suggest the car is being platformised like other domains from social media to public services, perhaps even more aggressively so, with car manufacturers looking to replicate the platform power of big tech companies who, in turn, have also become deeply invested in automobility too. Alphabet, for example, have Android Auto, Waymo, and Waze, whilst Amazon own Zoox and operate a version of its AWS infrastructure for automotive manufacturers. Cars increasingly function as 'sensing platforms' as new kinds of data are collected from components within them, and as platforms for the development of complimentary software such as navigation, addressing, or voice control systems. Cars are also increasingly being connected to other vehicles, with movements tracked and data aggregated on driver behaviour and preferences, acting also as proxies for the flow of people through urban environments. In short, there are unique developments within the automotive industry that add to, and extend, the conversation on digital platforms and platformisation (Helmond 2015). This discussion forum brings together scholars across various disciplines to discuss a range of issues: from the value of platform approaches to the study of automobility (as opposed to strictly media, mobile, or geographical approaches), the impact of platform automobility on society (as opposed to other forms/eras of automobility), key concerns with the platformisation of automobility (data extraction, monopoly power, climate crisis), alternatives to automobile platformisation (car-free, data-sharing, municipal mobility), and the utility of developing a research agenda around the term 'platform automobility' (methods, scales, foci).



← Discussants

STEPHANIE SHERMAN
UC San Diego, USA – Visual Arts

SILKE ZIMMER-MERKLE
Karlsruher Institut für Technologie, Germany – History of Technology

LUIS ALVAREZ LEÓN
Dartmouth College, USA – Geography

DEBBIE HOPKINS
University of Oxford, UK – Geography/Transport Studies

WEIQIANG LIN
National University of Singapore, Singapore – Geography/Mobilities

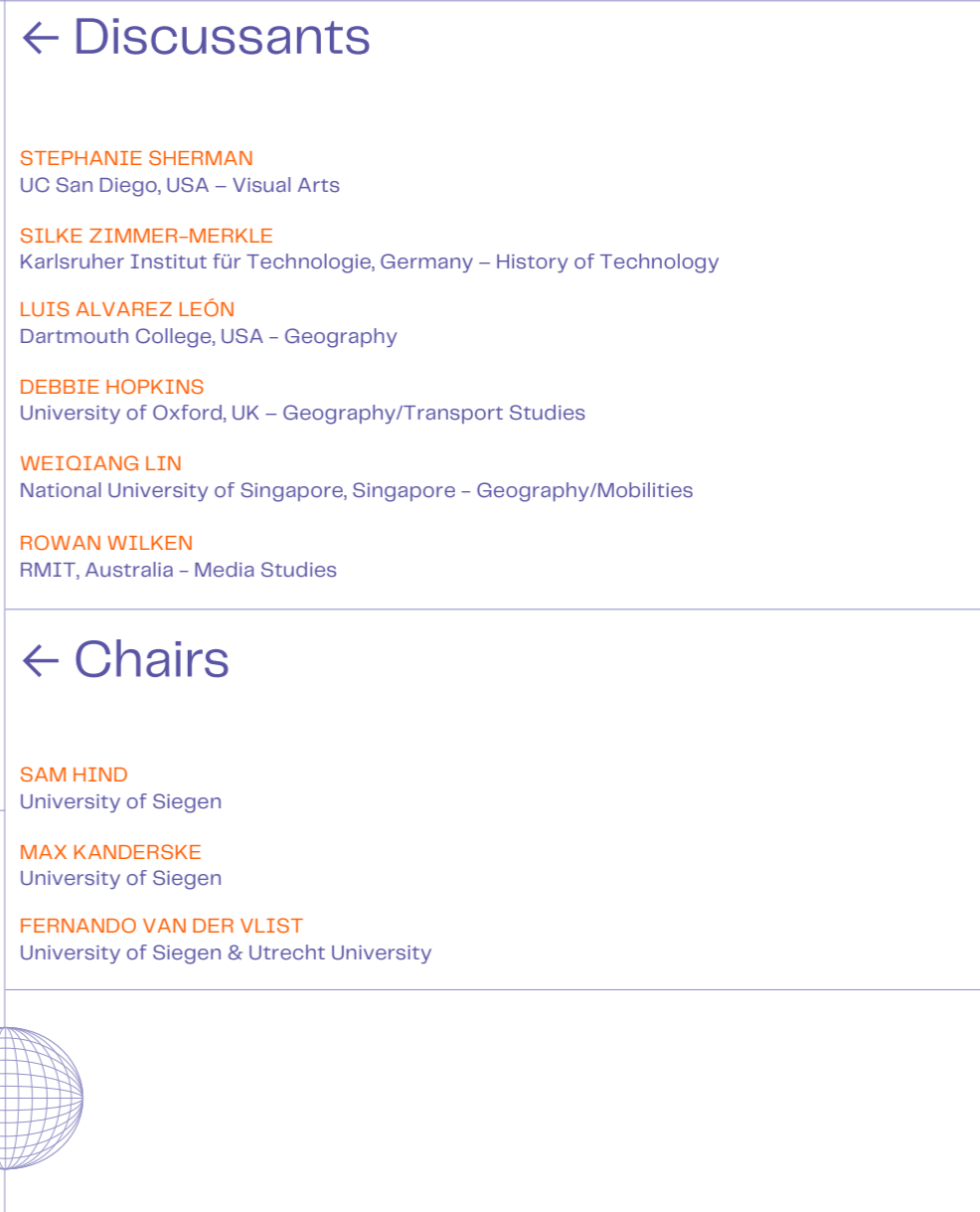
ROWAN WILKEN
RMIT, Australia – Media Studies

← Chairs

SAM HIND
University of Siegen

MAX KANDERSKE
University of Siegen

FERNANDO VAN DER VLIST
University of Siegen & Utrecht University



2:30pm
→ 3:45pm

T2S10: Disruption/Resistance

THEMATIC PANEL (INDIVIDUAL PROPOSALS)

Zoom
Stream 2

Off the Grid: Media Scarcity in an Age of Media Abundance

GREG ELMER

Ryerson University, Canada

In this paper I develop the concept of “media scarce” actors and communities, in short individuals and groups that for a range of reasons and histories have little to no personal media archives, documents and objects (eg. family photos, films, videos, diaries and so forth). The paper focuses on one particular community, former militants of the African National Congress, the party that led the fight against South Africa’s system of racial Apartheid. As ‘off the grid’ underground militants, these veterans of the ANC’s military wing – the ‘MK’ – purposefully avoided being captured by any form of media technology for fear of being identified and killed by S. African security forces. The paper subsequently questions how in the present juncture these previously ‘off the grid’ veterans engage in a media environment that seemingly requires the bountiful sharing of media images and objects across online platforms and properties as a prerequisite for participating in public and political. More broadly speaking, the paper addresses the fundamental question, to what degree does media (re)produce and indeed define an ‘off the grid’ life?



Black Box vs. Black Bloc

RENÉE RIDGWAY

Copenhagen Business School, the Netherlands

In an era of corporate ‘surveillance capitalism’ (Zuboff 2015), ‘ubiquitous googling’ (Ridgway 2021) has become a daily ‘habit’ (Chun 2016), with advertising companies (Google) shaping not only the web (Introna & Nissenbaum 2000) but organising (us)ers. With the collection of data (signals) from the ‘trusted user’, ‘subjectivities of search’ are produced that embody degrees of personalisation. In contrast, ‘agencies of anonymity’ are resistance tactics with the Tor browser and TAILS (The Amnesic Incognito Live System) that inhibit pure visibility by facilitating various degrees of obfuscation (Brunton and Nissenbaum 2015), ranging from pseudonymity to ‘unreachability’ (Nissenbaum 1999). In this presentation I depart from the EU legal term ‘data subject’ by applying the IP (internet protocol) address as an organisational hinge in order to structure the effects: the Black Box as a ‘personalised subject’ (Google Search) with the IP address identifying the subject compared to the Black Bloc as an ‘anonymous user’ (Tor Browser), where the user’s IP address is hidden. A discourse analysis and diagram elucidate how these ‘collaborative collectives’—‘subjectivities of search’ and ‘agencies of anonymity’— are organised according to degrees of human–algorithmic interaction. The key difference is that I decide to be in the ‘anonymous Tor collective’, trusting my privacy to unknown actors instead of putting trust in Google that assigns me to particular groups through their non–transparent process of collaborative filtering and without human agency.

