

# Editorial

Mimi Sheller and Gijs Mom

The name of our journal, *Transfers*, suggests a wide and even proliferating number of ways of thinking about movement and researching mobilities. What is transferred, how, and between whom? As things “cross over,” how are they changed? And how are contexts changed by that which moves through them? In this issue, we present a series of articles that indirectly take up the concept of transfers in different ways. Transfers, they suggest, might be thought of in terms of circulations, assemblages, entanglements, mobile social practices, networks of movement, moving onward, migrations, and the choreographies of bodies within practices of transport. But it also might be conceived of in terms of more temporal processes: instabilities, transformations, subtly shifting performances, and changing representations. We welcome this wide range of understandings of practice and processes of “transference,” as we might call this kind of conceptual transformation across mobilities. They all share an emphasis on relationality and the ongoing making of meaning.

Second, we wish to highlight the combination of qualitative social science methods with humanities sensibilities in this issue. Several articles use mixed methods, such as surveys, interviews, and discourse analysis, or more broadly conceived methodologies, such as cultural history and ethnography. Several also join multiple fields together, such as social practice theory and mobilities theory, or migration studies and mobility studies, thereby building on existing literature in each respective field but also opening new research questions. Thus, each article offers creative ways to address practices such as bicycling, music performances, migration, or gender relations in new ways.

And third, in the now established tradition of *Transfers*, the articles range geographically over many parts of the world, including China, Mexico, the Horn of Africa, Brazil, and Argentina. These three elements—conceptual diversity, multidisciplinary approaches, and geographical breadth—give our journal a distinctive character, one we would venture to say is especially necessary in a contemporary world of closing borders, rigid practices, and growing separation walls. We are proud to advocate for intellectual openness, cross-disciplinary perspectives, and international conversations.

In her article “Is the Kingdom of Bicycles Rising Again? Cycling, Gender, and Class in Postsocialist China,” Hilda Rømer Christensen looks at how bicycling is being repositioned as a social practice in contemporary China in ways that are also producing new kinds of gender identities and gendered practices. She understands cycling as an assemblage involving various mod-



els of bicycle, government policies, cyclists, bike manufacturers, bike shops, and images and representations of the cyclist and of the “modern” individual. She offers not only a much needed study of contemporary cycling practices in China, which have been somewhat neglected, but also a much needed gendered perspective on cycling as a mobility practice that remakes subjects, practices, and spaces.

Alejandro Miranda’s article “Movement, Practice, and a Musical Tradition between Mexico and the United States” focuses on the circulation of *son jarocho*, a musical tradition from southeast Mexico, through questions of the mobility of social practices. Miranda highlights how the reproduction and transformation of musical practices may be linked to the movement produced during the performance itself. Indeed, Miranda argues, “to understand the mobilities of social practice, it is crucial to examine the links between the circulation of recognizable practices and the movement produced within performances.” In that sense, like cycling in China, specific bodily movements (riding a bike, playing a type of music) are related to how the (gendered, ethnic) practice of cycling or of playing music is assembled and circulates. Practices circulate through interconnected objects, circulating know-how, ideas, and meanings, as well as through temporal moments of synchronized performances. Crucially, through such transfers, they are also gradually transformed and they transform the world.

The next two articles turn our attention to questions of migration. In “Moving Onward? Secondary Movers on the Fringes of Refugee Mobility in Kakuma Refugee Camp, Kenya,” Jolien Tegenbos and Karen Büscher focus on the complex nexus of refugee and migrant mobilities in and out of Kakuma Refugee Camp in Kenya, one of the largest refugee settlements in the world—a kind of “accidental city.” Focusing on the secondary movement of refugees, they demonstrate a blurring of the categories of “refugee” and “migrant,” which overflows the efforts of policy makers to define these as two rigidly separate legal categories. They argue, “This creates a contested social and semantic space wherein all actors struggle to uphold the rigid distinction.” Here too, then, is a kind of “mixedness” in the transfers that take place between categories (migrant/refugee, voluntary/involuntary, genuine/ungenuine, camp/city) and between motivations for moving.

Terry-Ann Jones considers a very different migration context of seasonal labor migrants who work cutting cane on sugar plantations in “Migration as a Response to Internal Colonialism in Brazil.” This more descriptive article seeks to show the ongoing coloniality of racialized labor relations within Brazil. As labor migrants move between northeastern Brazil and the cane fields outside of Sao Paulo, exploitative labor relations and social practices help to reproduce regional disparities and unequal citizenship over long periods of time. Rather than transforming power relations, in this case, mobility becomes a way of reproducing inequalities of power.

In the final full article in this issue, “A Genealogy of Sexual Harassment of Female Passengers in Buenos Aires’ Public Transport,” Dhan Zunino Singh draws on cultural history to analyze the intersection between gender and mobility through what he calls a “genealogy” of sexual harassment in Buenos Aires’s public transport in the first decades of the twentieth century. He argues for “the need to analyze gendered mobilities paying more attention to the relationship between sexuality and transport to understand passengers as sexualized bodies.” Like Christensen’s study of the gendering of cycling in China, this piece also draws our attention to mobility practices as part of the transformations of urban space and of modern (gendered) subjectivities. Interestingly, while drawing on mobilities scholarship within geography and urban studies that positions mobility as a “lived experience” shaping and shaped by power, Singh’s methodology is to combine gender history and transport history through an analysis of cultural and media representations, including an analysis of films. Thus, his work embodies the strengths of cross-disciplinary and historical perspectives that *Transfers* advocates.

Following the research articles, we offer an engaging call to action in our Ideas in Motion section. In “Automobiles and Socioeconomic Sustainability: Do We Need a Mobility Bill of Rights?” Daniel Newman argues for a Mobility Bill of Rights and begins to enumerate its basis. Against the current policy trends of simply adjusting the system of automobility by promoting alternative fuel systems or imposing congestion charges, Newman argues that we must truly rethink how the mobility needs of all people can be met. Technological fixes that merely reduce the environmental harms of automobility (such as electric power systems) will simply perpetuate the many other inequalities and forms of exclusion it produces. Instead, he argues, “issues of socioeconomic justice [need to] be brought into discussions of sustainable transport” to bring an end to transport poverty and automobile dependency.

He has drafted a very easily understood Mobility Bill of Rights that lays out some of the basic principles, and he calls on us to share it, discuss it, promote dialogue, and take action. One of us (Sheller) is currently writing a book on mobility justice and will bring this call for action into her argument to help advance this discussion. At the core of making a more environmentally viable world, we must build more socially equitable mobilities. While Newman focuses on human transportation, we must also incorporate principles of mobility justice in terms of the circulation of food, water, energy, and other goods. We must consider not only human mobilities but nonhuman, animal, plant, and more-than-human planetary mobilities as well.

The other of us (Mom) is currently finishing the sequel to his earlier monograph *Atlantic Automobility* tentatively titled *World Mobility History (1945–2015)*. This, too, ends in a call for a more activist stance in mobility matters, especially now that “global mobilities” are more and more defined beyond the West.

As usual, we close this issue with our review section on art, exhibits, film, and books, including our regular novel review. From this issue onward, our new book review editor, Liz Montegary, will be responsible for the book review section, assisted by Steven Spalding, responsible for our regular novel review. We introduced Liz and Steven in the editorial of the previous issue.