



11th Mobilities Aotearoa (Online) Symposium

Mobilities and Change in Times of Uncertainty

Friday, 25 June 2021

This symposium addresses the uncertainty currently experienced by a slowed down world, not only because of the COVID-19 crisis. Presentations are addressing mobilities (and immobilities) in a complex and diverse sense, which includes critical thought on disruption, inequalities, indigenous thought, gender, the urban, labour, transport, and security related issues. Through the lens of shared research interests, we hope to widen the discussion on mobilities' role in the intersection of certainty and uncertainty. Questions we are looking at are: How are people, cultures, and societies responding to the various uncertainties researchers are currently observing? Is mobilities itself centred on uncertainty, a possible threat that must be managed, regulated, and made visible? Or does mobilities offer aspects of 'certainty' – perhaps in contrast to regulating and immobilising regimes? Papers in this symposium are rich and intricate examinations of many aspects of this central issue and hopefully will provide for a stimulating day for mobilities researchers.

Information for attendees: This symposium will start at 9am and finish at 4.30pm. A programme and list of abstracts are included below. Each presentation includes ten minutes for questions.

Attendance is open for all researchers interested in mobilities. Please register [here](#).

Online platform: The Zoom link for this symposium is <https://massey.zoom.us/j/3268916045>

Organisers and Contact Details: Maria Borovnik (Email: m.borovnik@massey.ac.nz) and Martha Bell (Email: martha.bell@mediaassociates.nz)

This symposium is sponsored by the Mobilities Aotearoa Network and supported by the New Zealand Geographical Society's Mobilities in Geography Study Group, and by Massey University.



PROGRAMME

9am	Welcome and Introductions
Session 1: Mobilities and uncertainties dealing with COVID-19	
9.15am	Justyna Salamońska (Warsaw University), Aleksandra Winiarska, Marta Kluszczyńska, and Aneta Krzyworzeka-Jelinowska: <i>Immobile mobilities. Polish multiple migrants during COVID-19</i>
9.45am	Germana Nicklin (Massey University): <i>From mobility to uncertainty: The transformation of border security in a COVID-19 world</i>
10.15am	Henrietta McNeill (ANU): <i>Balancing threats: A snapshot of securitisation of deportation during COVID-19 in Oceania</i>
10.45am	Sylvester Tonga (AUT): <i>Frozen Taro</i> . [Film Project]
11.15	Morning Tea Break
11.30	KEYNOTE: Michelle Daigle (University of Toronto): <i>Theorising Indigenous Liberation through Movement and Relationalities</i>
12.30	Lunch Break
Session 2: Pathways, empowerment, and disempowerment	
1pm	Helen Fitt (Lincoln University): <i>Role reversals: EVs, gender, and systematic disempowerment</i>
1.30pm	Ruth Faleolo (La Trobe University): <i>Trans-Tasman mobilities in-between Aotearoa and Australia: Extending family, home, and work across the Tasman</i>
2pm	Rochelle Bailey (ANU): <i>Mobilising pathways through cross-border labour schemes</i>
2.30pm	Afternoon Tea Break
Session 3: Uncertainty in infrastructure	
2.45pm	David Bissell (University of Melbourne): <i>Uncertain mobilities in platform urbanism</i>
3.15pm	Shanthi Ameratunga (University of Auckland): <i>Mobility equity for people differently challenged by transport systems</i>
3.45pm	Martha Bell (Independent Researcher) and Maria Borovnik (Massey University): <i>Final Discussion on Mobilities in Times of Uncertainty</i>
4.30pm	Final Words

KEYNOTE



Michelle Daigle is Mushkegowuk, a member of Constance Lake First Nation in Treaty 9, and of French ancestry. She is an Assistant Professor in the Centre for Indigenous Studies and the Department of Geography & Planning at the University of Toronto. Her research examines Indigenous resurgence and freedom within the global conditions of colonial capitalist violence.