Disrupting the Grid: Geomedia Innovators of Burma

YUNG AU, KO HTWE

University of Oxford, UK / Independent Researcher

In the eight years between 2012 and 2020, 21.5 million people were connected to the Internet in Burma. After five decades of civil war, and a century of colonisation before that, many welcomed the country to the modern world when what was dubbed the ‘Internet Floodgates’ were opened after 2012. In the fixation of this point in time however, the earlier innovators of internet, digital privacy, and geomedia technologies in the region are overlooked. Here, cartographic and related technologies had long been adapted, refused, and shaped in many ways, including in territorial contestations, context of unmapped data, human rights documentation, communication, navigation, insurgency and the ethnic media landscape. These manifold of activities and lived realities mutually shape the geomedia technologies they are entangled in. A wide array of negotiations arose during this time, including: *Data In/Visibility*. The careful adaption of certain tools (e.g. open source mapping) and the refusal of others (e.g. tools associated with state surveillance). This reveals the authority geomedia technologies bestow to some actors but the invisibility it lends to others. *Design Logics*. The contradictions between the economic models of mainstream geomedia technologies and its adapted usages. *Platforms-as-Infrastructures*. And relatedly, the evolution of certain geomedia platforms into infrastructures, which imparts a certain ubiquity of the geo–aware landscape. This paper explores through archives, interviews, and auto–ethnography, some significant early digital innovations that took place in the northernmost nook of Southeast Asia. In particular, it questions what it might mean to be “off the grid” in this context.

4:15pm
→ 5:30pm

T1S11: Affective Geomedia

THEMATIC PANEL (INDIVIDUAL PROPOSALS)

Zoom
Stream 1

Blurring the grid: high–resolution sensibilities and fuzzy urban practices towards alternative urban commoning

LUCIA JALON OYARZUN

EPFL, Switzerland

In 2014, IBM published a public report stating that thanks to the Internet of Things, physical assets would “become as easily indexed, searched and traded as any online commodity”. They called it the “liquification of the physical world,” a process that has only accelerated since. As nature is translated into indexable data, our sensibilities are necessarily affected. If modernism already subjected our bodies to a growing acceleration and informational overloading, this culturally mediated battering of the senses gains now a biotechnological add–on resulting in what we term a “high–resolution sensibility”. As the speed of technological processes accelerates, our bodies becme increasingly subjected to a perpetual regime of shock, where sensations are interrupted before affects—a measure of continuity between different embodied and mental states—, can even be built, thus breaking any principle of causality and continuity. These “hi–res sensibilities” risk detaching our bodies from the fuzzy and continuous background defining our ecologies of attention, as coined by Yves Citton, and affective engagement with the world, thus compromising our ability to act and react to the environmental conditions defining our existence. Thus, while being on the grid means to be subjected to these anesthetic ballistics 24/7, we understand there’s a political agency to be explored in the “fuzziness” of the material world as it gets more and more entangled with data: if there is no possibility of going off grid, we want to explore the possibilities of “blurring” the grid. To study both this “high–resolution sensibility” and the emergence of counteracting “fuzzy practices”, we advance the preliminary results of an urban ethnography research project focused on a smart neighborhood of Geneva, Switzerland, to show the organization and workings of these sensibilities and the eco–informational environment producing them. This will allow us to advance a series of performative and aesthetic strategies towards alternative urban commoning practices based on the negotiation of new material agencies and “blurred” urban grids. In order to do this, the present proposal will work through concepts and practices derived from media studies, environmental humanities, architecture and urban studies.

Interfacing the affective city. Urban affective sensing between algorithmic governance and data activism

TIMO KAERLEIN

University of Siegen, Germany

Among the various types of urban data informing city planning and municipal decision–making, citizens’ situated affective states or emotions still play a comparatively marginal role. Only recently, initiatives in urban affective sensing utilize low–cost mobile biosensors and health monitoring tools to articulate cities differently – adding an affective layer to the combined built environment and datascape that comprises contemporary urban space. Affect–related data, e.g. physiological signals from biosensors, geo–tagged social media posts, and/or location–specific survey data, can potentially serve a range of purposes from supporting mental health and personal well–being, informing the layout of public transport systems and recreational areas, to assisting law enforcement in riot control and predictive policing measures. The talk aims at mapping and situating existing approaches of urban affective sensing between attempts at governance by affect (e.g. via facial recognition technologies), research in environmental health, bottom–up initiatives of participatory affective sensing (e.g. related to commuting stress) and data artistic and/or activist interventions intent on imagining the city as a dynamic assemblage of affective intensities. As a result of this initial mapping, several questions will be raised: What could it possibly mean to interface a city via data related to affect and emotion? How do these data come about in the first place? What role could urban affective sensing play in re–imagining digitally–mediated cities beyond the narrow framework of the ‘smart city’?

Oculus Insight, and taking VR ‘off the grid’

BEN EGLISTON, MARCUS CARTER

Queensland University of Technology / University of Sydney

This talk will explore Facebook’s recent foray into developing mobile virtual reality (VR) devices (Oculus Quest, Quest 2), that is, devices which are untethered from fixed in place sensors allowing for a greater degree of mobility and use in a wider range of settings. The first part of this talk will explore how the Quest operates as what McCosker and Wilken (2020) call a ‘seeing machine’ – an assemblage of sensors and algorithms that enable a range of autonomous technologies today. The Quest is reliant on a navigation stack Facebook have termed Insight (Hesch et al., 2019), employing a combination of optical sensors and Visual–Inertial Simultaneous Localization and Mapping (VISLAM) – an algorithmic odometry technique – in order to register users’ movement and location in space (and in some instances, to incorporate the user’s environment into the experience of using the Quest). The second part of the talk explores the politics of VISLAM–enabled Oculus – advancing limited existing political economic discussion (Egliston and Carter, 2020) to do with data extraction. Where VR research on emerging forms of mobile VR focus on phenomenological questions of user experience (see Saker and Frith, 2020), little work has begun to ask what Facebook stands to gain from the capture and processing of the spatial data yielded through VISLAM–enabled VR devices.

References
Egliston, B., & Carter, M. (2020). Oculus imaginaries: the promises and perils of Facebook’s virtual reality. *New Media and Society*, 1–20. Published online ahead of print. doi: 10.1177/1461444820960411
Hesch J, Kozminski A and Linde O (2019) Powered by AI: Oculus Insight. Retrieved from https://ai.facebook.com/blog/powered-by-ai-oculus-insight/
McCosker, A., & Wilken, R. (2020). Automating vision: The social impact of the new camera consciousness. New York, NY: Routledge.
Saker M and Frith J (2020) Coextensive space: virtual reality and the developing relationship between the body, the digital and physical space. *Media, Culture and Society*. Epub ahead of print. DOI: 10.1177/0163443720932498

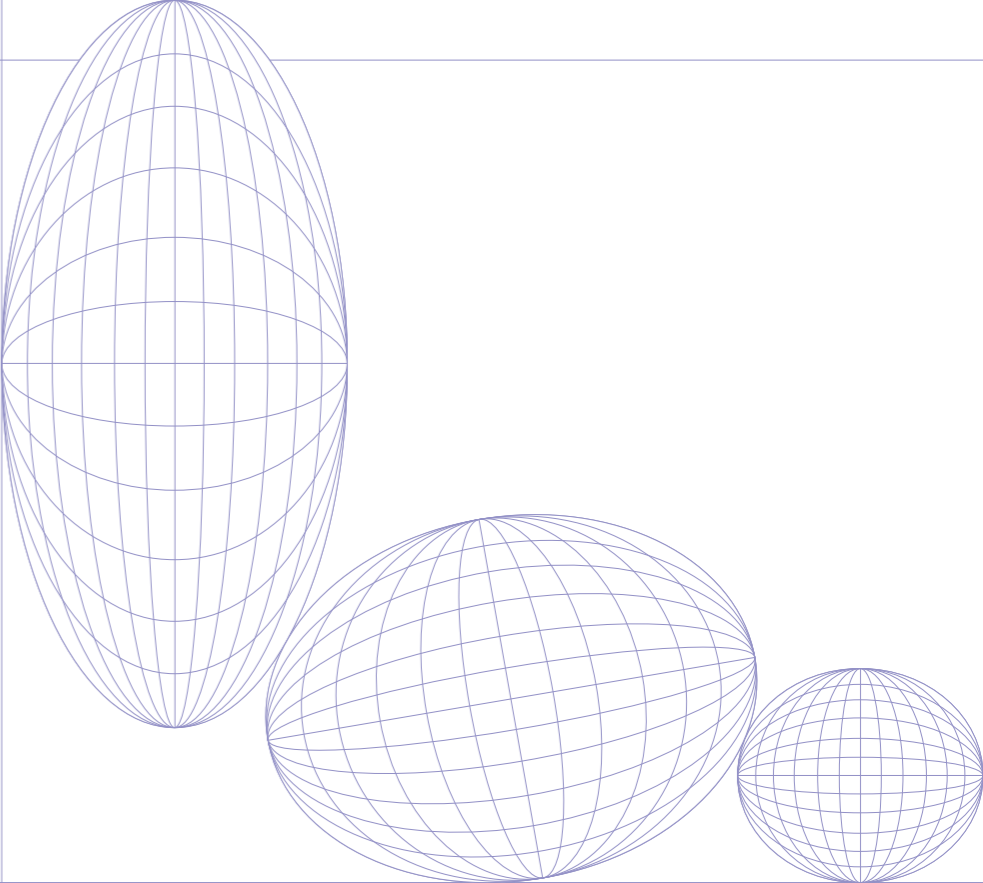
Stockholm as Affective Media Landscape in the 19th Century

