Studying Mobilities
Theoretical Notes and Methodological Queries

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Xavier de Maistre was born in 1763 at the foot of the French Alps. At the age of twenty-three, he became fascinated by aeronautics. De Maistre and a friend fashioned a pair of giant wings out of paper and wire and planned to fly to America. They did not succeed. Two years later, de Maistre secured himself a place in a hot air balloon and spent a few moments floating above his native Chambéry before the device crashed into a pine forest. At the age of twenty-seven, while under arrest in a modest apartment room in Turin as the consequence of a duel, de Maistre pioneered a mode of mobility that was to make his name. In his *Voyage Autour de Ma Chambre* (A *Journey around my Room*), soon followed by *Expédition Nocturne Autour de Ma Chambre* (A *Nocturnal Expedition around my Room*), de Maistre proposes 'room travel', a way of being mobile that is infinitely more practical for those neither as brave nor as wealthy as the explorers. How does it work? Simply lock your door and change into your pyjamas. Without any need for luggage, walk to the various pieces of furniture in the room. Look at them through fresh eyes and rediscover some of their qualities. The story's moral: the mindset we journey with is far more important than the destination we travel to.

This historical anecdote serves to contextualize how mobility, as a concept-metaphor, captures the common impression that our lifeworld is in flux. Mobility, as de Maistre's story confirms, entails more than mere motion. It can be understood broadly as 'the overcoming of any type of distance between a here and a there, which can be situated in physical, electronic, social, psychological or other kinds of space' (Ziegler and Schwanen

2011: 758). As a complex assemblage of movement, social imaginaries and experience, mobility is infused with both attributed and self-ascribed meanings. In addition, de Maistre's narrative descriptions of his peculiar travel experience illustrate how people are moved by movement: emotional processes shape mobilities, and vice versa (Svasek 2012).

Mobility research calls attention to the myriad ways in which people, places, and things become part of multiple networks and linkages, variously located in time and space. Some scholars, mostly in sociology and geography, have drawn attention to a 'mobility turn' in social theory to indicate a perceived transformation of the social sciences in response to the increasing importance of various forms of movement (Urry 2000; 2007). The 'new mobilities paradigm' they propose incorporates novel ways of theorizing how people, objects, and ideas travel, by looking at social phenomena through the lens of movement (Hannam, Sheller, and Urry 2006). This can be seen as a scholarly critique of both theories of sedentarism and deterritorialization, trends in social science research that may confine both researchers and their object(s) of study.

Proponents of the 'mobilities paradigm' have also called for novel research methods that are concomitantly 'on the move' and 'simulate intermittent mobility' (Sheller and Urry 2006: 217). Proposed methods include, for example, interactional and conversational analysis of people as they move, mobile ethnography involving itinerant movement with people and objects, keeping of textual, pictorial or digital time–space diaries, various methods of cyber research and cyber ethnography, and so on (Sheller 2010: vii). While these methods are being increasingly deployed to understand mobility, critical reflections on their drawbacks are also emerging in parallel. Peter Merriman (2014), for example, has warned about some of the methodological pitfalls of mobility studies, questioning the underlying assumption that mobilities research is necessarily a branch of social science research, and highlighting the production of overanimated mobile subjects and objects such research tends to produce, its inherent prioritization of certain kinds of research methods and practices over others, and the over-reliance on specific kinds of technology.

Anthropologists, too, have taken a particularly critical stance of late towards the analysis of the contemporary world through the lens of mobility (Salazar and Jayaram 2016). Regardless of this position, many of the issues raised within mobility studies are relevant to current debates within anthropology, for instance regarding the role of ethnography in the study of mobile subjects and objects (Amit 2007). Despite the extensive literature on the instability of 'the field' and anthropologists' relationship to it (e.g. Gupta and Ferguson 1997), there has been little scholarship that speaks to the implications of this theorizing for methodological considerations such

as participant–observation, the participant–research relationship, and the logistics, depth and breadth of data collection – or 'creation' (Lucht, this volume) – and of ethnographic thought.

The aim of this volume is to rise to the specifically methodological challenge that mobility-related research poses to our field(s). How can we, through our research, observation, and analyses, best capture and understand a planet in flux? What methods does a mobile world require us to design and reinvent? What are the challenges posed, and the possibilities offered, by novel methodologies of mobility to the production of engaged socioscientific theory and practice? As the chapters comprising this volume testify, the answers to these questions are not as straightforward as we may expect. Indeed, by bringing together scholars grappling with very different forms and scales of mobility, this volume reveals that engaging methodologically with mobility goes well beyond a mere methodological exercise, bringing to the surface issues of scale and ethics, geographic boundaries and social imagination, class and gender, material culture, and interdisciplinarity.

In this Introduction, we provide a background to the rich chapters to come, and the complex questions they pose, by reflecting on the multiple conceptual and methodological challenges that researchers – anthropological and otherwise – are facing when engaging with subjects, objects, and ideas 'on the move'. Using our own discipline's engagement with methodologies and mobility as a point of departure for our overview, but also moving beyond anthropology and disciplinary boundaries to develop a more adequate picture for the complex matter at hand, we reflect on the ways in which mobility acquires, and requires, specific forms of methodological thinking and acting.

