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Infrastructures in Trouble:

Public Transit, Crisis, and Citizens at the Peripheries of Europe

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Preface

A large part of this manuscript has been written in buses and trains, as I travelled between my study institute in Germany and sites of my ethnographic fieldwork in Ukraine and Romania, as well as relatives' and friends' places in Belarus, Russia, and Moldova. Here I am omitting the long list of acknowledgements to people who supported me by their patience, knowledge, and readiness to talk and listen to me.

The topic of the project inherits to my master work at European University in St. Petersburg which was dedicated to the mobility of elderly people in Mariupol. In this text I use some data collected for the master work, however, do not reproduce any parts of its text. Some of the dissertation arguments have previously appeared in my publications in journals; in case I use them, respective citations and references are provided in the text.

The manuscript has been written and structured with an idea of the book in mind. Introduction outlines research context, explains terminology and methodology used, and shortly presents the main theses of the following chapters. The first chapter briefly outlines historical context and introduces cities where I did my fieldwork. The chapters 2 to 5 are based on ethnographic data and they are written to be readable separately.

All interviews, a survey, and interview transcripts as well all translations from Romanian, Russian, and Ukrainian languages are made by myself. Any errors, inaccuracies or misinterpretations are my own.

Abbreviations

CP – concessionary passenger

LRT – light rail transit

MMKI – Mariupol Ilyich Iron and Steel Works

MT – maxi-taxi

PR – the newspaper 'Priazovskii Rabochii' (*Приазовский рабочий*)

SH – second-hand

ST – shared taxis

TTU – Tramway and Trolleybus Department

UET – urban electric transport

VL – the newspaper Viața Liberă

Names of places

Throughout the text geographical names of places in the Ukraine are Latinized alternately from their Russian and Ukrainian versions, as they figured so in conversations and documents during my research. The same goes for names of the cities that were re-named as part of decommunization in the Ukraine after 2014.

Avdiivka – Ukrainian: Авдіївка, Russian: Авдеевка, Russian transliterated: Avdeevka

Donetsk – Ukr.: Донецьк, Rus.: Донецк

Druzhkivka – Ukr.: Дружківка, Rus.: Дружковка, Rus. translit. Druzhkovka

Horlivka – Ukr.: Горлівка, Rus.: Горловка Rus. translit. Gorlovka

Kamianske – Ukr.: Кам'янське, Rus.: Каменское. In 2016 renamed back from Dniprodzerzhynsk

Kostiantynivka – Ukr.: Костянтинівка, Rus.: Константиновка Rus. translit. Konstantinovka

Kramatorsk – Ukr.: Краматорськ, Rus.: Краматорск

Makiivka – Ukr.: Макіївка, Rus.: Макеевка, Rus. translit. Makeyevka

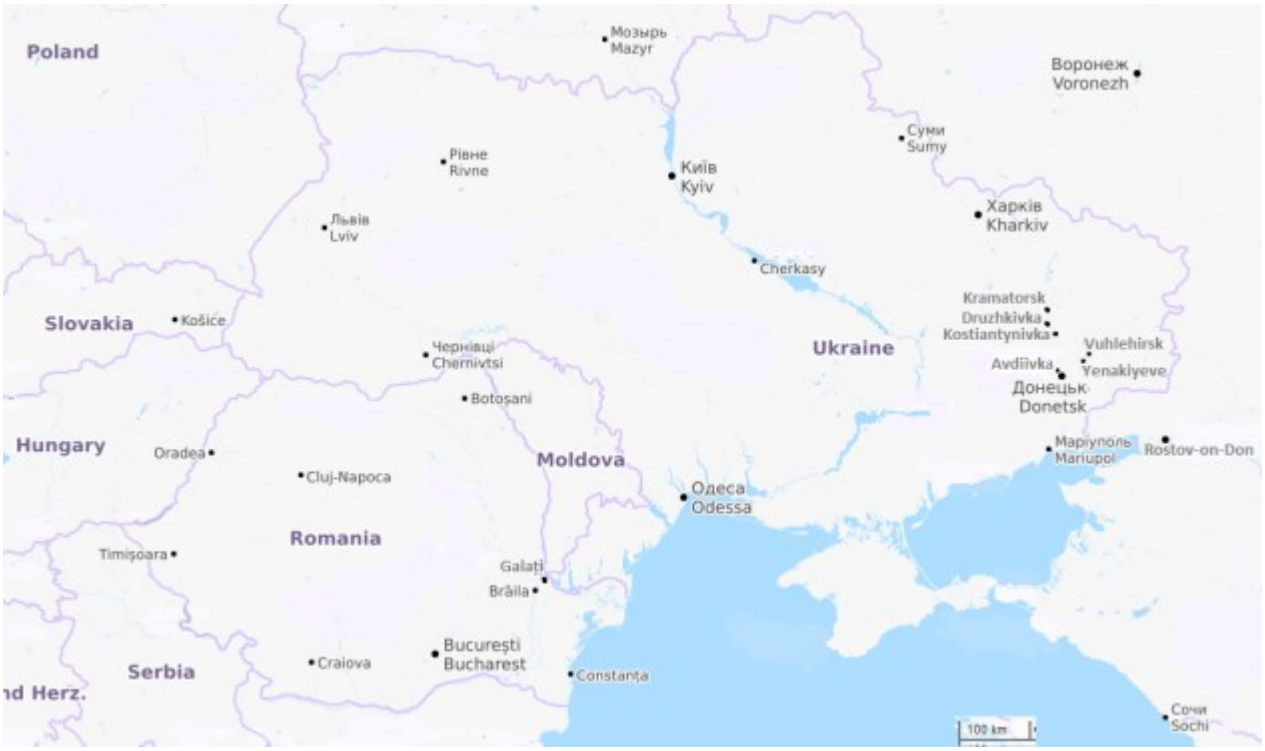
Mariupol – Ukr.: Маріуполь , Rus.: Мариуполь

Yenakiieve – Ukr.: Єнакієве, Rus.: Енакиево Rus. translit. Yenakiyevo

Vuhlehirsk – Ukr.: Вуглегірськ , Rus.: Углегорск Rus. translit. Uglegorsk

Stakhanov – Ukr. and Rus. Стаханов, in 2016 renamed back into Kadiyivka (Ukrainian: Кадіївка, Russian: Кадиевка, Rus. translit. Kadievka)

Map



Introduction

Public transportation – tramways, trolleybuses, buses, share taxis, and, in a few cases, subways – is an important part of life in Eastern and Southeastern European cities. The region is historically less motorized than Western Europe or North America, and using public transport remains a common feature of everyday life here. For many in the region commuting is a mundane everyday practice, something that happens between other, more significant activities like work, consumption, leisure, or being with the family. However, commuting feels unimportant to reflect upon and mundane as long as it is relatively unproblematic. When public transit infrastructure breaks down, it at once draws attention of various stake-holders. Also, such break-downs attract the attention of researchers – which is the case with this book.

This is a study about public transit from an anthropological perspective. It means that it does not concentrate on economic models or technical aspects of the organization of public transport. The primary focus is on practices and experiences of commuting citizens, discourses of public transit stake-holders, and the ideas of mobility that circulate in the city. Trams or trolleybuses in the city provide more than simply a way to move from A to B. Throughout the chapters of this book will describe decaying public transit infrastructures that suffer from dysfunctionality and are under threat of complete removal. Via an analysis of everyday mobility and grass-roots efforts to preserve these infrastructures, we will see how public transit is connected to ideas about urbanity, justice, state, and time in the region.

In spite of its ubiquity in Eastern and Southeast European cities, urban public transit is surprisingly underrepresented in the anthropological and sociological literature about the region. Research on post-socialist cities focuses primarily on the issues of privatization of property on contested urban spaces; another prominent topic is social transformation of industrial mono-cities. Some ethnographic works mention public transit in passing (Utehin 2004, P. 204; Parvulescu P. 33-35, 379, 381-382). Among the few texts I found on the topic, many were written by colleagues whom knew in person before or after reading their texts[1] and who shared my perplexity about the lack of scholarly writing in this area (Kuznecov Shajtanova 2013; Zaporozhec 2014; Sgibnev 2014; Smol'kin 2014; Tuvikene 2014; Jansen 2015, ch. 2). The lack of publications is one of the reasons why some pages in this manuscript spell out what may seem banal everyday knowledge for the residents of the studied cities.

[1] Some interesting publications on transport appeared in Russian and Ukrainian languages, and I owe many ideas and inspiration to them although readers of this manuscript might be not able to read these texts.

However, presenting this topic to audiences outside the region I realized that many of the things my informants and I consider to be self-evident are actually surprising and inspiring to others. This is why the work is written in English.

The book will focus primarily on surface electric public transport, tramways and trolleybuses, and it will sometimes also deal with shared taxis and buses, far less with subways. The subway is less relevant for this book since in my research I have focused on smaller cities (a choice which I will explain more in the detail below, see: Mid-sized cities).

This work is about public transit in Eastern European cities, more precisely about public transit crisis. In many locations at the peripheries of Europe public transportation has gone through hard times which can be gleaned from numerous quantitative indicators: the length of tram and trolleybus lines, lack of services and number of departures, the average age of the vehicles, the schedule fulfillment rates etc. This picture, however, would be incomplete without taking into account the qualitative signs of decay: the visual deterioration, the changes in attitudes, as well as the new stereotypes and social divisions pertaining to the use of particular transit modes. Together, these qualitative and quantitative data allow us to speak about a genuine crisis. The reader should keep in mind, though, that this work about infrastructures in crisis is an anthropological one. It means that 'crisis' will not be treated as a mere constellation of qualitative indicators of decrease, slow-down, or malfunction but also as a recognized characteristic of the situation – ascribed with the intention to depict the situation as abnormal or to speak about the situation in these terms, for some reason. Crisis also will be understood as a sentiment, or subjective perspective – something that people cannot always easily explain but nevertheless take into account in their behavior. For the urban anthropologist, crisis in transportation is particularly interesting to study because it manifests itself everywhere on the street, visible to everybody, to residents of different kinds of housing, those who do and do not commute, drive, or cycle.