HENRIK ÖRNEBRING

Karlstad University, Sweden

The term "media landscape" is commonly used in a metaphorical sense, i.e. to describe the overall media provisions and consumption patterns of a country or area. This paper uses the term in a more concrete, experience-based sense: the interaction between the physical landscape and the presence of media and mediation in/of this landscape, and the affective landscape this interaction engenders. This approach combines traditional media history with so-called sensory history, emotional history, and emotional/affectual geography in order to emphasize human (particularly subaltern) experience, mobility/fluidity, and feeling over technologies, institutions, and rationality.

The specific case is Stockholm, Sweden. During the 19th century, Stockholm transformed from an urban landscape where (mass) mediation was a relatively peripheral phenomenon linked to a few centralized places (a few print shops/newspaper offices/book shops; the Parliament; the Royal Castle) to a landscape suffused by a complex network of "media nodes". Such "media nodes" included a new proliferation of print shops, book shops and ever-larger newspaper buildings; public advertising in thoroughfares and plazas; and places of extensive public reading (e.g. bars, cafés, libraries). Foregrounding links between place, media and affect provides a more nuanced account of the "public sphere" that grew in importance in this period: a public sphere that contained as much (if not more) affective polarization, invective, and hurt feelings as it did any "rational-critical debate". The aforementioned "media nodes" in the urban landscape frequently also became "affective nodes"; sites of protest, affective performance, and/or convivial community, creating the affective media landscape of the paper title.



4:15pm
→ 5:30pm

T2S11: Infrastructure

THEMATIC PANEL (INDIVIDUAL PROPOSALS)

Zoom
Stream 2

Neoliberal cartography: A visual-semiotic analysis of three navigation apps

IGAL BAUM, RIVKA RIBAK

University of Haifa, Israel

The proposed presentation adopts visual-semiotic tools to analyze the virtual environment conjured by the apps Waze, Moovit and Gett. Recent work has pointed to the complicated relationship between maps and the spaces they purportedly depict, interpreting maps as simulacra that are intimately intertwined in the ideology and design of gaming. In the presentation, we develop a semiotic walkthrough method that allows us to identify four representational practices of these widely used navigation apps: the map is personalized and adopts the perspective of the user – in Waze the arrow represents the user rather than e.g. the North; the map is commercial in that it is informed by the economic model of the app, e.g. Waze presenting only those gas stations that pay the company; the map offers a visual depiction of time – arguably, time rather than space is its *raison d'être*; and lastly, the map is reflexive, incorporating users' data both to regulate their behavior (speed alert) and to seemingly subvert surveillance (police alert). In this cartographic regime, the map user adopts a "self as business" (Gershon, 2017) logic in which navigation must constantly create value, as the map becomes less a tool for regulating behavior and more, a tool for producing it (Zuboff, 2019).

References:
Gershon, I. (2017). Down and out in the new economy: How people find (or don't find) work today. University of Chicago Press.
Zuboff, S. (2019). The age of surveillance capitalism: The fight for a human future at the new frontier of power. Profile Books.

Privacy after Infrastructure

SAM HIND, ALEX GEKKER

University of Siegen / University of Amsterdam

In this paper we chart several potential futures for life 'off the grid', by evaluating various perspectives on automated surveillance considered threats to non-conspicuous living. In this, we build on previous work on the 'non-opt-out-able' (Gekker and Hind 2019) nature of infrastructural surveillance, in which data-enabled tracking becomes a default operating state of a wide range of services. In this work, we examine how various tracking technologies map onto – but also challenge – existing school of thoughts on automated surveillance. Besides others, we show how sociological approaches (Lyon 2004, 2018) eloquently foreground vision and the 'disclosure' of information, dataveillance approaches (Amoore and De Goode 2005, Van Dijk 2014) productively emphasize the multivalent capacities of data, and digital geographic approaches (Ash et al. 2018) effectively attend to socio-spatial effects at the 'front-end'. By attending to the infrastructural (Plantin et al. 2018) dynamics of privacy, we hope to create a conceptual tool to evaluate and contrast these various visual, data, and spatial approaches, in order to assess developing technologies and their potential threats. To test the limits of these approaches, we discuss Mobileye – a subsidiary of Intel providing camera-based sensing systems for (autonomous) vehicles. In this we hope to provide a complimentary conceptual framework to evaluate the privacy implications of data-enabled tracking as default.

The Error at the End of the Internet. Coordinates of geo-media

PETER KRAPP

University of California, USA

This discussion of the end of the internet plays on the "last page of the internet" meme. While earlier iterations of the joke exhorted people to shut down their computer and go outside, later versions typically sell a souvenir t-shirt. Either way, even as many of these pages have since disappeared, such webpages from the 1990s onward have been archived and can still be referenced—an illustration of the resilience of the web. If the idea of reaching an end of the internet is a joke, it is less ludicrous to imagine that the net as such could end. As a distributed reticular structure, it is built for redundancy, and error-tolerance, as we saw, is built on the assumption that there will be failed connections, dropped packages, lag and latency, and jitter. The infrastructure is designed to work around what it inevitably produces, and the history of error messages is the history of the internet, from before Baran's napkin sketches of topology to after the emergence of the dark net, censorship, hacktivism, leading to the prospects of "splinter-nets" and great firewalls.