A Moving Discipline

Ideas concerning mobility have a long history in anthropology. They are already present in late nineteenth-century transcultural diffusionism, which understood the movement of people, objects, and ideas as an essential aspect of cultural life. In a very different context, physical movement was a focus also of the first ethnographies of human dance, which, dating to the late nineteenth century, analysed the meaning of culturally derived movement and patterns through elaborate descriptions of steps, surfaces, and spaces. An important aspect of dance ethnography was (and remains) the ethnographer's participation in the dance itself, generating informed anthropological knowledge through intimate bodily practice (Davida 2011; Neveu Kringelbach and Skinner 2012).

However, the tendency throughout most of the discipline's history was to treat mobility as a concept describing physical or abstract movement, rather than as an ethnographic object in its own right, or something implying sociocultural change (or stasis) in and of itself (Salazar 2013). Human mobility was mainly understood as a defining characteristic of specific groups, such as hunter-gatherers or traveller-gypsies and, overall, the study of mobility remained subsumed under broad concepts such as class, social structure, kinship or geographic space. Anna Tsing remarks that 'if older anthropological frameworks were unable to handle interconnection and mobility, this is a problem with the frameworks and a reason for new ones but not the mirror of an evolutionary change in the world' (2000: 356). While Tsing is correct, it is equally important to note that there have been key technological and social changes that affect how people, things, and ideas move – even if such movement was present in other forms in the past.

Bronisław Malinowski is credited for moving anthropology beyond armchair philosophizing and putting notions of movement at the heart of ethnographic practice (Wilding 2007). In 1915–1916, Malinowski found himself stranded in the Pacific due to the outbreak of World War One. Prevented from returning to Europe (as with de Maistre, an exemplary case of 'involuntary immobility'), he embraced the opportunity to conduct research on the *kula* trading cycle of the Trobriand (now Kiriwina) Islands. Malinowski's participant-observation is often assumed to present the methodological ideal for studying a territorially bound culture (see Walton, this volume). But, as Paul Basu and Simon Coleman point out, 'in fact he was describing a "migrant world", albeit a very particular kind of one, where the significances of exchanges were articulated within an outwardly ramifying yet also confined sphere, constructed by the players in a system of exchange that spread across different islands' (2008: 322). Indeed, 'was Malinowski not a "multi-sited" ethnographer when he dealt with the Kula', Ghassan Hage asks, 'if all that is meant by multi-sitedness is this circulation between geographically noncontiguous spaces? Was he not an ethnographer of movement rather than stillness?' (2005: 467). From Malinowski's pioneering fieldwork onwards, the notion of ethnographers as itinerant and 'going somewhere' has been reinforced and reproduced.

Although the history of ethnography is thus intertwined with (technologies and practices of) travel, Claude Lévi-Strauss famously argued, after beginning *Tristes Tropiques* (1961) with the dictum 'Je hais les voyages et les explorateurs' ('I hate travelling and explorers'), that this has no place in the written work of anthropologists. Rather, he emphasized, travel should merely serve as a method to gather the empirical material necessary for writing ethnographies. In direct contrast to this, in his book *Routes,* James Clifford (1997) advocates for travelling as a way of doing ethnography; he

argues that anthropologists need to leave their preoccupation with discovering the 'roots' of sociocultural forms and identities behind, and instead trace the 'routes' that (re)produce them. If our objects of study are mobile and/or spatially dispersed, being likewise surely becomes a form of participant-observation – 'fieldwork as travel practice', as Clifford (1997: 8) puts it. This is an approach to ethnographic fieldwork as a movement back and forth between desk and field, and as an ongoing translation between social and spatial locations (Gupta and Ferguson 1997).

Rather than focusing on the local anchorage of peoples and cultures, the notion of Clifford's routes points toward their mobility – their movements, encounters, exchanges, and mixtures. Malinowksi's work on the *kula* ring, for instance, becomes from this perspective an illustration of how people in Melanesia move through the places (i.e. things) that they cause to travel (Strathern 1991: 117). It is precisely this kind of thinking that finds further elaboration in Bruno Latour's (2005) actor-network theory, which transforms the social into a 'circulation', following actors in networks – something urban anthropologists have also been doing for some time now (Smart 1999; Wolch and Rowe 1992).

It is important to remember that anthropology also has a long tradition of research on (semi-)nomadic people, and that this so-called traditional field of study contributes in fundamental ways to a more general understanding of mobility. Take, for example, the now-canonized work of Edward Evans-Pritchard (1940) on the Nuer, which presented in striking ethnographic detail how the mobility of cattle herding generated both contact and conflict among transhumant individuals and groups unconstrained by settlement and compelled to follow the movement of the seasons. More recently, Joachim Habeck has proposed a shift in the perspective from the potential of movement (or motility) to mobility 'acted out' in order to 'obtain more nuanced insights in how nomads and transhumant herders see the world that surrounds them and how they interact with the surroundings while doing their work' (Habeck 2006: 138).