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Theorizing Indigenous Liberation through Movement and Relationalities

The fields of Indigenous Geographies and Indigenous Studies have provided crucial theorizations on Indigenous place-based ontologies and practices, and how ties to place are at the core of Indigenous understandings of kinship, as well as visions for decolonization and freedom. In this presentation, I seek to build on this scholarship by centering Indigenous movement as an analytic that incites a consciousness of genocidal violence and decolonial futures. My analysis emerges from historical and contemporary Mushkegowuk mobilities through regional waterways in and beyond so-called northern Ontario Canada. In particular, I examine how rivers are a site of confluence, and how movement on such rivers elucidates the connectivity of colonial regimes of power, and Indigenous political agency, kinship and interconnected struggles for freedom.



ABSTRACTS

Immobile mobilities. Polish multiple migrants during COVID-19

Justyna Salamońska, Aleksandra Winiarska, Marta Kluszczyńska, and Aneta Krzyworzeka-Jelinowska

With this paper we provide a contribution to the emerging literature on the pandemic and how it affects mobilities. As the world largely came to the halt in early 2020 with COVID-19 spreading across the world, we were able to document how it affected the lives of Polish multiple migrants based worldwide. When the pandemic hit we were operating an ongoing Web-based Qualitative Panel Study which followed the group of these migrants. With the pandemic we decided to carry out additional Web-based semi-structured interviews to zoom onto the experiences of pandemic. Our study documented, unsurprisingly, how the mobilities on the international level largely ceased. We only collected one account related to ‘panic’ mobility at the outset of the pandemic. For majority the pandemic did not feature as an ‘unsettling’ event. However, the immobility had different meanings for people who represented various characteristics in terms of life course stage and family arrangements, financial resources, job situation etc. Some study participants were caught when on the move during the pandemic and they negotiated this new reality in the context of their biography. Others felt stuck in the places in which they resided. Importantly, in the uncertain times the welfare arrangements operated as a safety net, especially for migrants residing in ‘Western’ Europe welfare state ensuring livelihoods when migrants lost their jobs. While physically put, the migrants increasingly engaged in digital mobility, being in touch with friends and relatives elsewhere. Also, at least for some also their work largely transferred to digital, with work from home arrangements. In this way migrants engaged in ‘immobile mobilities’. The pandemic also made clear how inequalities shape individual access to who can stay put when mobilities and staying close to other people may pose risk.

Keywords: Multiple migration, COVID-19, physical mobility, virtual mobility

Justyna Salamońska is an Assistant Professor at the Centre of Migration Research, University of Warsaw. Justyna holds a PhD in Sociology from Trinity College Dublin. She previously carried out research and taught at Trinity College Dublin, University of Chieti and European University Institute. Her research and teaching interests include contemporary migrations in Europe, multiple migrations, migrant labour market integration, cross-border mobilities, quantitative and qualitative research methods. Email: jj.salamonska@uw.edu.pl

Aleksandra Winiarska holds a PhD in sociology and also an MA in intercultural relations. She is a faculty member at the Institute of Applied Social Sciences, University of Warsaw. Her doctoral thesis (at the Institute of Sociology) was about interethnic neighbour relations in Warsaw. Her research interests include social contact in the context of diversity, integration and migration. She is also active in the fields of participation and conflict management. Email: aa.winiarska@uw.edu.pl.

Marta Kluszczyńska is a sociologist and anthropologist. PhD candidate at the Institute of Sociology and Institute of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology at Adam Mickiewicz University. Her research interests focuses on the theories of agency and interactions of the institutions of mobility regimes (including refugee regimes) and individuals. Her master thesis in which analyzes concepts and practices of the integration of “foreign pupils” of teaching staff in Poznań (Poland) and Granada (Spain) was awarded as the Best Master Thesis of the 2017 by Poznań City Council. Aside from the scientific research, she disseminates scientific knowledge via educational workshops. Email: m.kluszczyńska2@uw.edu.pl



Aneta Krzyworzeka-Jelinowska is a PhD candidate at the Robert Zajonc Institute for Social Studies, University of Warsaw. Member of the research group in the Centre for French Culture and Francophone Studies UW Graduate of the Jagiellonian University (sociology, cultural studies) and UVSQ (France). Within the Erasmus programme she studied at the University of Poitiers (Laboratoire GRESCO). Her research focuses on the Polish Diaspora, mainly in Western Europe (especially in France), women and migration (with particular emphasis on the group of Polish women organizing the teaching of Polish language and culture), Polish education and Polish policy towards the Polish Diaspora. In this context, she conducts research on identity, especially national identity. Apart from the Polish context, she deals with the situation of women and children in a refugee crisis. Email: aneta.krzyworzeka@uw.edu.pl .