“The map is the territory” (II): Smithson’s Geomedia

BERNHARD SIEGERT

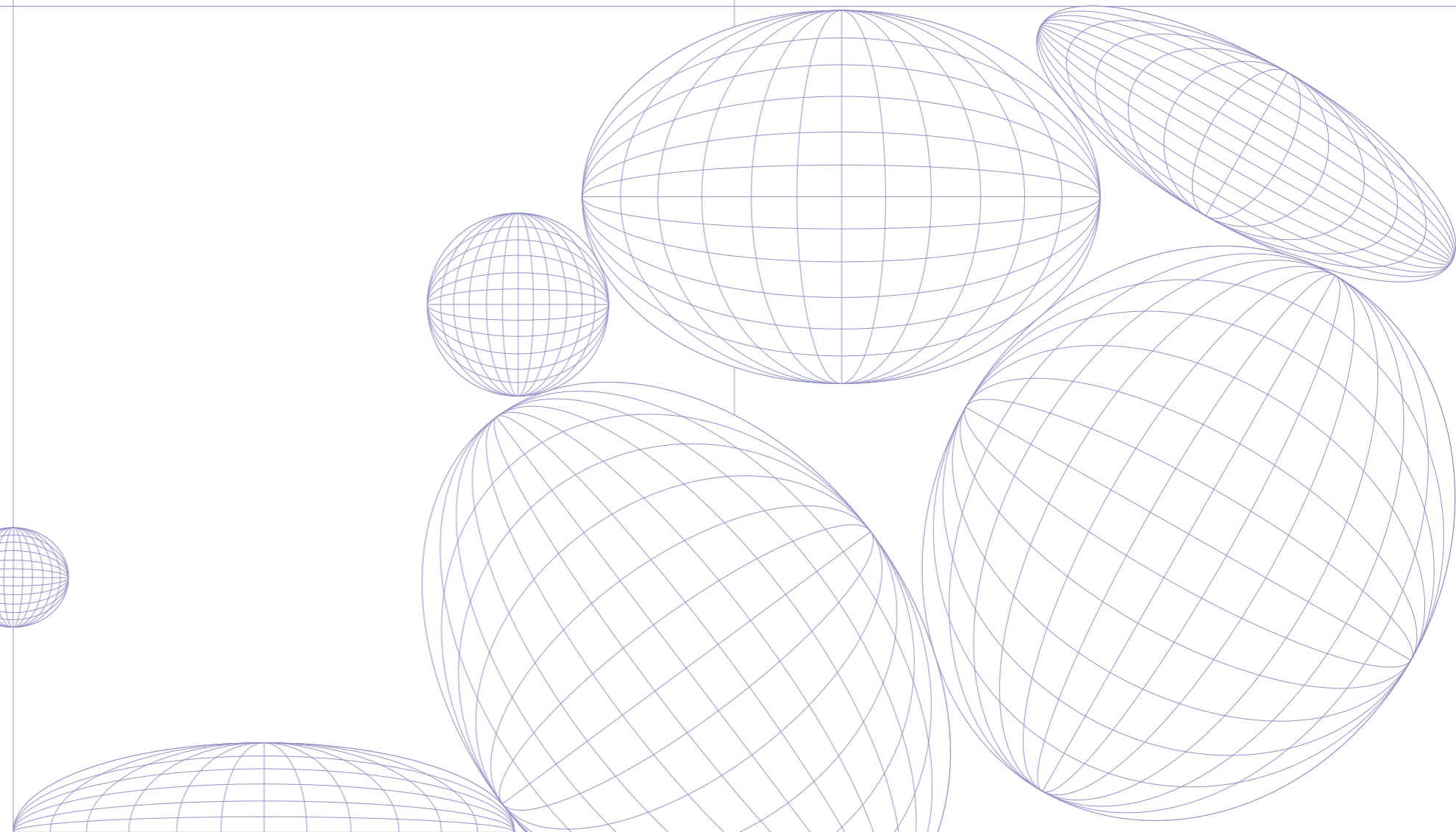
IKKM Weimar, Germany

Robert Smithson’s maps are paving the way for a conception of geomedia that goes beyond media of representation. Maps are not only a frequent component of Smithson’s works – first of all of his nonsites –, the map is as well a determining concept which informs his work from 1966 on. Smithson’s maps do not intend to represent a territory; they are neither a cultural technique of navigation in the usual sense. Smithson’s maps are geomedia in that sense that they allow you to explore the limits where signifiers and matter become indiscriminate. The question of the indistinguishability of map and territory, of writing and matter, is nothing more than a question of scaling.

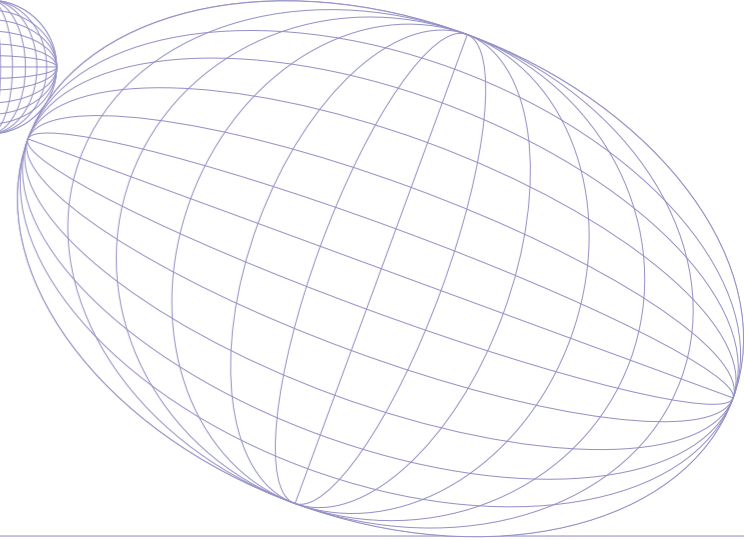
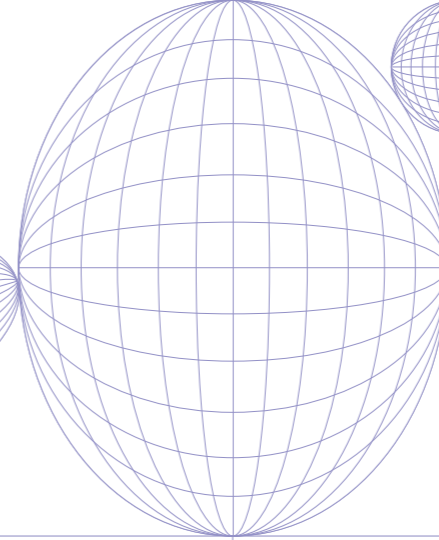
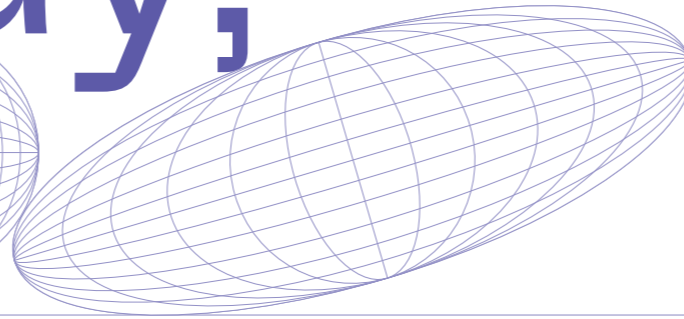
The cultural technique of the cartographic grid turns into an operation which translates linear perspective and geology into each other. Pieces like Gyrostasis or Leaning Strata (1968) develop from cartographic constructions which reveal geologic deep time within perception. The Spiral Jetty finally is an assemblage which links earthwork, film, sun and eye, and allows the subject to pass from inside to outside, from present to geologic deep time (and back). Smithson’s geomedia anticipated essential ideas of New Materialism, and may contribute to the further development of the theory of cultural techniques as well as to that of media ecology.

Bernhard Siegert is Gerd Bucerius Professor for History and Theory of Cultural Techniques at the Faculty of Media at Bauhaus University Weimar. Since 2008, he has been director of the International College for Cultural Technology Research and Media Philosophy, which he founded together with Lorenz Engell. He is the author of Cultural Techniques: Grids, Filters, Doors, and Other Articulations of the Real (Fordham University Press 2015) and co-editor of Archive of Media History. From 2013 to 2020, he was also speaker for the DFG research group “Media and Mimesis” at the Bauhaus University Weimar.

→ www.ikkm-weimar.de/kolleg/personen/bernhard-siegert/



Saturday, 8 May



10:00am
→ 11:15am

B1: Book Presentation

BOOK PRESENTATION PANEL

Conference
Stream

← Papers

“Digital Geographies Handbook”

¹TILL STRAUBE, ²HENNING FÜLLER, ³TABEA BORK-HÜFFER, ⁴PABLO ABEND,
⁵HELENA ATTENEDER, ⁶FRANCIS HARVEY, ⁷ANDREA MÖSGEN, ⁸UWE SCHULZE

¹Goethe University Frankfurt; ²Humboldt University, Berlin; ³University of Innsbruck;
⁴University of Siegen; ⁵University of Duisburg-Essen; ⁶IfL Leipzig

The panel introduces the edited volume “Digitale Geographien. Welt – Wissen – Werkzeuge” (Digital Geographies. Society – Knowledge – Tools, UTB, to be published in early summer 2021). The volume is the result of an ongoing collaboration that evolved as part of the D-A-CH-based research network „Digital Geographies” bringing together a broad range of scholars interested in the role of digital (geo-)data for everyday spaces, geographic research and teaching. The panel especially provides a stage for mediarelated contributions of the book for which purpose three authors were invited (each chosen from one of the three main book sections: society – knowledge – tools). Additionally the panel is also used to discuss the overall volume. The focal point of th paper presentations and discussions is on how Digital Geographies can be framed through an explicit engagement with the role of digital media in current geographic thought, theory and research practices.

Geomediatiation

PABLO ABEND & HELENA ATTENEDER

Geomeia are ubiquitous mediating instances between space, place, people and things, which lead to changed forms of spatial organization, perception and appropriation. On the basis of four research fields, the paper illuminates different facets of the concept of geomeia and shows that “geomeia” does not refer to a single medium. Instead, the term refers to the potential of mediation processes to constitute human and non-human interactions, practices and identities in geomeiatized worlds.

Geovisualisations

FRANCIS HARVEY

This paper suggests, given the tension between bias and reliance in all representational work with geoinformation, that old cartographic terms provide good guidance for geovisual work in the information age, but are not sufficient on their own for media processing and uses of maps, geovisualizations, and geoinformation. Furthermore, the article takes up epistemological questions concerning the production and use of maps. Three aspects of mediation can be differentiated: truth promise, purposefulness, and semiotic variety. The gain is a better understanding of the production and use of geovisual content in the information age and perspectives for one's own work with and use of geoinformation can be developed.