Methods on the Move

How, then, to study mobilities, which can be inherently transient and unstable? As Jo Vergunst writes, 'ethnography is an excellent way to get at important aspects of human movement, especially in relating its experiential and sensory qualities to social and environmental contexts' (2011: 203). But while notions of culture and its relationship to place have been dramatically revised in anthropology, ethnographic methods have been slower in catching up with changing objects of study (Olwig and Hastrup 1997). Given

that traditional ethnography relied on a rather sedentary approach, with a tendency to privilege face-to-face relationships, permanent residence, and fixed boundaries while overlooking mediated interactions, movements, connections, and connectivity (Wittel 2000), ethnographic techniques have needed to be adapted and sometimes radically rethought to be of use in mobilities research.

A range of anthropologists have creatively innovated various modes of research in order to be able to productively use multiple movements within their field sites (see, e.g. Kirby 2009). In her study of the mobilities of an island community in Melanesia, for instance, Katharina Schneider adjusted four familiar ethnographic methods to the purpose of learning about movements: (1) employing the senses to detect movement; (2) paying attention to verbal as well as nonverbal expressions of movement; (3) moving along with people; and (4) strategically deploying the researcher's own movements and recording people's reactions (Schneider 2012: 17–19). In his research on how places in the Bolivian Andes become intertwined via circuits constituted by the movement of people, goods, and information, Stuart Rockefeller adds to the mix 'a dialectical approach to movement and efforts to control or constrain that movement' (2010: 27). This tension is also taken up by Birgitta Frello (2008), who analyses the discursive constitution of movement in the Danish media.

In his 'anthropology of movement', Alain Tarrius (2000) proposes a 'methodological paradigm of mobility' articulated around the space–time–identity triad, along with four distinct levels of space–time relations, indicating the circulatory process of migratory movements whereby spatial mobility is linked to other types of mobility (informational, cognitive, technological, and economic). What he describes as 'circulatory territories' are new spaces of movement that 'encompass the networks defined by the mobility of populations whose status derives from their circulation knowhow' (Tarrius 2000: 124). This notion reaffirms that geographical movement is always invested with social meaning.

Ethnographers have often been concerned with the movements of their interlocutors. As Marianne Lien (2003) points out, anthropologists' unease in relation to rapidly changing global connectivities may be understood as a direct result of the way their discipline has traditionally delineated its object of study in time (synchronic studies, the use of the ethnographic present) and in space (a community, a small-scale society). In other words, a discipline which builds its epistemology around one's immersion in a single place (over a period of a year or more, usually) can hardly be well suited to dealing with translocal connectivities and flows – at least not without some creative reimagining and innovation of this epistemology. The single-sited methodology, its sensibility and epistemological presuppositions, are by

many in the anthropological community no longer felt to be adequate for the realities of an increasingly mobile, shifting, and interconnected world (Ong 1999).

To this end, Michaela Benson (2011) revisits the centrality of mobility to fieldwork methodologies which investigate mobile formations. She proposes a multi-faceted approach that embraces innovative thinking and flexible ways of building rapport with the subjects by engaging in mutual forms of everyday-life mobilities. There exists some excellent ethnographic work on everyday mobile practices (Wolch and Rowe 1992) and the actual processes of movement rather than the systems of mobility (*Journal for the Anthropological Study of Human Movement*; Ingold and Vergunst 2008). Here, much of the discussion on movement draws on nonrepresentational approaches that emphasize the importance of mobility not only as a defining feature of contemporary everyday geographies, but also in its capacity to transform social scientific thought – think, for example, of the way in which Tim Ingold (2004) has not only written extensively on the comparative anthropology of hunter-gatherer and pastoral societies, but also has offered a more general approach to human movement as a whole, and socioscientific thought about it, sensitive to embodied skills of footwork.

Ethnographies of mobility necessarily draw researchers into a multitude of mobile, material, embodied practices of making distinctions, relations, and places. Rarely is this more acutely experienced than through mobile video ethnography, 'where people's moves in interaction with others and their environments have to be anticipated by the positioning of the camera's viewfinder' (Büscher and Urry 2009: 105). The use of mobile technologies, especially for recording image, as well as soundscapes, is well established in anthropology. In the 1950s, for instance, the portable film camera reshaped ethnography's ongoing investigation and recording of 'exotic peoples' (e.g. the influential work of Jean Rouch; see Vium, this volume).

In the early days of such recording, the aim was to capture an objective representation of people's natural behaviour. Applications of these technologies are now 'more reflexive, participatory, and experimental and seek to capture on film the systems of signification of different cultural groups' (Lorimer 2010: 243). Film can approach the mobility of ordinary movement from a variety of vantage points and provide a way of creating ethnographic data collaboratively (Pink 2013). Employing mobile video ethnography, of course, requires engagement with a range of practical, epistemological, and ethical issues (Fincham, McGuinness and Murray 2010). For example, equipment choice, camera set-up and positioning, gaining access to and consent from participants, 'literacy' with respect to particular visual cultures, protecting the anonymity of 'incidental' participants, breaking the law on camera, and so on, are all key considerations when creating

mediated narratives of observation and analysis. Indeed, digital 'recording' has now progressed far beyond techniques of audiovisual film/ing, as Daniel Miller's comparative anthropological projects on 'new' technologies and social media have shown (Horst and Miller 2012).