From mobility to uncertainty: the transformation of border security in a Covid-19 world

Germana Nicklin

The Covid-19 global pandemic has disrupted global flows of people and goods in a fundamental way, challenging pre-Covid-19 assumptions about international mobility as an unquestioned 'given'. The protracted nature of the disruption continues to reveal new surprises, from the initial closure of borders to new government regulations of commodities and people associated with these global flows. Borders are complex mobility environments where goods and people movements are mediated by government regulation and clearance processes that aim to manage risk and at the same time facilitate border flows. As such, they are places of contestation. With Covid-19, that contestation has spread out beyond the border and challenged understandings of the role of border mechanisms in global mobility. This presentation will examine the transformation of "the border" in a Covid-19 world from a predictable, risk-focused, mechanism to much larger "zones of uncertainty" with a range of new actors and risks, particularly as it relates to people flows. These zones include new types of controls that have slowed people flows and created societal disruption. It will use the example of New Zealand and Australian border mechanisms since March 2020 to illustrate how this new virus is a wily actor that continues to surprise and disrupt attempts to return international trade and travel movements to 'normal'. It argues that the existing mobility paradigm for border security is no longer fit for purpose and needs to change, and that Covid-19 provides a practice run for future disruptions such as from climate change.

Keywords: mobilities; border flows; zones of uncertainty; border security; Covid-19

Dr Germana Nicklin is a Senior Lecturer at Massey University. She researches borders and border security, with a special interest in liminal and obscured borders. Her current research focuses on Antarctic collective border practices and experiences, New Zealand border disruptions from Covid-19 and maritime security in the Indo-Pacific. She teaches border security (including its relationship with mobilities) & resource security. She had over 30 years' experience in the public sector including 17 1/2 years in the New Zealand Customs Service where she held various senior strategic advisory roles that exposed her to the security environment both nationally and internationally.

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Balancing Threats: A Snapshot of the Securitisation of Deportation during COVID-19 in Oceania

Henrietta McNeill

While global travel largely stopped and borders closed during the COVID-19 pandemic, states continued to deport individuals who had been sentenced for committing criminal offenses. In Australia and New Zealand, questions over whether deportation of migrants during a global pandemic should occur were raised: weighing up arguments of legality, public health, and security. This left many migrants uncertain, isolated in immigration detention waiting for an unknown departure date. The decision was made to continue the deportation process, and in some cases pandemic restrictions were the basis for deportation. Once deported, mandatory quarantine on arrival under COVID-19 restrictions provides snapshot in time: highlighting and exacerbating the challenges that returning offenders face. These include extended detention before forcible removal; surveillance through detention and monitoring; and securitised discourse by the media and public creating ongoing stigma. This snapshot enables us to understand the challenges of an under-studied group considered as ‘the crimmigrant other’ (Franko, 2019), and determine how states balance multiple perceived securitised threats at once – the health threat of COVID-19 and the ‘threat’ of criminal non-citizens.

Keywords: Deportation, reintegration, COVID-19 pandemic, securitisation, borders, migrants, Australia, New Zealand, Pacific Islands

Henrietta McNeill is a PhD Candidate at the Coral Bell School for Asia Pacific Affairs at the Australian National University. She looks at the securitisation of migration, and in particular, criminal deportations to the Pacific Islands and the consequences of reintegration. Henrietta hails from Aotearoa New Zealand.

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Frozen taro

Sylvester Tonga



Frozen Taro is a 15-minute documentary produced by Sylvester Tonga, a PhD candidate at AUT University. This short film is a vignette of his practice-led thesis, a film project and exegesis about Leimatu'a, his village in the Vava'u islands of Tonga and how his people at home and overseas sustain the kava and frozen produce trade in uncertain times. Despite the pandemic climate of closed international borders and infrequent shipping routes, three Tongan migrants in Auckland talk about strengthening agricultural exports from village farmers to the New Zealand market. From forming village cooperatives of small-scale farmers to export larger and consistent quantities, to selling produce to the wider New Zealand market beyond the Auckland Tongan communities, they share a common conviction: central to keeping the local Tongan economy afloat is trading across testing borders.