Studying crisis to understand the norm

Having urban ideas of good life in mind, notion of crisis is rather ambiguous. It mediates the tension between the permanent and the temporary. In many contexts temporariness is problematic and uncomfortable, while *permanency* is a desired condition. Puzzlingly, the sense of crisis contains also a hope that the unacceptable present will be temporary, and that the current state of affairs will change for the better; the proper; the normal. Crisis is an indirect way to define the normal, the proper, and the permanent.

Cities were until recently constructed as *permanent.* Urban inhabitants absorbed and lived the dream of the permanent; the temporary was contrary to the norms and ideals of urban life. It is only few years ago when Bishop and Williams (2012) challenged this assumption with their concept of the 'temporary city' – of pop-up spaces, events, and interventions. However, as these lines are written, the 'explicitly' temporary city is still a project to be realized. The vast majority of post-socialist urbanites lives in wannabe-permanent cities; more than that, these are cities that were projected for the bright future more than for the present, and constructed as if that future would surely come. This confidence resulted into gigantic material investment – infrastructures, purposed to provide electricity, food, water, and mobility. Urban infrastructures, being the material skeleton for sociality, movement, production, and consumption, are pivotal manifestations of this illusionary permanency in the city; infrastructures underpin the coherency, the rhythms and cycles of urban life. Since 'a variety of scholars, across a range of disciplines, have brought the topic of infrastructure <...> into the more open daylight of anthropology, sociology, political science, and urban studies' (Graham, McFarlane eds. 2014, xii), I also will take an 'everyday' approach to infrastructural issues. To explore the social life of infrastructures, I will look at an infrastructure of a particular kind, public transit, and concentrate on its temporality. The geographical region and timeframe of the research – Romania and Ukraine after state socialism – will provide us with vignettes of infrastructures in decay, suspension, contestation, and hope. They will show the uncertainty of a dismantled myth promising the arrival of permanent good after temporary problems – a justification used by many political and some scientific discourses (Schwarzer 1994).

Although infrastructures symbolize permanency, much of the time they find themselves in limbo or in temporary states, that is, when subject to planning, construction, re-habilitation, closure, and dismantlement. Infrastructures demand lots of money, effort, knowledge, and, of course, lots of time to create and maintain their permanence. Such states differ in the degree of their desirability: the state of construction is intriguing and pleasant, when it does not take too long and people do not lose confidence; the state of decay and uncertainty is sometimes harder to live with than no infrastructure at all. This work shows, however, that different temporary states, including crises, may together constitute normalcy and coherence for urban infrastructures. Nevertheless, people inhabit such crises without ever making them into the norm – so that seemingly insurmountable structural predicaments are used as a basis for local mobilization, self-governance, and incremental change. Forced to live

with crisis, the people figuring in my research learned to care about infrastructures and technologies that are fully nontransparent during the periods of their normal functioning. Writing about how crisis mobilizes people, I by no means want to suggest that crisis is necessary or positive. In the regional context of my research, focusing on the effects of crisis helps us to stay analytically vigilant when the crisis is declared to be over and purported normalization relaxes the attention of urban communities.

Why study public transport in a post-socialist city?

In my research I investigate urban crises and ideas of the normal city by focusing on tramway and trolleybus infrastructures. I do this in Romania and Ukraine, the field I worked in between 2010 and 2016. I started with an ethnographic exploration of mobility amongst the elderly population in the city of Mariupol, Ukraine. As my fieldwork in Donetsk Region evolved, the notions of 'decay', 'abandonment', 'futility', 'normal city', and 'European city' co-existed and combined in numerous ways, being used by passengers and maintainers, by sceptics and adherents, by amateurs and experts of electric public transport. Public transport was the venue where many recent aspects of post-socialist of urban life came together: amongst them poverty, panhandling, the plight of homeless children, ageism, social stratification, corruption and other crimes, the proliferation of portable digital devices, etc. Public transit connected various sites of urban life – schools, offices, factories, markets, supermarkets – and provided itself a vibrant scene for debate, critique, conflict, and compromise, as well as mutual help and mobilization. For citizens, trams and trolleybuses – as technologies and as artifacts – materialized and indicated social welfare, urbanity, European-ness, and, not seldom, 'at least something done'.

Stops and vehicles were the sites where urban time was produced. At the everyday level, these were the spaces of waiting, boredom, and haste, causing irritation for the inability to administer one's own time. Some people found ways to inhabit these periods of uncontrollable time and even perceived them as useful and important – chapter 3 will explore this topic in more detail. For many urban residents, especially the economically and socially most vulnerable, transport organized their daily schedules. In the long term, the use of public transit invoked more abstract temporal notions: when people expressed their judgements on regress and improvement, shared their visions of normalcy and deviation from the norm, and spoke about their longings for stability and predictability. Commuting myself and watching others commute, I observed and heard about different forms and combinations of waiting,

hope, and desperation. These revolved primarily around public transportation but expanded far beyond that, into other domains of social, political, and economical life in the city.

Concepts and terms

This work was interdisciplinary from the very beginning and draws heavily on the existing literature about infrastructures, mobility, time, and post-socialism, as well as crisis and disaster studies. At the turns of the research my narration was sometimes moving closer to historical reconstruction, or to anthropological thick description, or to the critical analysis of the current 'new urbanism' toolkit. However, the concepts I will use in this text to systematize my material are mostly connected to notions of time and temporality. In my view, the social functioning of infrastructure – inter alia, the perception of infrastructure`s condition and quality, as well as the practices of its (non-)usage – should be studied in dynamics and change, even if the vocabulary of social sciences traditionally refers to static spaces and structures in the first instance.

Crisis

Crisis is the central concept of my work. I started to investigate something that was conceived as in crisis and many new developments I observed during my research project fell under that category. However, most of the time the notion of crisis will be questioned rather than taken for granted. In this context I will develop a constructionist perspective on the formation, development, and dissolution of crisis. Exemplary here is Marcus's work who questioned how the 'crisis' is made and unmade through his study of the debate on homelessness in America (Marcus 2006). Marcus traces the trajectory of the crisis of homelessness from the moment when the issue entered public debate till the shift of the focus away from the homeless without actual change of the housing situation, within the timeframe of a decade (1983 – 1993). The social construction of crisis here was 'as much about competing descriptions of society as it was about housing those without a home' (Marcus, P.142). Akin to Marcus, not putting into doubt the hardships of the crisis – in my case, of commuting in the post-socialist city, – I ask how the crisis in public transportation and, more broadly, in urban infrastructure is socially constructed? What such a crisis means for different stake-holders? How do social groups engage with this crisis?

In primary identification of crisis, I focus on the perspective of public transit stake-holders. In other words, I analyse crisis-like situations there, where informants see it, also when other words like 'abandonment', 'decay', or 'depression' are used. In this series of synonyms, the word 'meantime' has become particularly important in the course of my work. 'Meantime' is used by Stef Jansen in his book about life in a Sarajevo apartment complex. For Jansen's informants, 'the sense of lack of improvement <...> intimately related to the (geo)political stagnation and dysfunctionality <...> was itself a key pattern' (Jansen 2015, P. 2). In its exploration of how people yearn in the 'meantime' for the 'normal lives', the book subtly counterposes these two notions. The 'meantime' also suggests that 'crisis' or 'non-normal life' is by definition a temporary situation. In my ethnographies I will present people's efforts to live the 'meantime' as more 'normal', thus reducing the gap. Even more, some improvised repairs in Ukrainian urban life are predicated precisely in pessimism and the fear that the future may be even further removed from the normal. Thus in the depressive cities at the peripheries of Europe such a future is collectively and deliberately postponed, a counterpoint to the hastened future of socialism-communism. That is, for my informants the 'meantime' also bears positive and inspirational meanings.

Throughout the book I will talk a lot about the regional specifics of living with crises, but it's not my intention to describe crisis as something inevitable, necessary, or immanent for any particular society. At the earlier stage of research I used the notion of 'culture of crisis' to designate local practices of dealing with infrastructural problems, but later realized its problematic essentialist connotations: the phrase 'culture of' suggests that people live perpetually in crisis and cannot live outside it. Such a notion also would be affined to idea of cultures of poverty introduced by Lewis (1966) who describes the cultural patterns in low-income families that proved more stable than the level of their income. I tend to join the critics of Lewis' concept[2] who note that it prioritizes cultural determinism over structural factors and serves more to the reproduction of the status quo rather than tackles the problems of those living in poverty. Now I prefer to describe practices of resistance and adaptation to, as well as alleviation of crisis. Importantly, these activities take place as long as the situation is *not* conceived as normal. One can say, that through these practices people both become experts in crisis and resist its further normalization and blurring of boundaries with normalcy.