Follow Me

Mobility scholars track in various ways the many and interdependent forms of movement of people, images, information, and objects (Sheller and Urry 2006). Such approaches are not particularly new in anthropology; they were in large part what diffusionism was all about. This type of research is also linked to Arjun Appadurai's call three decades ago to 'follow the thing' – a method that is still very popular in the study of commodity chains and consumption. For Appadurai, following specific objects is important because 'their meanings are inscribed in their forms, their uses, their trajectories' (1986: 5). In his work, the focus on objects rather than people is a methodological intervention, not a theoretical one: 'even though from a *theoretical* point of view human actors encode things with significance, from a *methodological* point of view it is the things-in-motion that illuminate their human and social context' (1986: 5). Within studies of science and technology, scholars such as Latour (1987) have used a similar approach, studying how the interactions and movements of humans and nonhumans alike enact scientific realities (see also the Matsutake Worlds Research Group (2009) for cutting-edge work on the concept of 'following the thing').

Following 'things in motion', as Appadurai (1986) originally suggested, has proven a productive strategy for pursuing diverse empirical and theoretical concerns (see Österlund-Pötzsch, this volume, for an example of early 'following methods' employed in nineteenth-century ethnographic expeditions). 'Following' has taken two main methodological forms. The first, perhaps more immediately intuitive, mode of engagement with 'things in motion' requires the researcher to travel alongside the moving things that are being studied. The second mode, or form, of methodological engagement, draws on the researcher's observations, interviews, mapping, and other techniques of tracing aimed to capture the complex mobilities of the 'thing'. In the latter case, following things requires imaginative mobilities (cf. Walton's 'digital travel', this volume) and methodological and analytical attention as much as it does physical travel. Though this approach may miss out on some detail of the mobilities involved, for various practical reasons it can provide a solid option when being co-mobile is not possible or desirable (Hui 2012). Julia Harrison (2003), for example, found that her desire to interview Canadian tourists in Hawaii was mitigated by their

reluctance to give up their leisure time, and she opted to focus instead on the integration of travel experiences into the daily lives of tourists who had returned home. Another approach, with its own advantages and draw-backs, is auto-ethnography, employed for example by Shahram Khosravi (2007), who describes his own 'illegal' border-crossing journey from Iran to Sweden.

Studying mobility whilst remaining 'in place', so to speak, 'offers a type of perspective that is concerned more with the social organization of mobil-ity than with particular circuits, more with a system than a place of origin or a specific destination' (Lindquist 2009: 10). Much ethnography of mobili-ties has been located at sites of passage, transfer points, where populations and things are temporarily contained and arranged within stations, waiting rooms and baggage systems (see Andersson, this volume). Mobility infra-structure, then, is being increasingly seen, no longer as 'non-place' (Augé 1995), but as 'the ideal place where an anthropologist can perceive, study, and even touch the various dynamic transnational and fluid sociocultural formations, literally in the making, from both below and above, and on the move' (Dalakoglou 2010: 146).

Although the value of remaining 'in place' when studying movement has received increasing recognition (a point we return to below), the first mode of engagement with mobility, built on the idea of following one's subject or object of study, often remains the most alluring methodological route for anthropologists of mobility. Anthropological studies of mobility conducted through multi-sited methods are generally less directly concerned with the physical traces of movement, but rather tend to re-examine the ontological status of the local and offer a more careful contextualization of sites within networks and flows across diffuse time space.

Mobile ethnography involves 'travelling with people and things, partici-pating in their continual shift through time, place, and relations with others' (Watts and Urry 2008: 867). George Marcus's celebrated 'multi-sited ethnography' deals with the following of numerous objects of study, by tracing their 'chains, paths, threads, conjunctions, or juxtapositions' (1998: 90). According to Marcus, multi-sited ethnographies may focus on persons, things, metaphors, stories, allegories, or biographies. In her early work on Indonesia, Anna Tsing, for instance, abandons the fixed locale of the 'out-of-the-way' village to follow her interlocutors, whose communities can be understood only 'within the context of … mobility – from daily visits to annual field movements to long-term trajectories across the landscape' (1993: 124).

It is worth keeping in mind that such multiple, multi-variant voyaging is nothing new in anthropology. As Cordula Weissköppel writes, for many years:

> mobile research, in the sense of a multi-sited strategy, existed alongside stationary fieldwork. It even flourished in the first half of the twentieth century as anthropologists, cultural relativists especially, required comparative data in order to back up their arguments with empirical evidence … Later, Lévi-Strauss's many short trips to various countries and continents helped him demonstrate the universal character of the structures underlying patterns of behaviour and meaning systems (2009: 252).

Indeed, as mentioned above, traditional ethnography also 'gave rise in practice to works which were as mobile and, in some senses, "multi-sited" as the *Argonauts of the Western Pacific* or those arising from the Manchester School's "extended case method"' (Candea 2007: 169–70).

   Although Marcus (1998) promotes multi-sited ethnography as a way of investigating culturally connected, but geographically dispersed, phenomena, he is less clear about how such investigations should take place 'on the ground'. Clifford (1997: 57) has noted that there is a difference between the concept of multi-sited ethnography and its implied practice of multi-locale fieldwork; where the former recognizes the many locations of culture, the latter requires culturally cognisant field study in many locations. This raises unresolved questions about whether one should spend less time in each site (Lucht, this volume), and whether this implies forgoing some of the depth often considered the main strength of ethnographic fieldwork – crucial questions addressed by many of this volume's contributions. Nor is it clear if one should apply the same criteria for 'good' fieldwork of traditional ethnography to multi-sited ethnography – an open query which reveals how mobility may require us not only to think of new methodologies, but also to rethink the very methods through which we judge and asses 'research' itself.