Keywords: kava, frozen produce, Tongan farmers, reliable market, international border closure.

Sylvester Tonga is a PhD candidate at AUT University. His practice-led thesis is a documentary film and exegesis examining export trade from Leimatu'a, his village in Tonga to the village diaspora in Auckland, Sydney, and Salt Lake City.

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Role reversals: EVs, gender, and systematic disempowerment

Helen Fitt

Throughout automotive history, systematic assemblages of gendered meanings have been associated with cars and driving. There has, however, been an intriguing almost-reversal of the gendered meanings associated with electric vehicles (EVs). In the early days of private car use, EVs were widely associated with femininity, conservatism, and lack of power. Research in an international context, however,



demonstrates that contemporary EV uptake is heavily male dominated. This paper investigates the evolution of gendered meanings associated with EVs, and reports on research that explored gender dynamics amongst EV users in New Zealand. Many of the male participants in this research rejected suggestions of systemic gender differences in EV adoption and use, yet often gave examples of experiences that did suggest such systemic differences. Women more often supported suggestions of the gendering of EV use. Responses from both genders suggest that women have less freedom to make vehicle choices, less confidence in their own abilities with regard to both driving and mechanical and technical skills related to automobiles, and are afforded less cultural scope to enjoy cars and driving. This paper draws attention to the mobility of some of the meanings associated with EVs, and contrasts this to the relative fixity of disempowerment for women in a transport system primarily conceptualised as a male domain.

Keywords: Electric vehicles, gender, history, New Zealand

Helen Fitt is interested in social and cultural issues associated with transport and mobility. She is currently a postdoctoral fellow in Lincoln University's Centre of Excellence for Sustainable Tourism, where she has been exploring the potential implications of EVs for leisure and holidays.

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Trans-Tasman mobilities in-between Aotearoa and Australia: Extending family, home, and work across the Tasman

Ruth (Lute) Faleolo

This paper will discuss the trans-Tasman mobilities of Pacific families in and through Aotearoa, extending family, home, and work across the Tasman. This discussion will focus on the uncertainties and varying contexts resulting from Covid-19 that were observed during 2020-2021. Travel restrictions introduced have affected the collaborative well-being of these families. However, these challenges are contrasted against increased sociocultural connections occurring online between multi-sited and intergenerational groups.

Pacific Islander trans-Tasman migration involves a host of reasons that relate to their collective notions of well-being. The concept of extending family, home and work across the Tasman is discussed, with reference to narratives and surveys collected from Pacific Island trans-Tasman migrants, during 2015-2019 who highlight their collective notions of well-being. These important sociocultural interconnections that existed pre-Covid have been reimagined and transformed by Pacific Island families and communities in response to Covid-related restrictions.

Ruth (Lute) Faleolo is an Aotearoa/New Zealand-born Tongan, Australian-based researcher of Pacific peoples' migration histories, trans-Pacific mobilities, collective agencies, and multi-sited Pacific cultivation of cultural heritage. Her background is in education and social sciences. Ruth's recent research presents interdisciplinary understandings drawn from a mixed methods study of Trans-Tasman Pasifika well-being perspectives and experiences in Auckland and Brisbane (2015-2020).

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Mobilising pathways through cross-border labour schemes

Rochelle-Lee Bailey

Pacific island people are highly mobile. They tend to migrate towards Pacific Rim countries for employment prospects that provide families with educational opportunities. Often this mobilisation involves families permanently relocating or paying for school fees in the islands via remittances. Unlike many other Pacific nations, before establishing New Zealand's Recognised Employer Scheme (RSE) in 2007, migrations such as that from Polynesian countries were limited for ni-Vanuatu citizens due to immigration policies. This temporary circular form of mobility for ni-Vanuatu has provided new prospects and avenues to examine. Migration is a social process, and their decisions are based on this. Nonetheless, their new forms of mobility have enabled and at times created other forms of mobility. This paper discusses ni-Vanuatu RSE workers, their mobilities, and the new opportunities for movement from these mobilities, such as new forms of transportation, access to education, and relocations of individuals, families, and communities. However, COVID-19 has stalled progress and the mobility of these workers in various ways, creating new uncertainties for migrants and their families. This paper examines new internal mobilities via new income sources from available temporary labour schemes such as the RSE and Australia's Seasonal Worker Programme (SWP), as well as the impacts COVID-19 has had.