[2] See review of the most common criticisms of the concept 'culture of poverty' in Gajdosikienė 2004

Mid-sized cities

Romanian and Ukrainian cities that are described in this manuscript are usually classified as mid-sized cities and small towns. I am shifting attention away from capitals and large cities on purpose. First, my intention is to tell more about everyday life outside the booming capitals and million-plus cities, since this is still where the majority of the urban population in Eastern and Southeast Europe resides. In my choice for provincial cities, I also follow to Robinson's idea of 'thinking with elsewhere'. Robinson argues for a comparative urbanism that shifts the focus to under-researched cities outside of the global centers (Robinson 2016). Multi-sited ethnography allows to find out principles and patterns of urban life 'between these places'. With this in mind, I believe that my research on industrial small and midsized cities in southeastern Ukraine and southeastern Romania can be relevant for other cities of similar size. This continuous 'thinking with elsewhere' that I practiced during my research, to my belief, at least partly compensates for the relative shortness of time I spent in each of my six fieldwork sites.

Many practices described in this text may fall under the notion of *informal urbanism*. I will talk about grassroots initiatives in support of public transport and about practices which are sometimes at the verge of legality. Informal urbanism appears in descriptions of contemporary life in Romania as a critical concept. Văetişi (2018) shows how forms of informal urbanism such as squatting, do-it-yourself urbanism, creative re-appropriation of public space, guerrilla gardening, and artistic occupy-type interventions are only divided by a thin boundary from authorized urbanism. Informal urbanism practice in Romanian cities thus can reveal linkages between creativity and power. Although examples of creativity in my research are quite different from those analyzed by Văetişi, I would like to preserve critical element in my view on *informal urbanism* as well. That is to say, I see informality as something that can demonstrate the strength of local communities and popular inventiveness, but also reveals the exploitation of volunteer labor and buck-passing from the state.

My thesis deals mostly with vehicles that move and spaces on the move, designed to enable displacement. This makes them rather special in comparison to real estate, owned or rented, where people sleep and keep their belongings. There's a risk that social relations in these 'no one's' spaces where people 'just commute', wait, and spend less time than in buildings are seen as secondary and unimportant. That is why I would like to think about practices described in this book as *mobile informal urbanism.* The adjective *mobile* refers not

only to the fact that these vehicles move, but also that the social realms through which they move are fluid, and to the fragility of citizens' interests in *non-places* as Augé (1995) would put it – places only existing to provide transit between 'actual places'. My ethnography will show how the alleged 'non-place' of the tram takes on its own specific history, social significance, and ability to shape identities.

Peripheries of Europe

My research focuses on places that are located at a certain distance from the political, economic, and cultural centers of states and regions. Though being at different sides of the EU border, Romania and Ukraine are both peripheral, in many senses, in Europe. Both countries regularly appear at the top of the rankings of the poorest countries of Europe, facing aggravated forms of corruption, poverty, and social inequality. In addition, both countries have huge internal disparities between regions. In both countries I focused on the regions considered to be most problematic, according to economic, environmental, and demographic indicators. So my reflection is to reflect about the 'peripheries of the peripheries' where many cities and smaller towns of Eastern Europe find themselves. Being at the periphery means not only that social problems are more severe, but also that the belonging to Europe is more contested. In chapter 1 I will describe in detail why Galati and Mariupol are peripheral and why these sites are good for research on crisis, mobility, and urban life in post-socialism. Chapter 5 will focus more on the contestations of European-ness at the periphery.

Post-socialism is a very broad term and I initially wanted to introduce a narrower term ('after-socialism') in order to describe urban life in Mariupol, Galati, and other cities were described here. Such a term, however, would likely impose binary oppositions there where a kind of range or continuum is present. This is true for the varying intensity of change after socialism and for the differences between cities 'further eastwards' and 'further westwards'. Therefore, post-socialist is understood here in the simply chronological sense, as the period that follows the official fall of the state socialist system. In some cases the prefix 'post' marks the qualitative distinction from socialism, but in others it shows the reproduction of socialist patterns continuously shaping urban life. After all, 'post-socialism' never seemed of key importance for my informants whose more significant time orienteers were rather 'socialism', the 'nineties', and 'Europeanization'. That is why I keep the term 'post-socialist' here as a simpler way to locate the general timespace of my work for the broader public.

Infrastructure

Infrastructure is understood more broadly here than it would be in engineering. For the ethnographer, along with artifacts such as vehicles, rails, wiring, depots, and electric substations, public transit infrastructure also includes the people employed in public transport, their skills, practices of planning and maintenance, the legal and technical norms regulating the functioning of public transport etc. Knowledge about the infrastructure is also an important ingredient here, as it is unequally socially distributed among urban milieus and actors. Graham and McFarlane named knowledge of infrastructure one of the four main veins of ethnography of infrastructural lives (Graham, McFarlane 2014, P. 2), and I will focus on how the knowledge about infrastructure grows during crises. An important characteristic of infrastructure is that it goes usually unnoticed unless breakage occurs. Although a normal functioning of complex urban infrastructures requires the simultaneous intact performance of multiple processes, for end-users they together represent a non-event of unreflected 'normalcy' (Graham 2010, P. 17). Studying infrastructure ethnographically means looking at how its functioning, and expected results of its work begin and cease to be an infrastructural non-event.

Temporality and temporalization

Many aspects of life in midsized cities at the peripheries of Europe can only be fully understood through how they happen in time. This means that social practices and ideas are deeply influenced by plans, schedules, promises, and expectations not less than by histories and actually happening events. I will understand the sum of relations between these elements as the *temporality* of social life, and the conscious efforts of different actors to establish, adapt to, change, or resist such relations as *temporalizations*. Temporalizations formed a key ingredient refer to the handling of uncertainty and the resistance to imposed notions of regress and hopelessness. Temporalizations formed a key ingredient of socialist urbanism and they do so afterwards (Lindström 2012) – the socialist sociomaterial legacy keeps them meaningful and it results in temporality conflicts. In such conflicts, different urban actors negotiate what is outdated and modern, permanent and temporary, regular and deviant. Shared taxi entrepreneurs, for example, reject long-term planning to the benefit of short-term management. Electric transport enthusiasts re-define and advance the tram and trolleybus technology from being a remnant of socialism into a premise for green mobility. The elderly, by their wish to be mobile and consequent support electric transport, claim the importance of

their lives in retirement for the city. Temporalization, therefore, can be a way of defending own interests, of mobilizing urban communities, and producing knowledge on how the city works. From a constructionist perspective, crisis is also a form of temporalization. Different groups in these former industrial centers in Romania and Ukraine contest the temporal order by combatting crisis or enforcing the articulation of crisis in order to reach their future goals.

Complexity of post-socialist temporalities attracts attention of a growing circle of scholars. For instance, in their ‚ethnographies of absence' in contemporary Georgia Martin Frederiksen, Elisabeth Dunn write on ‚past perfects, past imperfects, future anteriors, and present progressives' emerging in propaganda, politics, and materialities of everyday life (Frederiksen, Dunn 2014, P.243). Categories like absence, disappointment, nostalgia are also frequently present in the studies of troublesome post-socialist 'grey zones' at the outskirts of Europe, embedded into societies experiencing emigration, unemployment, and development of semi-legal businesses (for more see Harboe, Frederiksen eds. 2015). With many of these topics present in my material, I will focus on diversification of temporalities, on desynchronizations there, where some semblance of integrity existed.

Citizens

This thesis is about groups of citizens that find themselves engaged in relations with each other and with transportation infrastructures. The existence of 'crisis' reveals many of these relations, and I am using this opportunity to learn about social life in midsized cities.

Passengers are the most numerous and important group for this work. For the urban ethnographer, passengers are generally interesting characters to study. This is so because practices of moving around the city make visible and clarify social norms and connections significant for urban life. Passengers represent and embody ways of life and various human-technology interactions (Adey et al. 2012). Trajectories and rhythms of passengering in the city tell about what everyday life consists of and how it is spatially connected. Rules for passengers indicate degrees of trust and control that are considered necessary in a particular society. The question 'what does it mean to be a passenger' might seem pretty boring in 'normal settings', but in a situation of crisis in midsized cities it might get surprising and quite specific answers. In this thesis, passengers perform the roles of beneficiaries, keepers, experts, and decision-makers. Different groups of passengers will be presented throughout the book, but of particular importance are the elderly, as formally defined by age. In my fieldwork sites

they were the most numerous group of urban electric transit (UET) users whose life patterns depended much on trams and trolleybuses. Economically, pensioners were irrelevant for public transit because of their rights on free rides. Such insignificance however was only formal, and the fieldwork reveals many *informal,* improvised, mobile practices in which the elderly show and establish their own importance for the urban infrastructure.

One more key group of stakeholders is a heterogeneous network of people whom I will call, in the absence of a better term, *enthusiasts of electric public transit.* Called amateurs, fans, supporters, adherents etc., these people are active in different forms supporting UET and producing knowledge about urban mobility in crisis (chapter 4). Amateurs are often disregarded by institutionally acknowledged experts, including social scientists. For me, however, UET enthusiasts are especially important, since I conducted my research, to some extent, together with them. More than that, this group initially inspired the project – as I became interested in the grassroots support of UET in Donbas as a relevant topic in the sociology of social movements. Later, I benefited a lot from data that UET enthusiasts had aggregated. Also, I discussed my research with them, which helped me to define the project goals; it taught me to explain the purpose and meaning of my research to a non-academic audience. Finally, enthusiasts were the most active readers of my published texts giving extremely valuable feedback. So enthusiasts were figuring in my research in various ways and the data about them demonstrate how the boundaries between expert and amateur knowledge can get blurred when 'normalcy' fails.