   Alongside Coates, Andersson, Walton, and Leivestad (this volume), Susan Frohlick (2006) has challenged notions of multi-sited methodology that conceive it simply as a matter of systematically following the circulation of people, objects, or practices within globalized worlds. Frohlick highlights, for example, how it is not always the researcher who follows mobile interlocutors – sometimes it can be the latter who follows (or bumps into) the researcher, in contexts other than the conventional field, leading to very new understandings of both research participants and of the process of research itself. Indeed, while from a certain point of view some multi-sited work may be criticized as 'shallow jet-set ethnography' (Olwig 2007: 22), it all depends on what one is actually researching, and on the ways in which 'the field' is allowed to intrude into one's methodological infrastructure. Karen Fog Olwig, for example, argues that while her multi-sited ethnography of migratory family networks produced 'limited data on the local sites

where the research took place', it did nevertheless produce 'rich data on the family relations that were the actual field site' (2007: 23).

A number of methodological and theoretical efforts have been made to develop the by now near-classic multi-sited method to capture the mobile field. Marianne Lien (2003) suggests a complementary approach to the field, one based on multi-temporality, where instead of juxtaposing field sites that differ in space, she juxtaposes the configurations of a single field site as it differs over time. Vergunst (2011), on the other hand, seeks to reconcile the embodiment of ethnography in the (mobile) field with various technologies of field noting: paper, typing machines, laptops, audio and video recorders, GPS, digital applications, and so on. He also warns, however, that the excessive attention paid to high-tech devices employed in ethnographic and mobile practices tends to distance both ethnographer and participants from the immediate experience of movement which these research methods seek to seize in first place (cf. D'Andrea, Ciolfi and Gray 2011). And while ethnographers may be moving together with some people in physical space, their interlocutors' communication and movements in digital spaces are often not easily available – the recording, logging, and capturing of digital activities in combination with analysis of ethnographic experiences are one way of tracking and making sense of the multi-sited, collective or collaborative action of distributed mobile participants (Büscher, Urry, and Witchger 2011).

In sum, a mobile set of methods based on 'following' – broadly conceived – resonates among anthropologists, but such methods are never entirely free from a concern with the possible fragmentation of research they may entail (Sorge and Roddick 2012). As Matei Candea (2007) notes, it is useful to ask how much following is necessary, and whether too much of it detracts attention from the emplaced. However, as many of the contributions to this volume testify (see e.g. Vasantkumar, or Lucht), following need not come at the expense of emplaced research, and indeed the two may be combined for a more refined view on the scales along which sociocultural phenomena might articulate.

Weighing Scales

A fundamental methodological challenge that studies of mobility pose to anthropology is one of scale. Presenting the researcher with an inescapable quantity–quality nexus (Holbraad and Pedersen 2009; Strathern 1991), the concept of 'scale' at once encompasses and exceeds that of size and measurement (Tsing 2000). In the study of mobility, it has often to do with the presence or absence, and relative efficacy, of overarching institutions, networks, and processes, rather than with merely geographic

or demographic scope. Scale, in this sense, requires researchers to simultaneously focus on the macro-processes through which the world is becoming increasingly, albeit unevenly, interconnected, and on the way subjects mediate these processes – it requires, in other words, what Noel Salazar (2010) terms 'glocal ethnography' (and Michael Burawoy (2000) calls 'global ethnography'). Other methodological modes of engagement with the issue of scale and mobility exist, from Anthony D'Andrea's 'nomadic ethnography' – which he defines as 'a methodology that tries to integrate a nomadic sensibility toward routes and rituals of mobility, with a notion of macro-ethnography that deploys methods of multi-sitedness and translocality in context' (2007: 33) – to Sverre Molland's (2013) 'tandem ethnography' – ethnography that allows a methodological oscillation between the policy domain and the social world, which Molland proposes as a solution to the methodological difficulties resulting from the destabilization of bounded territory and 'sitedness'.

> Glocal, nomadic, tandem ethnography all represent attempts to develop a methodological 'double gaze', capable of capturing both descriptively the lived cultures with all their subtleties and analytically the global which structures them, both people's experiences and the social environment in which this experience is grounded, both the experiential surrounding that people are aware of and the macro-global structures that are well beyond their reach (Hage 2005: 474).

Indeed, according to Molland (2013), the task is neither to deconstruct nor to essentialize 'site', but to investigate empirically what 'sitedness' means to different actors, and how it becomes privileged in different contexts. As such, the pivotal anthropological principle of comparison can be productively brought into fieldwork itself, and to mobility studies more generally, hereby illuminating discrepancies and inconsistencies (Gingrich and Fox 2002).