Rochelle Bailey is a Research Fellow with the Department of Pacific Affairs, at The Australian National University. She has conducted long-term ethnographical fieldwork investigating economic, cultural, political and social outcomes of Pacific labour mobility in New Zealand's Recognised Seasonal Employer Scheme (RSE) 2007-2021 and Australia's Seasonal Worker Programme (SWP) 2012-2021.

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Uncertain mobilities in platform urbanism

David Bissell

Evaluating how the on-demand mobilities of platform urbanism are transforming urban life is a pressing political question for our time. Developing recent work in cultural geography that explores the politics of negation and critique, I argue that there are two significant modes of evaluation at play in these geographies: the negations of platform urbanism itself, and the negations of critical theory that work to cleave open counter-hegemonic spaces of resistance. Reflecting on a project exploring the gig economy in Melbourne from production, consumption and governance perspectives, I suggest that there is a third form of negation that is often overlooked in these debates. Through the concepts of unknowing, neutrality and ambivalence, I argue that the negative can also be understood in terms of irresolvable limits. I explain how this way of approaching the negative offers both a means of questioning the operation of power in platform urbanism, as well as a way of interrogating 'actually existing' mobile digital geographies.

David Bissell is Associate Professor of Human Geography and and Australian Research Council Future Fellow in the School of Geography at the University of Melbourne. David is a cultural geographer who undertakes qualitative research on mobile lives and technological futures. His current and recent projects explore the impact of digital on-demand mobile work on cities; how automation is changing



workplaces; and how households respond to mobile work practices. He is author of *Transit Life: How Commuting Is Transforming Our Cities* (MIT Press, 2018), and co-editor of *Negative Geographies: Exploring the Politics of Limits* (U Nebraska Press, 2021), the *Routledge Handbook of Mobilities* (2014), and *Stillness in a Mobile World* (Routledge, 2011). He is Managing Editor of *Social & Cultural Geography* and Steering Committee Chair for AusMob, the Australian Mobilities Research Network.

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Mobility equity for people differently challenged by transport systems

Shanthi Ameratunga

This presentation is on behalf of the Inclusive Streetscapes Project team

The Transport Outcomes Framework of Aotearoa New Zealand asserts the purpose of the New Zealand transport system is to improve people's access to mobility and wellbeing and make active travel an attractive option. Yet, until recently, discussions focusing on pathways to mobility and wellbeing among disabled people and older citizens seldom examined how transport sector decision-making and entrenched professional practices influence these opportunities. Change and uncertainty are common experiences for people who are differently challenged by the built environment of transport systems. The impacts on access to mobility, active travel, and meaningful social participation are particularly salient for disabled people, kaumātua, and older communities.

Using case studies engaging disabled people and kaumātua/older residents in Tāmaki Makaurau (Auckland), the Inclusive Streetscapes project (funded by the Health Research Council of New Zealand) explored how ethnically and socio-economically diverse communities construct the meaning, value, and challenges of getting about. Analyses of the qualitative data identified impacts of infrastructure violence and varying perspectives on safety and access, disproportionately borne by older and/or disabled people, particularly Māori and Pasifika people living in low-income neighbourhoods.

These data alongside information gathered from transport professionals highlighted how transport infrastructure, ableist practices, policy neglect, and histories of colonisation and dispossession have powerful, enmeshed influences on disabled people's day-to-day lives, mobility, wellbeing, and opportunities to live the lives they value. Prevailing consultation and outcome monitoring practices produce, reproduce, and amplify inequities in disabled people's access to active travel and mobility. We conclude our presentation highlighting the imperative for urgent action to implement a decolonising framework where inclusive and equitable transport infrastructure and policies leave no one behind.

Keywords: inclusive transport, active travel, disability, older people, wellbeing

Shanthi Ameratunga is a Professor of Public Health at the University of Auckland and Senior Researcher at Counties Manukau Health. Her research interests span trans-disciplinary approaches to understanding and addressing health inequities with a focus on transport, injury, and disability.

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