Besides the enthusiasts, sometimes surprisingly close to them, stand the *entrepreneurs* – who engaged directly with acute problems and produced change during the crisis of the 1990s. Initially they appeared as the main antagonists of my 'main heroes' – the users of urban electric transport and pro-UET activists. I was not conscious enough to include them from the very beginning, but the field prompted me to do this for a proper understanding of the mobilities I intended to study. It also helped me to see how various modes of mobility are interrelated in ways more complicated than just rivalry and antagonism. The two groups – UET enthusiasts and share taxi entrepreneurs – shared one or two features: they started with informal, bottom-up efforts to resolve public transportation problems. And both entrepreneurs and enthusiasts proved equally helpless against the state's presence and power of ordering (see chapter 5). Although I did not interview drivers of share taxis and their ticket-sellers in the Ukraine, I had several conversations and many hours of participant observation,

newspapers, and a few interviews with entrepreneurs in Galati in 2016, right before and soon after maxi-taxis were abolished there.

In some cases one person combines more than one of abovementioned social roles or switches between them. For instance, tram passengers in Horlivka and Kostyantynivka, Ukraine, volunteered and donated to local public transport. Some enthusiasts were later employed at a regular basis in public transport and continued their activity even after retirement. For this reason, I prefer to view them as roles, or positions and not as fixed social groups.

It is not easy to unite these roles and groups of people under one umbrella designation without leaving important characteristics out. The word 'citizens' has been chosen as the best and most inclusive. It came to my mind through 'infrastructural citizenship', a notion coined by Kyle Shelton (2017a) in his study of civic struggle for and against roads in Houston. He understands it as 'a set of rhetorical and political actions' which emerge when the built environment transforms 'from inert materials into arenas in which they [citizens] could claim and assert political power' (ibid, P.5). Although the repertoires of such actions in Eastern Europe and USA differ a lot, they are similar in that they define citizenship 'not by nationality or legal standing but instead by the quotidian acts' (ibid). Acting together in support of or against particular modes of transportation, citizens might be guided by various motivations: love for the city, will to be mobile, claim for legitimacy, and yearning for a normal life. The following chapters will make the different motivations clear for a better understanding of the conflicts between public transit stake-holders – infrastructural citizens.

Finally in this section, I specify my use of terminology for different kinds of public transit, since many of them are contested in professional and amateur circles. Tramway, or streetcar in the American tradition, nowadays shares most of the features with translohr, premetro, or light rail transit (LRT), so that some cities promote as 'metro' something that in other cities is officially called 'tram' or 'high-speed tram'. This is not the case for the sites of my fieldwork. In Braila, Galati, Horlivka, Kostyantynivka, and Mariupol trams are quite outdated and have low operation speed; they also often share the road surface with other modes of transit and use wiring with a different voltage than railway. In this sense, they have the features of a 'classic tram'. The trolleybus is an electric bus that draws power from two overhead wires on its entire route or an overwhelming part of it. It is thus not the same as the electric bus which might use wiring to charge at the end loop; and not quite the electric bus

like the one introduced as 'trolleybus' in Prague in 2017 which uses overhead wiring only along a small part of the route.[3] Both tram and trolleybus technologies as they appeared in my project were inherited from socialist times without essential changes, even though some minor adjustments may have been implemented.

Ethnographies 'with elsewhere' and 'from afar'

The thesis is based on ethnographic research that includes a considerable use of online and media content analysis. In my ethnographic exploration of crisis, I was inspired by the example of Brekke and colleagues (Brekke et al. 2014) who studied 'crisis-scapes' in Greece through the everyday practices and experiences of Athens' inhabitants. My ethnographic research started with a traditional form of 'being there'. First I went to Mariupol, Horlivka, and Kostyantynivka as an anthropology student in 2011. Back then, my master research focused on the mobility of elderly people in Mariupol and the role of urban electric transport. During weeks and months of research in Mariupol I was sharing the rhythms of mobility with the passengers of trams and trolleybuses – mostly seniors. In doing so, I explored that 'boring thing' of infrastructure, which Susan Leigh Star has called upon to study ethnographically in order to understand its imbrication with human organization as well as with aspects of planning, distributional justice, aesthetics, and change (Star 1999, P. 379). First of all in Mariupol I bought a monthly card that made UET free of charge to me, just as to the elderly; along with that, I purposefully avoided marshrutkas at any time of the day. At stops and in vehicles I watched others waiting and spending their time. Sometimes I spent many minutes alone at a stop, feeling very tired and often wanting to continue foot. In Mariupol, the degree of visibility of infrastructure was informative in itself: it was hard not to notice it, due to the multiple breakages and the general unpredictability of UET. At the same time, the calmness with which the elderly faced yet another break-down of the tram service exemplified how dysfunctionality in mobility became part of their normal everyday life (Trentmann 2009). Also, repeatedly passing by the same venues and facing similar situations together was helpful in understanding of how seniors experienced urban space.

[3] After 45 Years, Electric Trolleybuses Are Back on Prague Streets https://cz.cityspy.network/prague/features/45-years-electric-trolleybuses-back-prague-streets/ . Hereinafter electronic links in the footnotes are accessed on 03.06.2018, except as noted.

Staying in Mariupol during 2011-2013, I also undertook a series of one-day trips to other sites in the Donetsk oblast – the region was quite well connected by buses. In such a manner I visited all Donechchyna cities possessing trams and most of those having trolleybuses, but the majority of trips were to Horlivka (Gorlovka) and Kostyantynivka (Konstantinovka). These two cities were examples of cities with 'ghost tramways' (*трамвай-призрак*) – to spot a tram or trolleybus on the streets there was extremely rare and a matter of good luck. Kostyantynivka at that time had three tramway vehicles on two lines and Horlivka not more than eight on three or four lines; during my research in these cities I unavoidably became a visible stranger, a recognized tramway fan. This image I did not mind since it corresponded to my own personal curiosity and helped me to explain my behavior to my interlocutors. In these cities I felt a high level of intimacy with conductors, drivers, and passengers at stops whom I always talked to, so it was virtually impossible to pretend to be a fly on the wall or ask people to speak with the recorder on. Also I talked to employees of the tramway-trolleybus departments; several among them were organizers or participants of initiatives supporting UET systems. These trips provided the basis of chapter 4.

Remote ethnography

Military conflict in Donbas in 2014 radically changed the environment where I had conducted my fieldwork until 2013. After my master project finished, I made only one private visit to Donbas in January 2014. In late 2014, intending to organize a photo exhibition about UET in Donbass, I restored my contacts with local UET enthusiasts using electronic means of communication, contacting my old acquaintances and new ones. This was followed by several Skype interviews, conversations in social media platforms, and phone conversations – and with the help of these I followed closely the news about urban life in the Eastern Ukraine (which by then had become physically inaccessible to me because of my Russian passport). In addition I monitored publications in the local online media and the comments in them. By working in this manner, I entered the territory of ‚remote ethnography' – a technique that has recently made its way into the methodological debate. Gray, researching Russian mass protests via social media, grounded her decision to abstain from going to Russia for firsthand research, since her USA citizenship at the time would have increased the risk of harrassment and violence against her (Gray 2016). Postill gives many more examples of how anthropological fieldwork can entail serious risks for particular researchers: when, for instance, their field site comes under control of the Taliban; when they became part of

skirmish during mass protests against a ruling military regime; or because of a volcano eruption (Postill 2017). For UET-enthusiasts living in Donbas, military conflict has presented much more risks, both offline and online, than for me living in Germany. Using channels of communication that they suspected to be tapped by the authorities but lacking alternatives, my interlocutors were highly concerned about the content and confidentiality of our conversations. For that reason, I abstained from continuing our communication when they deleted me from the conversation after some weeks of my silent reading. From an ethical perspective, I did not continue because I was not confident about the safety of our conversations and did not possess any technical tools to make them safer. Epistemologically, I acknowledge that ethnographies are virtually always unfinished, and their end is determined by constraints of our academic setting and other external factors.

Postill (2017) raises the issue of authority and proposes to re-think the meaning of ‚being there' and ‚being then' in the context where part of the studied reality inevitably happens *not* offline but online and in the media. Remote ethnography then is a way to triangulate, to access the actors from a different perspective, and to approach their lifeworlds composed of *both* digitally mediated and non-mediated experiences. Facing the same dillemma of ethnographic authority vs. personal safety, akin to Postill and colleagues, I try to alleviate my physical separation from Donbas by continuing my observations and incorporating the data collected ‚from afar' into those gathered offline prior to the conflict.

Defining ethnographic sites in Romania

In 2015 I started my field research in Romania, in the cities of Galați, Brăila, and Constanța. Going there and making Galați the principal fieldwork site in Romania was not a result of trial and error as it was in Ukraine in 2011. The Ukrainian cities Horlivka and Kostyantynivka appeared in my research due to their geographic accessibility at the moment of my stay in Mariupol and they suggested topics that I did not intend to research before. In 2015, in Romania I was obliged to establish a selection of field sites through the topics that would connect them with my previous research locations in Ukraine. That is why I will describe my inroads into Romanian cities in more detail in chapter 1. Here I only briefly outline my ethnographic activity in Galați.

During my four visits to Galați in 2015 and 2016, I spent a lot of time commuting, communicating with my host families, and talking with locals: acquaintances of my hosts and

colleagues, people working in different organizations – the library, statistical agency, university, museum, newspaper's office – as well as people in the streets. I also studied newspapers from the 1990s and 2000s in order to compensate, if only partly, for the absence of personal experiences for those decades that I had seen in the Ukraine. In some way, Galati made an impression as being the projected future of Mariupol – more precisely, one of the futures anticipated in Eastern Ukrainian cities. The Romanian city was an arena of rehabilitation and renovation, and it existed in a particular time – the time after the crisis. That is why I observed various sites of reconstruction, repair, and rehabilitation in Galați with special attention. The temporality of crisis that pervaded the urban space of Mariupol, Kostyantynivka, and Horlivka in 2011-2013 was replaced by the temporality of Europeanization in the case of Galati in 2015. Again, this does not only mean a lived material change, but also a declared or perceived transformation in relation to previous years. Given this, in Romania I paid attention both to discources about the ‚normal city' and to mobility practices, present and reported for the past.