← Papers

Critical GIScience

ANDREA MÖSGEN & UWE SCHULZE

Against the backdrop of the discourse of the Critical GIScience movement, the paper deals with theoretical and application-oriented implications for doing Critical GIS for geographical research. On the one hand, the focus is on the critical-reflexive discussion of GIS from a socio-theoretical perspective concerning epistemologies and positionality in terms of (geospatial) knowledge generation. On the other hand, we ask for further development of Qualitative GIS in terms of participatory approaches and ethnographic working methods. Finally, we outline aspects for GIS-based projects in higher education teaching and learning in geography.

11:45am
→ 1:30pm

P1: Plenary Panel

A PLENARY PANEL

Conference
Stream

← Speakers

Geomeia Methods

When studying geomeia, we may not only need theories that speak to questions of space, geography, location, and mobility, but also methodological strategies. Based on examples of particular research practices, this plenary panel discusses whether there are specific geomeia methods and ways of producing knowledge. It also engages more specifically with methods “off the grid” and asks whether research on various forms of mediated disconnection requires its own set of tools.

ANNE KAUN

Department for Media and Communication Studies, Södertörn University

JAMES ASH

Department of Media, Culture, Heritage, Newcastle University

CORNELIA BRANTNER

Department of Geography, Media and Communication, Karlstad University

JOAN RAMON RODRÍGUEZ-AMAT

Department of Media Art and Communication, Sheffield Hallam University

← Chair

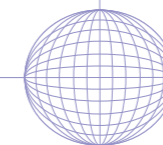
JENNY SUNDÉN

Department of Geography, Media and Communication, Karlstad University

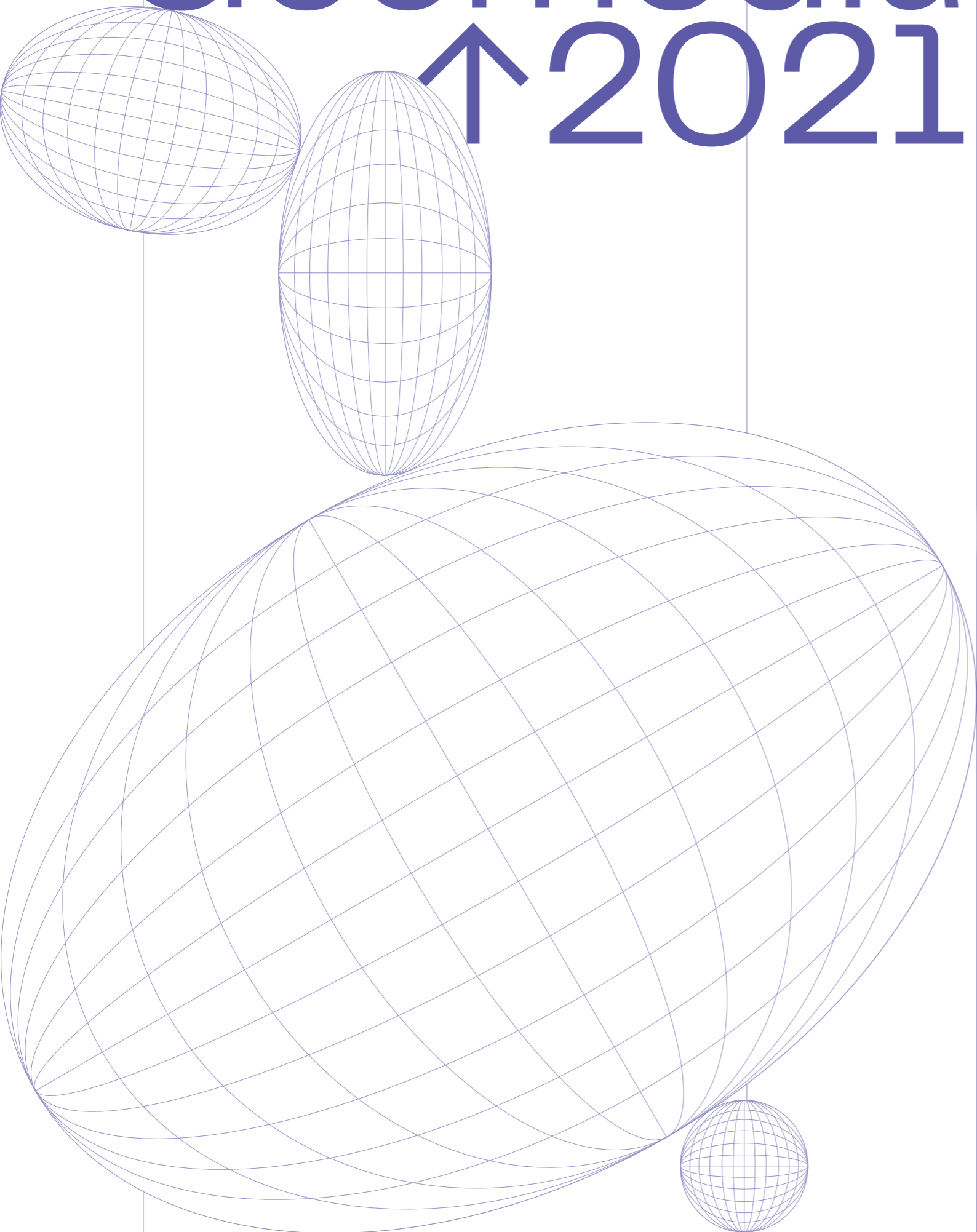
1:30pm
→ 2:00pm

CA: Closing Address

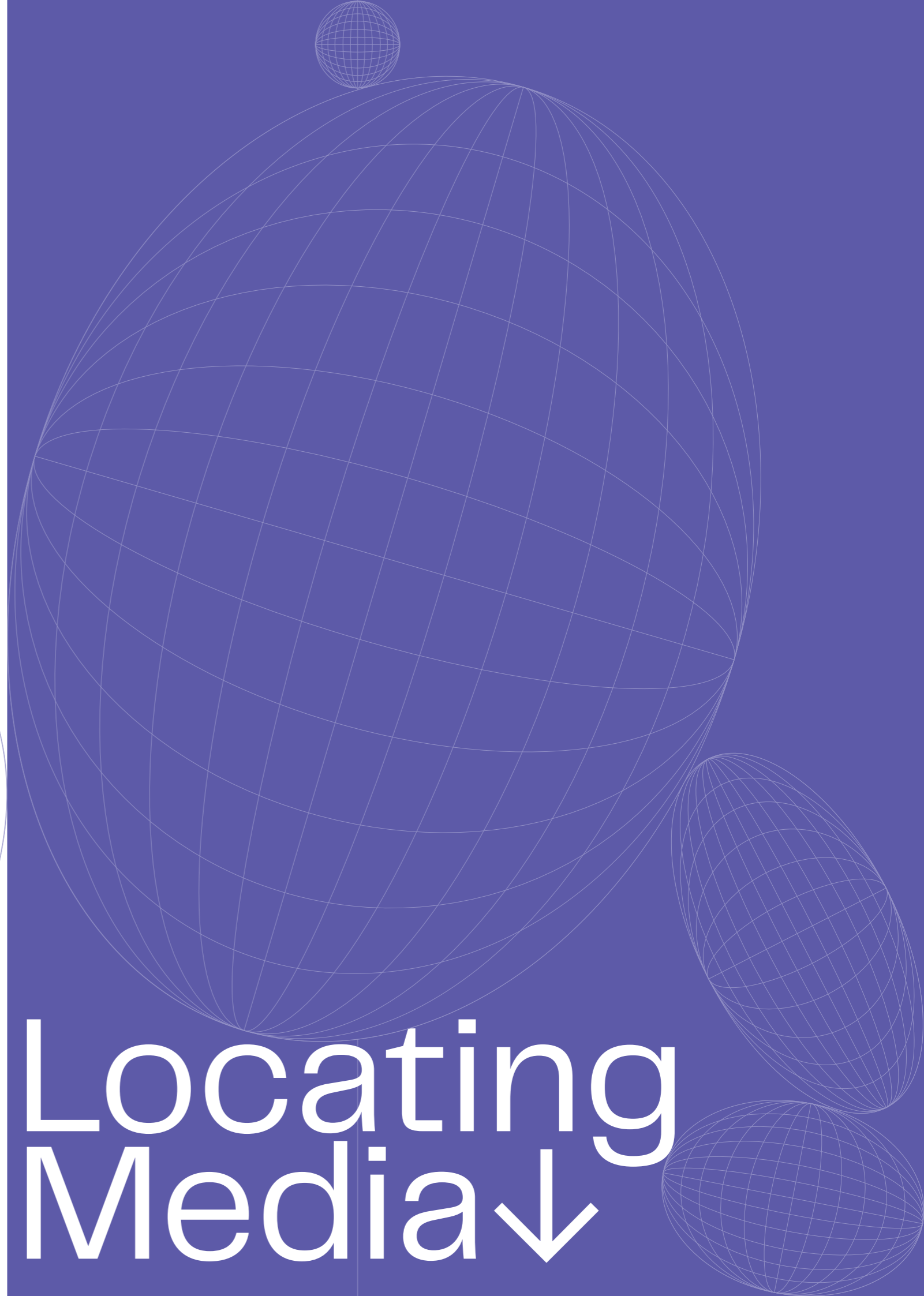
Conference
Stream



Geomedia ↑2021



Locating
Media ↓



Since 2012, the interdisciplinary graduate school “Locating Media” unites researchers with a strong emphasis on investigating media, data and human actors in motion and in situ relevant to present times. The current summer term is at the same time the last semester of the group. Former associated and current members of “Locating Media” are taking this as a worthy occasion not only to look back upon a longstanding and thriving tradition of situation- and location-aware media research but to present their current research to provide an insight into the innovative variety of topics and methods of a “Locating Media”-specific approach. Uniting researchers and methods from various fields from both the sciences and the humanities such as critical data studies, media linguistics, socio-informatics, or theatre, platform, literary, media and cultural studies, the research training group applies skills from the social, computer and cultural sciences to issues relevant to digital media culture in the true spirit of interdisciplinary exchange and discussion.

Whereas the first period of “Locating Media” (2012–2016) focused on the convergence of technical, scientific, creative and practical localisations of media, the second and final phase of the group (2017–2021) investigates the distributed spaces and situations of mobile media and data practices. In doing so, the hitherto proved ethnographic methods of media research are supplemented by digital and mobile methods. Using both qualitative and quantitative approaches in investigating digital media and data practices, the graduate school was, and is, delivering pioneering research not only in German media studies and sociology but also in related fields, having a profound impact on the development of methods and methodologies for the disciplines involved.

At the core of the “Locating Media” panels which run in parallel and supplementary to the regular conference programme at the 4th International Geomedia Conference, “Off the Grid” at Siegen University, stay reflections of all access points of the graduate school which include Ethnography, Socio-Informatics, Praxeology, Linguistics, Ethnology, Literary and Science and Technology Studies and (Media) Theory. These individual panels represent structurally the variety of disciplines that are represented at the graduate school. Even if there is *prima facie* no explicit thematic geomedia connection, all the panels unifies that “Locating Media” specific issues are at the same time always interwoven and overlaid with questions of place and space, situational awareness and sometimes georeferencing media and media practices in the broader sense. Most of the panels will be held in English.



Thursday, 6 May

10:00am
→ 11:15am

T3S4: Locating Media: Ethnography as Practice

THEMATIC PANEL (INDIVIDUAL PROPOSALS)

Zoom
Stream 3

Field Research Off the Grid

JUDITH WILLKOMM

University Konstanz, Germany

Latour's text about "sampling the soil in the Amazon" is one of the most influential contributions to Science and Technology Studies (1999). In it he manages to make insightful how chains of translations and circulating references in scientific research function. In his case study he drew on the data collection done by a botanist, a pedologist, and a geomorphologist in the rainforest. Still, the challenges and unpredictability with which researchers have to deal—whom have swapped the safe infrastructure of the lab for the uncontrollable and contingent circumstances of the field—has been hardly taken into account within STS. In her contribution, Judith Willkomm will discuss the mobility, power supply and storage capacity of field research media, as observed during years of ethnographic field work with biologists. The uncertain connections of media infrastructure and off the grid workarounds, such as stand-alone assemblages, are analysed. In doing so, it will become clear that not just "media determine our situation", as Kittler (1986) famously assessed, but that the other way around, the situation determines which media are deployed how.

The camera as a focusing medium: On developments of the Finnish passport without language

ASKO LEHMUSKALLIO

Tampere University, Finland

Based on empirical work on the history of the Finnish passport conducted together with Paula Haara, the paper discusses the role of the camera in identifying Finnish citizens intending to move across national borders. It is argued, that by understanding the camera as a focusing medium, we may pay attention to changes in how identity is situationally upheld. By focusing on historical changes, we find that mistrust in passport development is repeatedly evoked by both changes in the bodies identified, as well as the techniques of identification themselves.