Together with a major focus on comparison, the perspectives offered by glocal, nomadic or tandem ethnographies, which Xiang Biao (2013) terms 'multi-scalar', lead also to a more nuanced understanding of the relation between mobility, established institutions, and multiple ethnographic experiences. In Biao's words:

> Multi-scalar ethnography follows flows and connections, but more importantly traces people's concerns, calculations, and strategies. It seeks to explain why certain changes take place and others don't, and identify the interfaces between mobility and institutions where interventions are feasible and productive. Multi-scalar ethnography does not at all discount the importance of sites, but articulates the meanings of sites to the actors … [W]hat is at stake is not the expansion and

> contraction of physical scope of mobility, nor the jumps up and down between pre given levels, or the actors' defiance of established boundaries. What matters is the creation of new scales. The emergent scale can be undefinable and unmappable in the given scalar schema (Biao 2013: 296–97).

Together with Mika Toyota, Xiang (2013) has presented important methodological experiments that explore the interfaces between individuals' migratory experiences and institutional, structural, and historical forces that are themselves constantly changing.

Such ethnographic approaches incorporate two major ways of addressing the conundrum of scale. First, they scale vertically ('scale up'), by providing close-grained studies of how a 'field' is connected locally, regionally, nationally, and globally (Rockefeller 2010). If the goal is deep system awareness, traditional fieldwork, and the method of participant-observation may be just the beginning, and will need to be reinforced with other, complementary ethnographic methods and conceptual tools. Gupta and Ferguson, for instance, call for introducing a multitude of 'other forms of representation' alongside fieldwork as it was traditionally understood in anthropology: 'archival research, the analysis of public discourse, interviewing, journalism, fiction, or statistical representations of collectivities' (1997: 38). The presence of these new types of material 'may require, and also provide openings for, new skills of composition and synthesis' (ibid). Vertical scaling can also include a multi-temporal (longitudinal or historical) dimension (Dalsgaard 2013).

The second strategy to deal with issues of scale is to scale horizontally ('scale out'), by including more than one site in an analysis. Multi-local or multi-sited research (Marcus 1995) might sometimes prove an inadequate description as many places are linked or networked to each other – what Ulf Hannerz calls a 'network of localities' or 'several fields in one' (2003: 21). A single site within a complex society may be conceptualized as a multiple one, whereas multiple localities can be seen as 'a single geographically discontinuous site' (Hage 2005: 463). Hannerz therefore advocates 'translocal' research (2003: 21), clarifying the nature of relations between localities. While the analytical entity may be translocal or glocal, fieldwork is unavoidably multi-local, because the ethnographer is always somewhere. Sally Engle Merry, on the other hand, proposes a 'deterritorialized ethnography' (2000: 130), not restricted to predefined sites, but rather one that follows patterns of circulation. Naturally, the more complex the levels of analysis become, the more necessary collaborative, interdisciplinary and creative research methods need to be (Coleman and Von Hellermann 2011). Such notions clearly open interesting questions for anthropology, a

discipline that long distinguished itself from other modes of social scientific research by its very (rich, deep, empirical – and often highly individual) method. Indeed, it is precisely these sorts of questions that animate the contributions to this volume.

Moving Forward

As the chapters in this volume show, mobility can take myriad different forms. However, it is important to reiterate here that mobility research does not refer to a new subject of scholarly investigation, much less a new discipline. Rather, it directs new questions towards classic anthropological subjects. As this Introduction has outlined, and the chapters to come testify, mobilities – be they physical or digital – can be thought of as an entanglement of movement, meaning, and practice. The effects of these mobilities are multiple (and by no means necessarily beneficial); new boundaries are constructed even as borders are crossed, and such boundaries are multiple and multi-faceted. Mobility remains formidably difficult for many; sometimes more so than before. To understand mobility, we thus need to pay close attention also to immobility, to the structures (which, once again, shift and move in their own right) that facilitate certain movements and impede others (Salazar and Smart 2011).

How mobilities should be studied clearly remains a methodological and theoretical challenge. Anthropological methods in general have had a significant impact on mobility studies (D'Andrea, Ciolfi, and Gray 2011). While direct participation in analysing mobile practices is nothing new in anthropological research, what emerges as innovative in recent scholarship on mobilities is a concern with mobility as a *sui generis* mode of phenomena requiring particular methodological and conceptual work. As a polymorphic concept, mobility invites us to renew our theorizing, especially regarding conventional themes such as culture, identity, and transnational relationships (Glick Schiller and Salazar 2013; Salazar 2011). Interestingly, mobilities research remains rather methodologically homogenous, with a focus on qualitative studies and few examples of quantitative studies or mixed-method approaches (Ricketts Hein, Evans, and Jones 2008). Despite the long tradition, 'the impact of movement (and motility) upon a researcher's own research remains largely unproblematized at the level of analytical representation' (D'Andrea, Ciolfi, and Gray 2011: 154). For one, the often exhausting nature of multi-sited travelling remains undiscussed (Hage 2005). This is why, with this volume, we aim to broaden the terms of methodological engagement with mobility, as well as initiate a constructive reflection on the challenges and possibilities of the methods of mobility.