Comparing parts of the Ukraine and Romania, and particularly choosing the cities of Mariupol and Galați as cases for my research project triggered many questions from people in both countries. In my view this astonishment can be partly explained by the fact that knowledge of both sides about each other was scarce, both regarding the cities and the two neighboring countries in general. My fieldwork cities did not meet the stereotypical expectations of 'fascinating' places, and in both countries when indicating that you work in Mariupol/Galați you harvest an incredulous grimace – which means, probably, that the cities have things to teach to their own countries as well. People in Galați and Mariupol sardonically joke about their city ('after death residents of Mariupol who behaved badly go to Mariupol') but it does not mean that they do not care. In the Romanian and Ukrainian cities that I studied the previous agenda of socialist development was abandoned but a new one was not formulated yet. These cities are peripheral both to the new flows of movement and to the new ideals of urban regeneration. At the same time, they are too small to dominate their region but too large to give up their longing for urbanity.

During my research the method of data gathering transformed significantly – in the Ukraine I followed the model of grounded theory, formulating and developing ideas while doing the fieldwork. Coming to Romania, I had become more focused on particular topics that proved to be of key importance in my previous research: the notion of crisis, ideas of the

normal city, the participation of various urban stakeholder groups, and the process of Europeanization. Narrowing down was also a necessity due to limited time resources. However, gathering data from another setting enabled my thinking 'in between' and 'with elsewhere', as proposed by Robinson.

Collaborative ethnography and engaged urbanism

The research on which this thesis is based has been influenced by ideas of collaborative ethnography and engaged urbanism. Collaborative ethnography engages communities at a more equal basis, in all stages of the research: the formulation of questions, and the collection, processing, and interpretation of data. At each stage of the project I aimed to update my research question on the basis of what my informants counted as important. At the start of the project, still having a low confidence in my research abilities, I tried to make sure that my stay in the field will bring at least some benefits to the respondents. Particularly, I tried to facilitate the exchange of information between passengers and the public transport authorities in Mariupol by writing contributions to local newspapers, disseminating timetables among survey participants, and introducing local transport enthusiasts to a wider activist community. In Romania I tried to contact local transport enthusiasts and arrange my data collection in such a way that it would make sense in the context of already existing data sets created by them. Sometimes the form of my participation was close to activism, for instance, when I tried to represent interests of local communities in open letters and petitions: I will reflect more on the methodological effects of such activism in chapter 4. All this helps me to think that this book is not the only outcome of my fieldwork throughout the last six years.

Prioritizing a collaborative approach and admitting to interaction with the field, I want to view the book itself as an example of engaged urbanism in Romania and Ukraine. Engaged urbanism is 'practical in orientation' and means 'work that critically and purposefully responds to the concrete problems and issues that are important to improving the quality of life for city dwellers'. Also it 'increasingly takes place outside of traditional academic environments', and features 'strong collaborations between academic, professional groups, community based organizations, artists, activists and others' (Campkin Duijzings eds. 2016, iv). This is not to say, however, that my occasional minor assistance to informants is enough to legitimately call it like that. Collaborations and activism-like episodes provided a setting for more intense communication and allowed me to better understand the ideas and behavioral logic of local elderly people, activists, transport officials, and authorities. Such insights

sometimes confirm what is written in the scholarly literature and sometimes inspire me to contribute new ideas to this literature. That is, I have aimed to integrate social participation into the research process in a way that neither of them would clash and produce new obscurities and misunderstandings.

Chapters

The chapters that follow will not only tell dramatic local stories but also depict more generally societies on their move out of crisis – or between crises. The structure of my dissertation is not based on separate geographical case studies but instead seeks to be problem-oriented, analyzing the problems of urban infrastructures across the peripheries of Europe. The reader will be familiarized with various kinds of social responses to crisis: the idealistic maintenance of a big bright reliable future of an accessible and democratic urban environment (chapter 1), the pessimism resulting from the fall of this planning paradigm and the emergence of informal public transit with consequent shift towards short-dated management (chapter 2), the efforts of urban elderly people to satisfy their need and desire to be mobile in spite of low income, ageism, and contradictory legislation (chapter 3), and the grassroots production of know-how and knowledge in order to preserve infrastructures in absence of the state (chapter 4). The overarching theme is the blurring of boundaries between 'crisis' and 'normal life' and the efforts to make crisis more livable without normalizing it. Chapter 5 will conclude with an analysis of challenges that public and political initiatives encounter when trying to finish the crisis as a narrative and a period of time.

The first chapter outlines the role of large urban infrastructures in the establishment of a socialist social order. Large and complex technological infrastructures in the socialist city did not only secure a better quality of life. They also represented the power of the state and state's ability to exert technological and social control over, as well as to take care of, its citizens. Public transit in the socialist city showcased a particular kind of modernity and helped to maintain the image of a socialist future. Modes of public transportation had different functions and meanings in public life and culture. Trams and trolleybuses together formed an integrated administrative system – urban electric transport (UET) – and were used to calibrate spaces and places. This calibrating proceeded not only according to the existing characteristics of the places but also in reliance on what these places *were to become*. UET infrastructures communicated the idea of preparation for and transition to normal life – not always through its current condition but more so via plans, promises, and hopes. The visibility

of tram and trolleybus infrastructure – rails, wires, electric substations, catenary poles – helped to produce a belief in the forthcoming normal life, it generated confidence and the feeling of the place already when being planned and constructed. The chapter will outline the rules of distribution of transit modes in socialist cities and the exceptions from such rules. Then the midsized city will be introduced as an idea with specific place characteristics. In midsized cities, the existence of UET was often questioned and contested after socialism – which also represented a contestation of the place's status itself. I will introduce the cities of my fieldwork and discuss their similarities and peculiar features regarding urban infrastructure, mobility practices, specific lifestyles, and the effects of post-socialist transition on the local population. The chapter draws heavily on historical sources, particularly those collected by UET enthusiasts.

The second chapter focuses on the acute problems in the public transportation domain during the 1990s and the practices with different degree of formality that rapidly emerged in response. The deficiency of petrol, the lack of spare parts, and insufficient maintenance and repair provoked diverse responses, whereby one became particularly widespread: the share taxi. As the state provision in the public transit domain collapsed abruptly, privately owned mini-buses started operating on fixed routes, with pricing being independent from the municipal transit authorities. The chapter reconstructs the upsurge of *marshrutkas* in the Ukraine and *maxi-taxis* in Romania and the change of their public perception over the decades after socialism. The share taxi as a response to a sudden challenge was initially seen as a temporary solution but in actual fact entailed a long-term change. The chapter analyses how the acceptability of particular solutions is connected to an imaginary temporal horizon of their application. As short-term management took over from long-term planning, the share taxi took adopted new meanings. The technology evolved from being an enhanced comfort option for the few to an enforced urgent solution and then to the new 'normal' disadvantageous for many and widely criticized. The popularity of the share taxi was both a response to and catalyzer for the decay of the tram and trolleybus transport systems. From being a spine of the transit system, UET was degraded to co-exist with shared taxis and later became its second-rate alternative. The informal urbanism in the public transit domain resulted in something that I call *submobilities* – adds-on to the formerly united mobility systems which function according to different economical and ethical principles. Along with on-site ethnography the chapter uses open source materials from local newspapers as well as interviews with longtime residents of Mariupol and Galati.

Chapter 3 is about elderly passengers who find themselves on the margins of the social order in this post-socialist environment; there are many parallels and interconnections between them and the aging infrastructures of UET. This chapter will trace the social effects of Ukrainian legislation to reduce fares for the elderly in public transit. Similar to some other post-socialist states, the Ukraine entitled a wide range of social groups including the elderly, handicapped, and mothers with a certain number of children to free use of the stately and municipally owned public transit. As the municipal public transit system degraded, and share taxi developed as an alternative, commuters sorted themselves out between share taxi users and UET users according to their income. Another effect was the stigmatization of trams and trolleybuses as 'social assistance for the poor and old'; at times, such stereotypes were steadier than the actual characteristics of these transport modes. Thus, young people avoided using trams and trolleybuses as they saw them as transport provided for senior persons. In 2005 a new bill obliged private share taxi companies to carry old people for free, which was followed by a boycott by both transport providers and the elderly. This boycott – the companies' refusal to provide the zero fare and the elderly's refusal to use it – demonstrated how market relations in the post-socialist city are very much charged with moral codes. The chapter investigates why the elderly perceived the new legislation as unfair to the share taxi drivers. I will show that old vehicles and old bodies in the Ukrainian city found themselves in a kind of symbiotic relationship. On the one hand, trams and trolleybuses provided affordable mobility for seniors, helping them to maintain some independence and visibility. On the other hand, pensioners sustained the existence of the tram and trolleybus lines through their own policy input: as an influential part of the electorate they halted the rapid displacement of UET infrastructures from midsized Ukrainian cities, especially since in the public discourse, pensioners were the main beneficiaries of UET infrastructure. I offer an alternative perspective, arguing that the elderly enabled the survival of tramway-trolleybus infrastructures until the inflow of EU material aid in form of new and second-hand vehicles in the mid-2010s. My elderly informants often compared themselves to old vehicles, and I want to use this metaphor to elaborate on the linkages between identity, time, and infrastructure. Public transit symbolized development and progress in the socialist city but during the 2000s it was proclaimed backward and doomed for extinction. So was the generation of the elderly, together with their past aspirations and ideals. For them, life at a more advanced age was the time after their 'actual life', devoid of perspectives and longings. In their direct and indirect engagements to save UET, the elderly re-assessed their advanced age stating that

improvements during 'their remaining time' is important, even if temporary. This engagement also marked a departure from the socialist ideology wherein the hardships of today were justified by prosperity to come. The crisis was thus actively tackled, not just passively waited through. The elderly projected this perspective – of 'tackling and not just waiting through' – onto their advanced age in the city. Chapter 3 uses the materials of my research with the elderly in the Ukraine: participant observation, surveys, and interviews, as well as maps drawn and self-observation diaries written by participants.