Recording studio as inscription device

JOCHON CHAE

University of Siegen, Germany

This article interprets recording studios as technical tools for inscription of sound, comparing media production practices with practices of scientific discovery in laboratories. So-called "high end" recording sessions like classical music production scenes aim to capture the "original sound" from musical performance into the recording. This is a very difficult job, because acoustic sounds at a certain locus always emerge as a slippery, volatile and incommensurable event with individual particularity, which should be described as sensible integrity of "soundscape." (Scharfer 1977) Ethnographic fieldwork in recording studios, however, shows that whole technical arrangements of a recording studio serve as "inscription device" (Latour 1979) so that each particular acoustic event can obtain material objectivity, social transferability and commensurability in relatively fixed form of audio recording media. Only doing so a particular acoustic event can have its auditive existence in wider network beyond the soundproof walls of concert hall. The "original sound" at the locus of musical performance in this sense is rather constructed by technical arrangements of the recording studio than captured "as is", since the only "commensurable" fact about "how it sounded" is defined by sound recording praxis itself. The "original sound" should be regarded as "myth", because there is no such thing to "capture". Yet recording engineers realizes and reconstruct this "myth" through their professional practices, projecting their own statement of how their recording should sound.

Research without language

ANDREAS WAGENKNECHT

Charite Berlin, Germany

Situated media and practice research may move within uncharted territories. Methodologically, methodologically, and throughout the contact with actors from the research field, it is required on the one hand to connect with objects and to engage with the field by means of concrete places and situations; on the other hand, the research process is bound to the practical agency of instruments and media of research. Both aspects often imply a departure from canonical procedures and an instrumental understanding of methods in particular and research in general. Prototypical for these assumptions is the epistemological style of Science and Technology Studies. In the lecture, basic assumptions of this research style will be explicated, e.g. how knowledge emerges locally, how research can be understood as a process, that the instruments of knowledge generation (such as methods and theories) are not neutral, powerless artifacts, but shape autonomously what is finally available as a research result. Using empirical evidence from a practice-theoretical media and technology research on the use of speech computers by people with physical disabilities, it is shown how security-saving presuppositions of a methodological nature become a problematic limitation for cooperative action in social situations. In order to manage social situations with people without spoken language and at the same time producing material for empirical research, an 'off the grid'-understanding and practical use of methods and research instruments is necessary. The presented scenes of a field research testify to corresponding situated learning processes.

11:45am → 1:00pm

T3S5: Locating Media: Practice+ Approaches

DISCUSSION FORUM

Zoom Stream 3

Off the Grid? Into the Wild? The Possibilities of Practice Beyond Praxeology

Are there limits to thinking with, and through, practice? Scholars across geography and media studies talk variously of 'everyday', 'situated', 'digital', and 'media' practices as well as, increasingly, 'app' and 'data' practices. But what do we gain from thinking about practice, or through the lens of praxeology? Alternatively, what might we lose from thinking only about practice, or only through praxeology? This panel is intended as a dialogue between scholars wrestling with these questions, in which the value of practice and praxeology is explored. The aim is to discuss how the limits to practice might be, and indeed are being, studied, and potentially re-drawn – especially by those working with, in, and beyond, geomediality. The panel does not intent to cast doubt on the value of studying practice – long an interest of media scholars based here in Siegen. Instead, the forum will discuss how everyday, situated, digital, media, app, and data practices – as identifiable phenomena – are nonetheless modified by other things they meet, from bodily affects that 'pre-code' or modulate practices, to broader

2:30pm → 3:45pm

T3S6: Locating Media: Socio–Informatics

THEMATIC PANEL

Zoom Stream 3

The Practice Turn and its Relevancy for Research in Socio–Informatics

Erhard Schüttpelz has suggested many innovations for the field of media studies. Among others, he widened the traditional understanding of the field which mainly dealt with mass media towards an investigation of digital infrastructures of many kinds. To analyses these infrastructures and their infrastructuring, he suggested to ground media studies in empirical investigations of human actors' social practices (which ethnomethodologists and others have called the 'turn to the social' or 'the turn to practice'). From a political point of view, he suggested to look at varieties of publics (in Dewey's sense) rather than at a mass media created public. To ground this research program, he introduced ethnomethodology to a media studies audience as a sensitizing perspective. In this panel discussion, we will examine how Erhard's work resonates with, and has enriched, studies in socio–informatics. We will report on various work place studies in relatively new contexts, studies which raise the somewhat controversial question of what we mean by 'work'. These, briefly, journalism as well as studies of social media use by political activists. We will discuss how ethnomethodological sensibilities are shaping our research agenda. Finally, we will discuss our attitude towards theory and concept building and contrast it with Erhard's still vivid interest in these domains.

