‘Car States’ in motion.
(Re)Producing mobility cultures in industrial politics.
Investigating “the change of the automobile industry” in car-producing regions

Michael Mögele | mobil.LAB Doctoral Research Group | mobil.LAB Final Event September 2020
We save the car!

(...) Here we have documented the solidarity between the automotive industry and politics, which we actually take for granted, but which no longer seems so obvious in view of the debates of recent months and years. We know that we will continue to need the car in the future to maintain the quality of life, especially in rural areas. The urban public may think differently, but even there the vast majority of people are dependent on cars. And we need future-proof models how to be able to present the car to the public in the long term (...) because there are attacks on whether driving a car is still modern.

Yes, driving is modern and must remain modern!

Bavarian economics minister at press conference Future Forum Automobil on Phoenix 2019; translated by MM)
Research Focus – (Re)Production of Mobility Cultures & Car Industry

(Re)Production of Mobility Cultures in car-producing regions

Mobility Cultures  ❓  Car Manufacturing
Research Focus – (Re)Production of Mobility Cultures & Car Industry

(Re)Production of Mobility Cultures in car-producing regions

Mobility Cultures

Car Manufacturing

Investigation of “Change of the automobile industry”
Theory: Automobility and automobile cultures

The “System” of Automobility (Urry 2004); Automobilismus (Burkart 1994)

Automobility as a specific way of mobile life
- Focus on cultures around driving a car
- Car as cultural artefact
- Driving as cultural practice

- Usage-oriented definition of automobility as mobility cultures based on individual mobility using cars
- Car industry is not part of culture but is seen as provider of product.

- Car manufacturing and mobility provision is part of mobility cultures.
Concepts of mobile societies in contemporary social sciences:

- Mobilities paradigm (Sheller & Urry 2006)
- Mobility cultures (Deffner et al. 2006)

Mobility cultures are meaningful mobile lifestyles (re)presented in the totality of all conflict-laden provision-oriented and usage-oriented everyday practices - as a complex of meanings, competencies and materials - which (re)produce meaningful mobility as the "production and consumption of distance".
Methodology: Culturally Sensitive Approach

Culturally sensitive approach to study (Re)Production of mobility cultures in contemporary political processes (Rau 2008; Aldred & Jungnickel 2014)

Inspired by Argumentative Discourse Analysis (Hajer 1995)
Interpretative-hermeneutic approach (Keller 2007)

Focus on cultural meanings and social practices
Analytical tool: Storylines (narratives, argumentation, positions and practices).

Methods:
Document analysis
Problem-centered interviews
Participant observation

Data material: documents, secondary data, video and interview material, field notes, reports
Description of Case Study

- Two car-producing regions
- “Change of the automobile industry” as process dealing with mobility cultures and car industry
- Special focus on two institutionalized state initiatives (Bavaria & Baden-Württemberg)
- State initiatives provide access to dominant discourse coalition and represent set of mobility cultures
# Results – Narratives representing different mobility cultures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Diesel Protection Area</th>
<th>Car State</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mobility State</td>
<td>Slow Down State</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Results – Meanings in narratives

Artful Jobs

Value Creation

Export

Diesel Protection Area

Car State

Mothers as necessity

Mobility as limited resource

Means to an end

Mobility provider

Slow Down State

Producer of problems

Trouble maker

Resource intense

mobility as achievement

mobility as effort
Results – Positions regarding change

Maintaining

Diesel Protection Area
- Diesel cars
- No phase out date combustion engines
- Automobility everywhere

Accompanying

Car State
- All kinds of “clean” technology
- No driving bans
- Individual (Auto)mobility

Changing

Mobility State
- No more diesel cars – Electric Cars
- Phase out date combustion engines
- Collective Multimodality, Automobility in rural areas

Transforming

Slow Down State
- Recyclable cars
- Immobility
Results – Occurring Cultural Conflicts

- Transfer regional consumption changes to production changes
- Regulating existing mobility practices

Dominant mobility cultures

Alternative Mobility Cultures

Questioning dominant mobility cultures
Results – Introducing a transitional phase called “Technological Openness”

- Dominant mobility cultures

Technological Openness for “moderate” change!

Transitional Mobility Cultures

- Transfer production to consumption
- Additional mobility practices
- Active Non-Regulation of existing technologies and mobility cultures

Alternative Mobility Cultures
Results – Introducing a transitional phase called “Technological Openness”

Dominant mobility cultures

Technological Openness for “moderate” change!

Transitional Mobility Cultures

Culture-conserving strategy of change: “Let me have my cake and eat it too” “Wasch mich, aber mach mich nicht nass!”

Alternative Mobility Cultures
Mobility cultures are more than specific practices of “being mobile”: embraces mobility provision and mobility consumption
Intersectionality of mobility provision and mobility consumption is important to understand the process of (Re)Production

“Change of automobile industry” is proxy for process of conflict between mobility cultures
“Productive Mobility Cultures” as mobility that makes mobile and provide meaningful jobs continues to be dominant meaning that has to be ensured if change is happening.
Alternative mobility cultures seem “unproductive” due to orientation towards “mobility with limits” and immobility

Technological openness as “Keep it up!” strategy of linear modernization (“Weiter So!”) (Beck et al. 1999)
Provision-oriented mobility practices are important for understanding continuity in mobility cultural change
THANK YOU!

Contact: michael.moegele@tum.de