Chapter 4 is a story of how knowledge develops and the boundaries between expert and amateur domains get blurred in conditions of crisis. The chapter presents the social network of people who share a passion for transportation infrastructures. This network unites people whom I call *enthusiasts of urban electric transport*, or UET-enthusiasts. This tram-trolleybus hobby generates a specific *methodology* – a set of practices that enthusiasts undertake in order to collect, systematize, and consolidate information about their objects of interest. Such a methodology evolves at the intersection of two factors: the evolution of digital media and the crisis in urban transportation. The proliferation of the Internet and digital photography allows the collection of data from amateur journeys in a digital archive. The chapter traces how personal web-sites gradually transformed into collectively maintained multimedia platforms, in particular, a good example being *transphoto.ru*. Part of the chapter is dedicated to this largest online repository storing photos, databases of rolling stock, maps, historical notes, news etc. In parallel with the evolution of digital media, the crisis – trams and trolleybus being at risked of dissappearance – triggered the emergence of an *enthusiast epistemology*. Such knowledge production means that enthusiasts have to bring across the importance of existence of their object of passion, UET, in ways meaningful to others. In pursuing this goal, enthusiasts inevitably acquire knowledge about other modes of transportation as well. During the late 2000s they carried out (mostly informally) different activities in support of tram and trolleybus infrastructures. This included crowd funding, fundraising, voluntary work, innovative advertising schemes, and development of Internet-platforms where news and information on available resources circulates. Just like elderly people, the enthusiasts have inhabited the crisis through mobilization. In particular they used preventive and sometimes alarmist tactics when they identified dangerous trends at an early stage. The chapter also raises the issue of the lack of recognition for enthusiasts. First, enthusiast networks find themselves outside of the usual Webs of institutionalized activism with its grants and NGOs. Second, professionals and transport employees do not

acknowledged the community's authority except in crisis situations, even though they, along with the NGOs, increasingly use the *Transphoto* platform. Enthusiasm becomes especially vulnerable in situations of large-scale political conflict as has occurred in Donbas since 2014. The formerly most active cluster of grassroots initiatives was divided both physically and politically: some enthusiasts had to leave the conflict zone while they also had to severe their connections with UET adherents of the other side. In my online-ethnography, which forms the basis of the chapter, I have tried to find at least minor examples of how common interests in UET infrastructures managed to overcome political discord.

The last chapter, chapter 5, deals with the most recent infrastructural developments in Romania and the Ukraine which pursue the goal of 'exiting' transition. Entering Europe might be perceived as 'the end of the meantime' and at the same time it remains challenging. Empirical topics here include state-led attempts to rehabilitate tram and trolleybus transportation and to combat share taxi as the problematic legacy of a past transition. I will approach the peripheries of Europe not only as space but also as a temporal order – where some European states go in the footsteps of others and never ahead of them – which makes some places more 'past' and others more 'future' in relation to each other. In particular, the situation of temporal inequality is reproduced by the flow of second-hand trams going south- and eastwards from Western and Central Europe. Analyzing the contradictory popular reactions to second-hand vehicles arriving in Galati and Mariupol, I will show that the perceptions of these vehicles are strongly connected with their difference from the previous ones, as well as with the form and discourse in which the vehicles are presented to the population. Difference forms a key ingredient for the exit from transition. The message saying 'transition is over' gets distorted or causes disappointment when the newly arriving normalcy turns out to be less different than was expected. In the region ideas of a normal city are linked to a re-scale of governance: efforts have to be allegedly large-scale and the relevance of grassroots initiatives is reduced. Infrastructural investments might be used to show the state's sovereignty and power, especially when the effectiveness of the state is contested. This idea has emerged from the data I gathered on infrastructural investments in Donbas, which under the military conflict were higher than during the two previous decades of peace. From both sides of the frontline powerful actors try to demonstrate their capacity of building a proper state. Remarkably, the similarity of their methods betrays the common background of the territories that now belong to different political factions. In Romania the investments into the renovation of public infrastructures has made mid-sized peripheral cities into a new frontier of

Europeanization, which paradoxically includes re-habilitation of tram and trolleybus projects from the communist 1970s and 1980s. Uncertainty, as a sign of weak or 'failed' states which did not secure a plausible infrastructural maintenance after the fall of socialism, is viewed as incompatible with Europeanization. In most cases this infrastructural uncertainty is resolved through opposite technological solutions: either to remove or to substantially rehabilitate the infrastructures. Sometimes it means that what was abandoned by the state and kept minimally alive by grassroots initiatives during the early 2000s is then closed and dismantled as a result of arbitrary decision a decade later. These recent processes of urban 'ordering' can represent a change from a crisis of transition to 'crisis' as a mode of neoliberal governance. Within this new mode deficiencies are articulated as structural, while responsibilities are delocalized, making it increasingly hard to identify who is responsible for whatever problematic situation. For local communities it threatens to decrease their agency in terms of defining, articulating, and combatting a perceived crisis. At this point and with these challenges, the micro-histories and ethnographies collected in this book resonate with present day problems and seek to provide insights for the future of European cities – more precisely, for people living in these cities.

In the end of this introduction, I would like to specify whom I see as the primary addressees of the text:

- academic, intellectual, and wider audiences interested in the complexity of contemporary mobility infrastructures and their social impacts;
- public transit activists, enthusiasts, experts working in regions with serious infrastructural problems;
- mediators connecting those different stake-holders usually not communicating with each other;
- people dealing with social futures of different kinds – those initiating, facilitating, and empowering local populations against undesirable and seemingly inevitable futures.

The text was written with this readership in mind and intends to be understandable for people beyond narrow academic circles. This specification should not frighten away anyone else interested in the region of Eastern and Southeastern Europe, in issues of crisis, and in public transportation. The intention behind this work was to bring together groups of people and pieces of knowledge that usually stay apart.

1. Public transport infrastructure and midsized Eastern European city: between anticipations and crises

One day in 2012 a maintenance team arrived to Slov'yanska Street in Kostyantynivka, Ukraine, to start dismantling the tramway rails on former line 2. Since the early 2000s the line was not in service, and during 2004 and 2005 the entire city remained without a tramway service for 14 months. Then in the years 2007 – 2009 line 2 was shortly reinstated, but soon after that it was abandoned again, yet without being dismantled. Nevertheless, in 2012, the rails were to disappear for good. Locals were outraged and surrounded the workers – yelling at them, calling journalists, and protesting. It seemed they were alerted even more than when line 2 stopped circulating. Although there was no tram service in their neighborhood for a while, they were now dispossessed of the tram infrastructure that had remained after the tram stopped running. For them the existence of a tram infrastructure had a meaning that went beyond carrying people.

The relevance of technologically complex infrastructural assets can never be reduced to their nominal functions like the provision of water, illumination of streets, or movement of people. Apart from performing a role in a technically engineered physical space, infrastructure is also important as representation (Larkin 2008, P.9), as a reflection of a particular social order and ideology, which 'does not just exist in linguistic form; it also appears in material structures' (Humphrey 2005, P.39). Infrastructures, for example electric networks often help to constitute urbanity and to draw its spatial borders, thus defining also what does not belong to a city and who is excluded from the urban social order.[4]

Larkin points at the poetics of infrastructure by considering roads and railways not just as technical objects but also as things that operate on the level of fantasy and desire: 'They encode the dreams of individuals and societies and are the vehicles whereby those fantasies are transmitted and made emotionally real'(Larkin 2013, P.333). Transportation infrastructure, which has a public presence and visibility, provide the face of the social status quo: you cannot observe people's life in their private dwellings, but you can at least see them commuting. If kitchens and bedrooms host the kind of sociality that is not supposed to be

[4] For example, in Uroa, Tanzania, 'people began to speak of their village (*kijiji*) as a town (*mji*) on the day the streetlights were turned on' (Gupta 2015)

publicly visible, boulevards and public transport showcase at least the public part of social life.

This chapter will outline specific legacy of former socialist cities in Europe, introduce sites of my fieldwork in Eastern Ukraine and south-eastern Romania, and look for the similarities between popular visions of infrastructure in highly industrialized mid-sized cities of these two regions. I will argue that public transport infrastructure represented progress in socialism and continued to do so afterwards. Urban electric public transport was an indispensable asset for any mid-sized city as a quality that distinguished it from provincial, rural, and traditional spaces. Tramway and trolleybus infrastructures were important to the construction of a social identity of provincial socialist cities. This was the case even before they started, that is, at the planning and construction stage, and during the process of their demolition. At 'the peripheries of the peripheries', in highly industrialized mid-sized cities, urban infrastructures after socialism underwent more than simply a neoliberal privatization. Tram and trolleybus infrastructures became an arena where state claimed its social character while different groups of population tried to engage with the processes of decision-making in the city management. Furthermore, these infrastructures became signs of 'normalcy' and 'crisis' representing alternately these both conditions. Here continuous infrastructural decline of transport, interrupted with short periods of rehabilitation, leads to a conflict between different models of economy and ideas of urbanity, such as oligarchic, nationalist, and European one. Together, these dynamics of infrastructural hope and disappointment shape the ways in which crisis, norm, and quality of life are perceived and practiced in the region.