4:15pm → 5:30pm

T3S7: Locating Media: Linguistik

THEMATIC PANEL

Zoom Stream 3

Praxeologien: Sprache in den Medienwissenschaften – Medien in den Sprachwissenschaften

STEPHAN HABSCHIED, ERIKA LINZ, MARK DANG-ANH, TIM MORITZ HECTOR, MATTHIAS MEIER

¹Universität Siegen; ²Rheinische Friedrich–Wilhelms–Universität Bonn; ³Leibniz–Institut für deutsche Sprache, Mannheim; ⁴Technische Universität Chemnitz

technical, material, and social infrastructures that likewise facilitate or constrain how practices are performed. In short, and to engage with the topic of the conference: are practices ever really off–grid – purified, observable, discrete things shorn from their surroundings? Does a narrow focus on practice 'in the wild' only seek to obscure these wider actors that cannot be accounted for, praxeologically? As a provocation, the panel offers what might be productively referred to as a 'practice+' approach. In doing so, we emphasise how practices (as phenomena) and praxeological approaches (as lenses) can be engaged with materially, discursively, and affectively. We discuss how practice+ approaches are enhanced by a supporting cast drawn from aesthetics, political discourses, technical representations, or cognitive concepts. Moreover, the discussion draws attention to alternative theories that define practice differently such as queer and feminist studies, computer science, or theatre studies. The panel also intends to ground these provocations with observations draw from studies of governance, management, and markets, as well as the arts, culture, and health. As the contributors will aim to discuss, there are manifold opportunities to exchange ideas around practice across disciplines and traditions, not least geography and media studies. These fruitful additions, arguably, put practice back on the grid, bringing it out from the wild.

← Panelists

VOLKMAR PIPEK
University of Siegen and International Institute for Socio–Informatics (IISI)

DAVE RANDALL
University of Siegen

KJELD SCHMIDT
Copenhagen Business School

GUNNAR STEVENS
University of Siegen

PETER TOLMIE
University of Siegen



← Discussants

DANIELA VAN GEENEN
(Siegen) | critical data studies

MARGALENA GÖTZ
(Siegen) | art, media and gender studies

ANA OCH
(Siegen) | media linguistics

TATJANA SELTZ
(Siegen) | platform studies

SEBASTIAN RANDEKAT
(Siegen) | design and media studies

DANNY LÄMMERHIRT
(Siegen) | critical data studies

HANNAH NEUMANN
(Siegen) | theatre studies

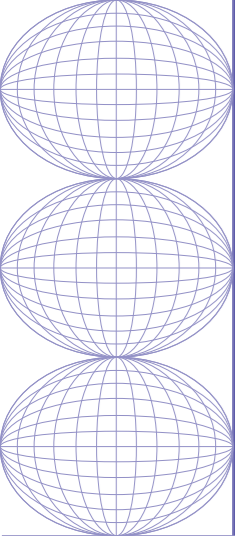
SAM HIND
(Siegen) | media studies

← Chair

CHRISTOPH BORBACH
University of Siegen

← Chair

VOLKER WULF
University of Siegen



Friday, 7 May

Zoom
Stream 3

T3S8: Locating Media: Ethnology

Locating Shamanism I

THEMATIC PANEL

Who owns shamanism?
Mimetic Cooperation between El Loko and Joseph Beuys

AMNA BRUS

University of Cologne, Germany

This paper explores the mimetic co-operation between Joseph Beuys (1921–1986) and his student El Loco (Edoh Lucien Loko, 1960–2016) at the Art Academy Düsseldorf. Joseph Beuys became famous as an artist shaman who performed curing rituals for Postwar Germany and the transatlantic world. His student El Loko likewise staged artistic shamanistic performances. While the latter used voodoo, and “shamanistic rituals” he experienced during his youth in Togo for an “artistic defamiliarization”, he was never acknowledged as an artist shaman and was refused similar ascription of “authenticity” in the art world. Although there is ample visual documentation of El Lokos presence in Beuy’s performances where the student appears alongside other non-European students as a nameless ‘extra’ standing in for Beuys transcultural claims, the ambiguous relation between Beuys and El Loko is hardly ever reflected in the literature. Breaking the Eurocentric focus of art scholarship on the Düsseldorf academy, this paper tries to read the co-operation of Beuys and El Loko against the idea of “originality” and “authenticity” as a form of mutual invention, appropriation and entitlement and performative art as a transcultural site.

Locating American Shamanism. Spirit Mediums and ‘so-called shamans’ between regeneration and violence

CORA BENDER

University of Siegen, Germany

This paper discusses the emergence of spirit mediums, a.k.a. shamans or “so-called shamans”, in America against a backdrop of colonialism and globalization. Taking the storming of the Capitol by supporters of the former U.S. president Donald Trump in January 2021, and the appearance of a self-styled “QAnon shaman” wearing face-paint and a fake bison fur headdress, as the latest case, my paper argues that violence plays an important role in American settler regeneration, and has been doing so from the earliest years of contact and colonization on. A key question is how mimetic practices, i.e. imitations of a Culturally “Other” in costume and role play, have been drawn into this context of violence and regeneration, to an extent that mimetic practices nowadays are seen by a postcolonial critique to represent colonial violence, per se. Are these occurrences tantamount to an end of mediumism in America?

Honest Liars. About the Ambivalences of Magical Trickery and its Exposure

EHLER VOSS

University of Siegen, Germany

Shamanism and sham are closely connected. In the 19th century, European and American entertainment magicians and cultural anthropologists, in a process of mutual mirroring, have established the asymmetrical distinction between stage magic and occult magic, the former being perceived as modern and secular because it explicitly admits to the skillful and science-based production of illusions, and the latter as primitive and religious because it either believes that it manipulates or pretends to manipulate forces (for good or evil) that are not scientifically approved and thus usually claimed to be supernatural. Therefore, stage magicians usually dismisses all the phenomena people often experience in altered states of consciousness as deceit or self-deceit, and many stage magicians derive from the distinction between stage magic and occult magic a moral duty to publicly expose people who practice occult, i.e. „real“ magic. Based on fieldwork among magicians in California, this presentation explores the controversies and paradoxes that result from the attempts to purify magic from its ambiguities.

11:45am
→ 1:00pm

Zoom
Stream 3

T3S9: Locating Media: Literaturwissenschaft

THEMATIC PANEL + INDIVIDUAL PRESENTATION

Das Ende des Goldenen Zeitalters

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Das Panel geht von der These aus, dass ein besonders intensiver Austauschprozess von künstlerischen und wissenschaftlichen Praktiken zwischen Ethnographie, Literatur, Film und bildender Kunst, der in der Nachkriegszeit begonnen hat, in den 1970er Jahren zu einem Höhepunkt, aber auch zu einem vorläufigen Ende kommt. Hierzu diskutieren wir insbesondere, wie sich in dieser Zeit des ‚Goldenen Zeitalters‘ die künstlerischen Praktiken in der medialen Übersetzung verändern und wie sich die spezifischen medialen Verfahren auf neuen Feldern und in anderen Disziplinen fortsetzen. Wir werden neue Leseverfahren sowie Schreib- und Publikationstechniken, Methoden der audiovisuellen Aufzeichnung sowie künstlerische Interventionen als lokal situierte Praktiken untersuchen und uns die Frage stellen wie diese als Resultat einer dreißigjährigen Entwicklung – als Ende des Goldenen Zeitalters – lokal-situativ auch zu historisieren sind.