Over the past few decades, numerous anthropologists have criticized the discipline's traditional approach to ethnographic fieldwork (Faubion and Marcus 2009). However, despite the effort spent moving the ethnographic imagination into 'shifting locations' (Gupta and Ferguson 1997) and 'non-places' (Augé 1995), most models of fieldwork still evoke the ethnographer's entry into a discrete 'field' (Hume and Mulcock 2004). If beginning scholars receive any methodological training at all (Stocking 1992: 14), they are being taught that medium- to long-term participant-observation (alone) is and should remain the norm. In addition to dictums about the necessity of (and time required for) cultural and linguistic immersion, this is also inherently linked to the epistemic value of serendipity (Rivoal and Salazar 2013). This, as suggested above, stems from the idea that anthropology as a discipline only distinguishes itself from other disciplines by virtue of its methodology. Even Marcus shies away from endorsing a 'thinner' model of ethnography by suggesting that field study, although framed by a 'multi-sited imaginary', should for the moment remain a 'site-specific, intensively investigated, and inhabited scene of fieldwork' (1998: 15). Mobile fieldwork that does not fit disciplinary norms – or worse still, mobility-related projects without any field component – can be easily marginalized within anthropology. There may, at times, be good reasons for such deviations. However, what is often forgotten in such disciplinary identification with fieldwork is that the crucial, fundamentally ethnographic, question anthropology should be compelled to ask, and that the volume contributors explicitly, and indeed boldly, address, is how to make meaningful research whilst allowing research problems to guide which methods we use. And not the other way around.

Sociocultural anthropologists are well equipped to challenge the assumptions embedded within much current mobility theory. Founding fathers such as Franz Boas and Bronisław Malinowski, while perhaps ignoring the extent to which their own epistemological project was predicated on their own mobility, showed how the liminal positioning of anthropologists among the humanities and social sciences, with constant methodological and theoretical boundary crossings, offers promise for a fruitful holistic and grounded ethnographic analysis. Anthropology – with its interest in holism and scale, methodical scepticism, and focus on the primacy of ethnography – holds the potential to act as a catalyst for the establishment of novel horizons in the study of mobility, bringing different fields together in creative ways. As the chapters of this volume show, a processual, collaborative, and creative ethnographic focus enables anthropologists to document the many ways in which mobility transforms social life, both for 'movers', 'stayers', and those in-between.

'Methodologies of mobility' here become more than mere technicality, but rather a gateway to radically rethink mobility, its protagonists, and our continual engagement with them. Rethink is the operative word here, but such rethinking should not be seen as a means of doing away with so-called traditional, bread-and-butter ethnographic method. Rather, the 'experiment' employed in the title of this volume refers precisely to the chapters' experimental engagement with classic anthropological, and broader social-scientific, methodologies (from participant-observation, to snowball sampling, to archival research). Even if anthropology's traditional(ist) roots long maintained rather fixed ideas about what proper ethnography should entail – and what type of research card-carrying ethnographers should (and should not) engage in – the ethnographic methods used by even the early anthropologists were always experimental, and necessarily so. This holds true even if anthropologists, themselves perpetually (self-)conscious of the contested 'scientific' nature of their discipline's core methodology, may have been less ready to embrace the necessarily exploratory or untested nature of many ethnographic research tools. But reflective work on the discipline's experimentation with ethnographic method – and its intrinsic theoretical potential – is emerging (e.g. Estalella and Criado, forthcoming; Marcus 2013; Berghahn's *Ethnography, Theory, Experiment* book series). Indeed, the reflective writing in this volume speaks explicitly to a need within the social sciences more broadly to be continually rethinking and reimagining what investigative research methods are and what they can do.

The Chapters

The opening chapter of the volume provides a historical perspective on the themes outlined in this Introduction. Susanne Österlund-Pötzsch delves into historical records of Finnish–Swedish ethnographic expeditions at the turn of the nineteenth century and reveals how mobility was at the methodological and sociopolitical heart of these trips. Drawing on fieldwork diaries of folklore collectors, Österlund-Pötzsch traces the extensive physical mobility of these early ethnographers throughout the vast Finnish countryside in search of Swedish-speaking peoples and traditions. In doing this, she shows how 'mobile methods' were not only constitutive requirements of these culture-collecting endeavours, but also fundamentally contributed to the creation of a Swedish-speaking 'ethnic group' in Finland in the cultural and national imagination of the time. Moving between contemporary theoretical perspectives and historical archives, Österlund-Pötzsch traces the deep social, political, and cultural implications of research methods in general, and of methodologies of mobility in particular.

Hege Høyer Leivestad also uses, in her chapter on the materiality of mobile homes, a peculiar form of archive-as-method, albeit of a different, contemporary, kind. Drawing on ethnographic fieldwork among British caravan dwellers in Spain, Leivestad introduces 'the inventory' as a specific research technique for studying social spaces constituted by complex layers of mobility and immobility. She traces how a co-created inventory of mundane objects and materials inside the caravan provides crucial insight in the material and social life of (im)mobile homes. In doing so, she powerfully draws our attention to the materiality of mobility, or 'mobile materiality', and the complex role it plays in contemporary forms of social, spatial, and imagined mobility. Interrogating the very analytical category of 'mobility', Leivestad argues that creative methodological techniques such as 'home inventories' reveal how the potential mobility of specific materials and objects – for example, the wheels of caravans – constitutes continual fodder for imaginaries of mobility.