1.1 Infrastructure, the future, and normal life

Infrastructure never represents the mere present, neither in its practice nor in its logic. Infrastructure has a strong connection to the future visions, prognoses, and expectations; it embodies perpetual longings for modernity, development, and progress. Often, an infrastructure is the requirement and burden of being up to date; it is seen as pushing the society into the future; it represents the possibility to be modern and to have a future. Correspondingly, the foreclosing of this possibility results into an experience of abjection, making the modernity of infrastructure 'unbearable' for individuals and for social groups (Larkin 2013, P. 333). The desire to demonstrate modernity may occasionally run ahead of the available capabilities: for instance, the aesthetical functionality of architectural forms may

suffer from the modernization of such vital invisible infrastructures as water pipes (Gandy 2008, P. 126). Apart from projecting a desired modernity and future, infrastructure has also a strong connection to the past. It is constructed for a long time and thus the very project bears the imprint of ideas that were actual at the moment of planning. It starts ageing immediately after the startup, and inevitably inherits characteristics of the previous technological solutions, demonstrating path-dependency. More than that, the public apprehension of the improved technology is also path-dependent (Low, Astle 2009); hence, '[C]ities are haunted by past events that reverberate through places long after they have occurred' (Brigstocke 2016a, P.92). Infrastructures are therefore layered in time and must be understood through the archeology of their planning, implementation, and contestation.

Management of collective anticipations through infrastructural projects was an inherent part of many governing strategies. The future was also important because it allowed presenting current hardships as temporary, on the opposite to the awaited 'permanent' prosperity. Ferguson influentially deconstructs the 'myth of permanency' behind the urbanization, industrialization, and modernization in Zambia, showing how these processes paradoxically give way to counter-urbanization and de-industrialization (Ferguson 1999, P.11-12). For the state socialism in general and for its urbanism in particular, the future was also highly important. As the conditions of life in socialist cities were often unsatisfactory, citizens needed to be given a bright perspective, or a teleology that would justify their hardships. The future goals and anticipated achievements were a key element in temporal structuring of socialist life.

In socialist states, massive planning institutions were established to provide detailed visions of cities-to-be (Bakanov 2003) – particularly, Giprogor[5] and CENII[6]. Five-Year Plans then became the standard tool to draw these future horizons. In the neoliberal era (Abram Weszkalnys 2011, P. 7), planning, apparently, is a target for criticism due to its tendency to 'foreclose the future', to dispossess the majority of their future time, and of possibility to decide and to see the future as open, 'collective, shared, and hopeful' (Brigstocke 2016b, P. 152). Planning may also be criticized as a colonizing practice, as a form of internal colonization (Abram, Weszkalnys 2011, P.12). However, in particular contexts, planning can

[5] Russian spelling is ГИПРОГОР. Institution's full name has been changed several times throughout Soviet years and after, initial name is *Государственный трест по планировке населённых мест и гражданскому проектированию НКВД РСФСР [State Trust for Settlements Planning and Civil Engineering NKVD RSFSR]*

[6] Russian spelling is *ЦЭНИИ* (*Центральный научно-исследовательский экономический институт Госплана РСФСР*) [Central Economic Research Institute of Gosplan, The State Planning Committee]

also function as a promise that makes 'the openness of the future appear controllable by humans' (Limbert 2010, P. 10). Promises from the state are performative, they are 'not merely statements. They do more than describe: they express intention. Promising is a performance; it has effects' (Abram Weszkalnys 2011, P.9). Thus, the infrastructural provision for the socialist city was performed not only in relation not to the present, but rather to the yet inexistent future. Particularly it was determined by growth in the entire socialist block, as well as by demographic prognosis that failed to predict the decrease after 1990 (Goskomstat 1991, P. 65-66). In post-socialist urban spaces, the promise of socialism is still materialized in the presence of unfinished constructions (Ssorin-Chaikov 2003). Plans, and, inter alia, unrealized plans contribute to perceptions of success and failure, rises and falls. The task of the ethnographer is to chart practices, discourses, technologies, and artifacts produced by these planning activities (Abram, Weszkalnys 2011, P.3). These plans, partly forgotten and partly resonating today via practices, discourses, and artifacts were part of my library research as well as of my informants' accounts in the Ukraine and Romania.

Temporalities of infrastructure: normality, crisis, and anticipation

The imaginary future plays an important role for popular perceptions of what is normal in the work of infrastructure and what indicates a crisis. At the same time, such perceptions of normalcy and crisis differ across territories and in different areas of knowledge. For conventional urban planning, a 'normally functioning' infrastructure by-default implies long-term planning, stability, regularity, increasing service frequency, predictability, and permanency of improvement. Also, in a long-term perspective infrastructure is usually thought of as an incremental process of growth. For anthropology and social sciences in general, this notion of 'normal functioning' is less of a given and is a premise than needs to be deconstructed and tested in case-studies. Analytical insights into unnoticeable sociomaterial carcasses of our everyday life – what Pinch called 'making infrastructure visible' (Pinch 2010) – were often inspired by a *broken* door-closer (Latour 1988), North American electricity blackout (Bennett 2005), air traffic paralyzed by volcano eruption in Iceland (Martin 2011). Following Latour, who coined the term blackbox for the objects whose principles of functioning remain unclear to the users (Latour 2000), Stephen Graham and Simon Marvin recognized a disruption as an *unblackboxing* (Graham, Marvin 2001). The Graham's edited volume, compiled predominantly of ethnographies of infrastructural disruptions (Graham ed. 2010), shows the paradoxical helplessness of the most

prosperous population groups in the face of material/technical problems, most of all because of total ignorance of how the infrastructure works.

Mobility infrastructures are specific in that they require a lot of time to be constructed; their building may take the time comparable to infrastructure's entire 'lifecycle'. Time is also needed for their disassembling: as will be shown in chapters 3 and 4, the end-of-life of infrastructures may last longer than their 'normal service'. It's also possible that, after years of construction, infrastructures never start operation or they do start to work, but never work 'properly'. Instead, they immediately start to decline – as happened to several trolleybus networks in Romania, where the rolling stock was never renewed after they started operating. In order to understand the various forms of crisis, we have to question the unilineal frames of long-term planning processes, and the irreversibility of developments (Sgibnev, Vozianov 2016).

Given that number of disasters and crises has increased over the last century and will probably continue to do so (Quarantelli et al. 2007, P.18), for the infrastructure scholars the breaks of normality are actually more interesting than normal functioning.

Understanding decline and crisis is challenging since both 'scholarship and popular ideology alike have for so long depended on tropes of development and progress, emergence and advance' (Ferguson 1999, P. 15). In my research I assume that not only normality and progress are culturally specific notions; but that there are different cultures of crisis and decline as well. In the European context, one of the most detailed and multi-sided accounts of life in crisis is an edited volume on Athens that provides various ethnographic vignettes of how age, gender, sex, race, and class in crisis affect urban practices of consumption, employment, mobility, solidarity, and dependent forms of violence (Brekke et al. 2014). Dalakoglou and Kallianos (2014) note that in this context similar interruptions of infrastructural flows (in this case, the cycle of waste utilization) might be perceived differently, depending on whether they were caused from above, by decision-makers, or by the personnel maintaining these flows. 'Crisis' is not only captured by dry data on the functioning of the system – but also by cultural and social dynamics and anticipations, fantasies and desires, in Larkin's words. It may be identified by the suspension of belief: something that never functioned properly might enter into crisis when people do not wait for improvement anymore. Shevchenko traces the normalization of crisis in the everyday life of Moscow, from a state of emergency into routine and permanency (Shevchenko 2008). Crisis

is also a temporal phenomenon, and for research on the post-socialist *period* of transition it should be seen as constitutive.

My research deals with experiences of crisis at the peripheries of Europe, in some heavily industrialized mid-sized cities of Eastern Ukraine and Eastern Romania. This culture of crisis is different than the one in Athens; however, similarly to Greece, Romanian and Ukrainian perceptions of crisis by different stake-holders – entrepreneurs, passengers and those whom I will call enthusiasts – influenced practices of management, civil engagement, and user opportunism performed in the deregulated public transit sphere. Following other studies of disrupted infrastructures, I will approach crisis also as chance for the growth of knowledge[7], an opportunity 'for the cultivation of new ways of doing and thinking politics' (Chatzidakis 2014, P. 39), and of popular mobilization. Chapter 2 will mostly deal with entrepreneurial mobilization practices, while chapter 4 will focus on grassroots forms of action, in an attempt to explore the epistemic potential of crisis.