Zwischen Sitzordnung und Automobilität.
Bildungslandschaften der Gegenwartsliteratur

GREGOR KANITZ

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“Bildung” war über mehr als zwei Jahrhunderte ein furchtbar hoffnungsvoller Begriff. Seitdem er jedoch nicht mehr vom pädagogischen “Feldherrenhügel” aus definiert und affirmiert wird, erscheint die dezentrale Vielstimmigkeit sowie die brüchige Verlaufsform einer situierten Bildung. (Rieger-Ladich 2019: 16–20) Bildung findet sich als implizites Wissen auch in Baumärkten, Fast-Food-Restaurants, auf einer Yacht, auf Parkplätzen oder im Jobcenter.1 Unter diesen Prämissen gewinnen auch Erzählungen der Gegenwartsliteratur eine neue Brisanz, die seit einigen Jahren mit Vorliebe Schulen, Universitäten oder merkwürdige Lehrfiguren ins Zentrum ihres Diskurses rücken. (Rüdenauer 2012) Der universitär gescheiterte Bildungsweg eines Mittvierzigers, der aus Berlin flüchtet, um als Gymnasiallehrer in seiner Heimatprovinz zu arbeiten, wird vor allem dann interessant, wenn die Stationen seiner Übergänge auf Toiletten, an Berghängen oder im Bierzelt lokalisiert werden können. (Thome 2009) So wird deutlich, dass entscheidende Erzählstränge des Romans Grenzgang (2009) ausgerechnet auf Parkplätzen von Bildungseinrichtungen entstehen. Das Auto ist hierbei ein eigenes erzählerisches Vehikel, wendet die poetische Verlaufsform,

definiert Orte mobiler Medienrezeption (v.a. Radio) und choreografiert die Positionen und Praktiken der Protagonist*innen. Schauplatz ist auffallend oft die Provinz, so auch im ebenso weitrezipierten Roman Der Hals der Giraffe von Judith Schalansky, welcher sich im Untertitel sogar “Bildungsroman” nennt. Geklärt werden soll nicht, inwieweit die traditionellen Bildungsanforderungen von der gealterten, DDR-sozialisierten Lehrerin erfüllt werden. (Mielke 2016) Vielmehr geht es um die naturwissenschaftlich-biologistische ‚Anordnung‘ einer Schule wenige Jahre vor ihrer Schließung. Schalanskys Bild-Text-Erzählung sistiert dabei eindrücklich die trostlose, aber scheinbar unnachgiebige ‚Natur‘ von Schultüren, Dorfrändern, Lehrerzimmern oder Sitzordnungen. Schalanskys Hals der Giraffe (2011) und Thomes Grenzgang (2009) bilden gegeneinander gelesene eine automobilen Bildungsreise mit Schlaglöchern und Fehlbildungen, deren erzählerische Logistik des Misstratens neue Aufschlüsse über Institutionen und Praktiken der Bildung liefert. Gregor Kanitz (Guangzhou), 31.01.2021

Referenzen:
Mielke, Angela: Philosophie hätte ich auch unterrichten können“. Judith Schalansky Der Hals der Giraffe als vielschichtiger Spielart eines Bildungsromans. In: Institutionen der Pädagogik. Studien zur Kultur- und Medientheorie ihrer ästhetischen Formierungen, hg. von Metin Gönç und Christof Hamann. Würzburg 2016, 357–391.
Pädagogische Heterotopien. Von A bis Z, hg. von Daniel Burghard und Jörg Zirfas. Weinheim 2019.
Rieger-Ladich, Markus: Bildungstheorien zur Einführung. Hamburg 2019.
Rüdenauer, Ulrich: Gegenwartsliteratur: Lehrer am Rande des Nervenzusammenbruchs. In: Die Zeit, 25.04.2012. Schalansky, Judith: Der Hals der Giraffe. Bildungsroman. Frankfurt/M. 2011.
Thome, Stephan: Grenzgang Roman. Frankfurt/M. 2009.

Goll: "Die Reise des Tupac Yupanki"
Vickery-Barkow: "Retelling: Ethnography's Past and Present in the Art of Lothar Baumgarten, 1968-78"
Eidelpes: "Ethnologie und Selbst-Entfremdung"
Porter: "Die Suche nach einer Ethnographie des Inlands in Harun Farockis Filmen der 1970er"

2:30pm
→ 3:45pm

T3S10: Locating Media: Ethnology

Locating Shamanism II

THEMATIC PANEL

Zoom
Stream 3

Drawing on Drums.
Michael Oppitz in Dialogue with Philipp Goll

MICHAEL OPFITZ, PHILIPP GOLL

University of Siegen, Germany

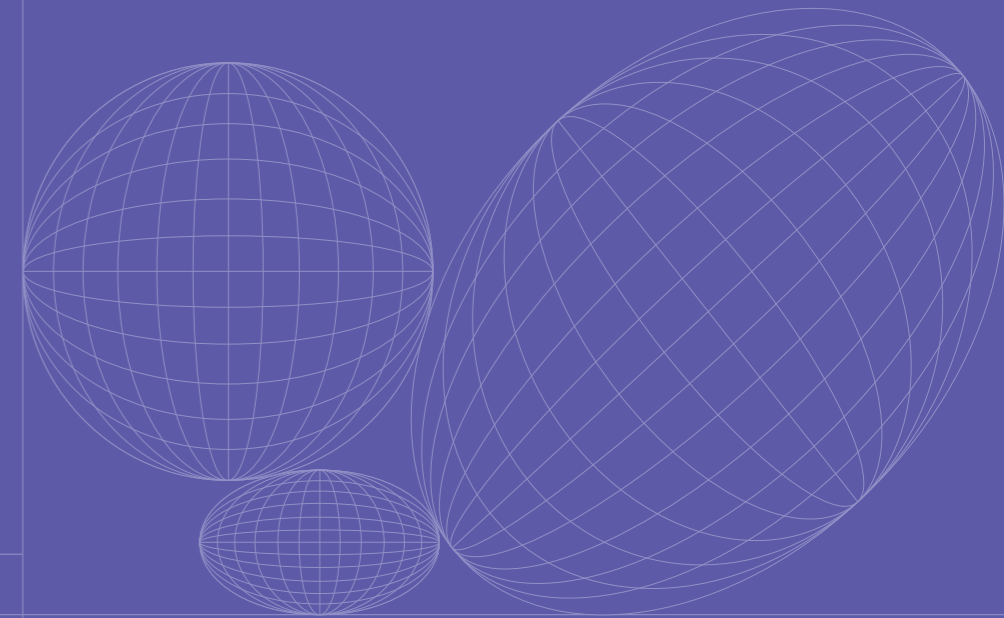
Drawing on Drums is a book project borne out of a larger one on shamanic drums. This was completed by a two-volume publication in German: *Morphologie der Schamanentrommel* (2013), in which the Eurasian complex of faith healing was studied from the perspective of a single material object – the drum. Starting from this most important utensil in all shamanic societies, it was possible to discover a limited number of characteristic regional styles for this instrument in both Siberia and the Himalaya. In many of these regions the shaman drum is ornamented with drawings, made by those who play them. The aim of the new research is twofold: one, to document the variations of the motifs (mainly cosmological), which are highly individual, and yet follow regional patterns; and two, to find out, if these regional patterns are similar to those sketched out by the morphologies of the drum as a ritual tool.

(Dis)Entangling Spider Dances

ANJA DRESCHKE, MICHAELA SCHÄUBLE

University of Düsseldorf / University of Bern

Our essay film ›Tarantism Revisited‹ approaches Southern Italian tarantism from a media anthropological perspective. It builds on current research on the remnants and revival of popular religious practices and aims at exploring how tradition, heritage and cultural identity are presently created and mobilised through religious performances. Focusing on the ethnographic example of tarantism, the project traces the multiple facets of a phenomenon that has been endemic to Southern Italy for at least five hundred years yet currently experiences an unprecedented revival and growth in popularity. In the past decade, tarantism and pizzicata music have become a crucial element of local popular culture in Apulia which not only attracts ten thousands of tourists, but has also become part of the transnational world music scene, thus contributing to the construction of a new, neo-traditional local identity. In our presentation we reflect the use of the essayistic form as an empirical artistic ethnographic research practice that multimodally explores the fascination that the ›exotic‹ Italian spider-possession cult has had on scientists, artists, filmmakers and tourists for centuries.



4:15pm
→ 5:30pm

T3S11: Locating Media: Theory

DISCUSSION FORUM

Zoom
Stream 3

When Siegen University started its postgraduate School "Locating Media" in 2008, few would have expected it to see a twelve-year run. Situated media ethnographical and historiographical approaches were largely new within Germanophone media cultural studies then. By now they have become a recognized methodological approach in digital media research, even providing inspiration for a "practice turn."

Within our panel discussion, we would like to combine a rear-view mirror approach with questions for the future of both interdisciplinary media research and media studies. We thus invite the Locating Media and Geomedia communities for an afternoon of future memories, and memorial futures. Bring your favorite Locating Media moments, and discuss new approaches to operational chains, sensory ethnography, ethnomethodology, data practices, digital methods, and media theory with us!

← Discussants

JULIA BEE
Bauhaus-University Weimar

CAROLIN GERLITZ
University of Siegen

TILL HEILMANN
University of Siegen

CHRISTIAN MEYER
University of Konstanz

JENS SCHRÖTER
University of Bonn

← Chair

SEBASTIAN GIESSMANN
University of Siegen