Chris Vasantkumar also reflects on the concept of dwelling, in his discussion of mobile methods and their theoretical underpinnings. Vasantkumar draws, in particular, on the work of Tim Ingold, and his influential proposal of treating anthropological practices of dwelling as themselves mobile methods. In doing so, Vasantkumar offers both a conceptual tour de force on newly visible mobilities emerging in contemporary anthropological fieldwork, and a careful analysis of the specific ethnographic case of the Tibetan diaspora, whose members have increasingly lived as 'exiles in their own homeland'. It is through the peculiar existential and (im)mobile case of the Tibetan diaspora that Vasantkumar foregrounds the itinerancy of 'place' itself – both in methodological and theoretical terms. Indeed, attention to mobile methodology emerges here not only as a mobilization of new anthropological fieldwork techniques, but also as in-depth reconsideration of its very traditional objects, tools and loci.

It is precisely on questions of objects, tools, and loci that Ruben Andersson focuses his contribution. Relating to his work on what he calls 'the illegality industry', Andersson unpacks the distinctive methodological challenges raised by a phenomenon characterized by conflictive mobilities and immobilities and spanning multiple countries, contexts and domains – 'illegal' migration between West Africa and southern Europe, and those measures used to control and contain it. Explicitly drawing on the classic Manchester School 'extended case method', Andersson charts an original methodological perspective based on the idea of the 'extended field site', and shows how such methodological framing can bridge migrants' lifeworlds and the 'macro' features of a system. Arguing for a form of mobile fieldwork at the 'borderline' between groups and disciplines, Andersson proves how creative methodologies become crucial

pathways for studying complex, dispersed, and mobile systems in the contemporary world.

Developing further Andersson's point on the crucial importance of 'strategic locations' in mobility research, the chapter by Jamie Coates, based on fieldwork with Chinese migrants in Tokyo, shows how picking a locale and 'staying put' is at times the best strategy for capturing those whose lives are transient, busy, and even hidden. Conducting 'immobile research' in a small Chinese hair salon in Tokyo, Coates traces how, from lunchtime businessmen, to afternoon students and late night adult entertainers, this tiny space served as a plateau of conviviality among Chinese migrant lives in the city, while also enabling Coates to weave a patchwork of mini-ethnographies within a single Tokyo neighbourhood. Coates shows how 'multi-sited' fieldwork often occurs within field sites as much as between them, and that due to the embodied limitations of the ethnographic researcher, staying in one place (what Coates terms 'strategically situated idleness') can reveal much about the movement in the city and beyond.

'Staying put' – for example, with a seemingly ineffective research assistant – emerges as a key 'mobilities method' also in the chapter by Hans Lucht. Looking back with a reflexive and critical eye at his ten years of research into transnational migration between Africa and Europe, Lucht writes about the methodological concerns, challenges, and possibilities this specific form of human mobility produces for the researcher. In engaging the virtues (and limitations) of classic socioscientific research methods, such as snowball sampling and reliance on local research assistants, he traces the fragmentation of his subjects across regions and continents to consider how social networks can be mined as fodder for research questions. Championing serendipity and embracing the 'forms of disturbance' inherent in fieldwork, Lucht calls attention to the value of simply 'waiting around' with research interlocutors in contexts of intense and multi-layered mobilities, mining 'breakdowns' in fieldwork for their own epistemic value and espousing the virtues of wading through unknown social waters.

Shireen Walton engages in a similar kind of recursive conversation between field and method in her chapter on Iranian photo bloggers. Walton addresses the dictum of geo-spatial (co-)presence that has long been mythologized as a defining aspect of anthropological fieldwork. In rethinking the various landscapes of 'the field', she shows that limited physical access for the researcher can present less a predicament of 'immobility' than an opportunity for methodological innovation. Walton's proposed methodology relies on physical and digital movements, both of which are rooted in the practices and circulations of Iranian digital photography, her research 'subject'. In co-curating with her interlocutors a digital photogra-

phy exhibition, Walton showcases the ability of 'remote' methods to build connective proximity to geographically dispersed research subjects, the virtue of developing site-specific methods, and the multiple layers of digital ethnographic investigation. In so doing, she reminds us that impactful ethnographic work can indeed take place in tandem with the development of new forms of methodological creativity.

The closing chapter, by Christian Vium, also draws on the method of photography to delineate novel horizons for mobility research and 'collaboration' in methodology and theory. Returning to the theme of transnational migration addressed by Andersson and Lucht, Vium shows how photography is a privileged methodology for analysing such a difficult, elusive, and ethically complex 'field'. Through empirical examples of 'interventions' in significant migratory nodal points, Vium argues that the camera can incite new forms of performative storytelling processes and discourses. Indeed, Vium suggests that the collaborative dialogue arising around the production of photographic images plays a crucial part in 'fixating' a 'fluid' context, rendering it comprehensible to both ethnographer and migrant. It is in this sense that Vium agitates for an approach to photography that acknowledges the inherently interventional nature of ethnographic fieldwork, which is able to open up to a more reciprocal, participatory, and enactive form of research of, on, and in mobility.

Finally, in her afterword, Simone Abram reflects on the promises (and pitfalls) of the very concept of mobility – in particular its potential for generating and informing modes of critical, comparative study. In doing so, she stresses the continued importance of manifold forms of immobility in, and to, mobility research, arguing that immobility and mobility need not be binarily opposed to one another, and that nuanced methodologies of understanding each are key in an increasingly complex and spatially politicized world of movement.

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