Doing ethnography of mobilities and of passengering in particular is not a novelty anymore. Roads, railways, airports, and the temporalities they produce occupied an important place in scholarship on infrastructure and modernity.[8] Roads, despite having a particular spatiality – being among the most extended anthropogenic outputs – also produce time as they are planned, built, used, and removed. Roads are intended to propel the territories they serve into modernity but they sometimes far outstrip the modernity of the territory itself (Khan 2006, P.88) or they are constructed long before the appearance of vehicles that can use it (Dalakoglou 2010). Being state led engineering projects that 'operate as sites of contemporary governance' (Knox, Harvey 2011, P.142), mobility infrastructures incite both 'hope for a materially secure future' and 'anxieties of entrapment' (Reeves 2017, P. 711). At the intra-urban level, mobility infrastructures may generate less dramatic but equally complex meanings. Urban renewal projects have a 'speculative and futuristic nature' (Melly 2013, P. 387) and tend to be 'rationalizing present impossibilities' through 'spectacular expectations for the future' (ibid, P.399).

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[7] Connection between stress and knowledge was much earlier discussed by McLuhan who, in his comments on Selye's theory of disease (Selye 1956), argued that 'stimulus to new invention is the stress of acceleration of pace and increase of load' (McLuhan 1964, P. 42). Although, studies of crisis operationalize decline and shrinkage rather than extension, increase, and acceleration, an invention, apparently, may be relevant in connection to any of these changes. Galina Orlova has drawn attention to this conceptual linkage.

[8] One of the most comprehensive overviews of the ethnographic research done on roads, spelling out the relations between mobilities and time can be found in (Dalakoglou, Harvey 2012).

In the states of 'the socialist block', public transportation – as a technology and ideology, as a social and political phenomenon, and as an assemblage of artifacts – has a specific history, different from the Western European and North American one. While cities in the 'First World' were re-distributing urban spaces for the benefit of private cars, Eastern European urbanity was in some aspects close to contemporary aspirations of the car-free movement and the new urbanism activists.[9] Low motorization and the promising dynamics of Soviet public transportation developments were seen as a positive paradox in a totalitarian state (Crouch 1981). However, socialist and post-socialist mobility infrastructures are similar to many others outside of the region in that they represent both the past and the future as well as communicate hope or despair, depending on the context. The messages sent by such urban infrastructures are negotiated anew during times of change.

1.2 Urban public transit and socialist city

Public transit infrastructure was one of the showcases where socialist *progress* in building of socialism was exposed. Under Stalin, before WWII, Sheila Fitzpatrick writes, '[U]rban life in the Soviet Union <…> was a mess' (Fitzpatrick 2000, P. 52). Fitzpatrick mentions many examples of miserable public transit in cities such as Magnitogorsk, which only had 'a short streetcar route' and eight buses as of 1935 (ibid P. 54). However, much later Crouch (1981) noted how significant the progress in public transport made in post-war decades was. In 1975 Magnitogorsk, mentioned by Fitzpatrick, had 318 tramcars with track length 127.8 km tram lines.[10] A Czechoslovak enterprise ČKD Tatra alone produced more than 17,000 tramways between 1950 and 1990 which were exported exclusively to socialist Europe with a few minor exceptions.[11] Also, the ubiquity of public transport was visible on the socialist images of street spaces such as on postcards, in films, books etc. An impressive number of vehicles, lines, depots etc. across most socialist countries were a bright and transparent testimony of *process of socialism.* One could easier spot the transportation others were using than their housing; so one could notice that something was *being* done to improve public transit. Even if such improvements were, as a rule, insufficient, they represented the

[9] See for example the Charter of New Urbanism at https://www.cnu.org/who-we-are/charter-new-urbanism
[10] http://magnitogorsk-tramway.narod.ru/about.html
[11] https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tatra-Stra%C3%9Fenbahn

growth in comparison to the past. Street urban infrastructures were therefore important for the collectively shared perceptions of an improving quality of life.

The emphasis on the visibility of infrastructure construction did not mean that its effects were reduced to the spectacle: many people indeed used public transit on an everyday basis throughout the socialist period. Soviet figures on transportation demonstrate that the use of different modes of public transit was dominant in comparison to cars.[12] Public transit was a space where different social segments of society had to meet and spend time together, with no divisions like first or second class, or female carriages. Commuting was probably a more mundane and less social everyday experience than ideologists liked it to be. 'A human is a friend to a human. Who is a passenger to a passenger?' appealed a hero of the movie 'First trolleybus'[13] to the collectivity of his fellow travelers whom he only knew from the daily trolleybus trips, in order to ask an informal favor from them. The combination of formal regulations and informal expectations during rides suggested commuters to conceive themselves as kind of 'a short-term (one ride long) *adhoc-Gesellschaft***,** which was more than an aleatory mixture of sexes and strata' (Porombka 2011, P. 89). In practice, the collective was primitively performed through various rules of etiquette – like giving a seat to the elderly, taking others' child or bag on the knees, giving a hand to those getting off, validating tickets with the hard-punch *komposter* for the passengers standing at a distance from it etc. Both keeping to these rules and breaking them was present in the memories of my interviewees. Using public transport was *normal*, with nothing to be stigmatized or ashamed of. Discursive othering would rather happen in the case of a taxi-cab – which was used only on special occasions. In the famous Soviet movie *The Diamond Arm* one of the heroines produced what later became a popular aphorism: *'our people do not take a taxi to the bakery'*.[14] Though taxis and private cars became a notable phenomenon in urban culture[15], for the majority they remained only a dream throughout the socialist epoch.

Multi-modal mobility in a planned (anti-)economy

The socialist system of public transit was using, though not perfectly, the principle of intermodality, that is coordination and distribution of the transport modes' functions

[12] http://istmat.info/node/9297 – the statistics for UET, http://istmat.info/node/9296 – for buses https://genby.livejournal.com/439044.html – for cars.
[13] *Pervyy trolleybus [First trolleybus]* Dir. Isidor Annensky. Gorky Film, Odessa Film. 1964. 39th minute.
[14] *Brilliantovaya ruka [The Diamond Arm]* Dir. Leonid Gaidai. Mosfilm. 1969. 44th minute.
[15] See (Siegelbaum 2008).

according to the volumes of passenger flows. Large passenger flows were considered to be inappropriate for bus, and thus were delegated to trolleybus; even larger flows were envisioned for the tram; the subway had to carry the largest ones. In most cases, the mode of public transit for particular connection was defined by planning institutions and did not involve actors at the local level; there was no contact between those who planned and the end-users, so the responsibility for planning mistakes was depersonalized. Similarly, high infrastructural expenditures were reimbursed by the institutions of centralized command-planning economy (or, as some argue, anti-economy (Halperin 1994). At the user end, different modes of public transit bore specific meanings both as facilities to carry people and as representations of comfort, speed, and modernity. The subway existed in the largest cities of the socialist block – almost exclusively those with a population of over one million exhibiting metropolitan urbanity. One famous example is the pompous architecture of Moscow subway. Along with the artwork in Socialist Realist style, the metro also had some elements of religious architecture (Jenks 2000, P. 718); 'the lavishly ornate Moscow subway served for more than half a century as a showcase of Soviet socialism' (Wolf 1994, P.1). The subway was so important, that state leaders sometimes interfered into its planning and construction.[16] For many newcomers from the province and other 'guests of the city' (*гости города,* a common Russian expression to denote visitors from other places), the subway was the first place to encounter modern technologies like turnstile and moving stairs – after 2000 precisely these were to transform the subway into museum and even a 'shelter to hide in from modernity', where, for example, the mobile network signal was absent (Zaporozhets 2014). The subway being an exceptional sign of a metropolis, most cities relied on the surface public transit only. Buses were the most ubiquitous mode of transportation, especially after WWII; present in virtually every town and settlement of an urban type. Only most busy lines enjoyed articulated vehicles. Buses were often first mode to come to newly built areas, suburbs, seasonly active locations like dachas, beaches etc. Even 'urban-type settlements' (*poselki gorodskogo tipa*) had their *own* bus lines with *separate* numeration (that is, starting from number 1), presenting a kind of elementary self-sufficient urbanity.

Share-taxis that will be the main topic of the second chapter, existed in some large cities already under state socialism, as early as during the interwar period (Kuznetsov 2015).

[16] Numerous accounts of Stalin doing so in Moscow and Ceasescu in Bucharest can be found in Internet.

For instance, in Kiev several routes of state-owned route-taxi (*marshrutnye taksi*) connected different locations to the railway station; alternatively, they would serve areas with a low passenger flow, where bigger vehicle capacities would remain unused. In Bucharest share taxis were refered to as *maxi-taxi*; similarly to route-taxi in Soviet cities, they were slightly more expensive and fast. Maxitaxis were run by the city public transport enterprise as fill-in services between the peaks and in the evenings on routes where the full conventional bus services cannot be justified (Banister 1981). Pârvulescu's edited collection of popular memoirs mentions night maxi taxis in communist Bucharest (Pârvulescu 2015 P. 239). Minibus transport could be found in smaller cities as well, although not everywhere. One can suppose that the combination of additional comfort and additional costs seemed reasonable only for irregular rides to the airport and railway station, or for nocturnal commuting. Either they could be considered a low-budget substitute for taxis, but not for public transit. During weekdays socialist urbanites travelled from home to work and back on municipal buses, trolleybuses, trams, and the subway. Pârvulescu includes tram and trolleybus in her ‚Small dictionary of terms from communism' (*Mic dicționar de termeni din comunism*), though she also includes taxi-cabs that were ‚almost impossible to be found in a situation of urgency' (Pârvulescu 2015, P. 381-382).

Socialist construction of technology: urban electric transport as unity

Tramway and trolleybus occupied a specific place in the mobility infrastructures of socialist world. Their shared specifics were of administrative, material, and cultural kind. The socialist era has left enormous infrastructure of urban electric transport (UET). More than 200 trolleybus and tramway networks were constructed in the Soviet Union alone. Pavel Ziuzin, geographer who conducted several trips to hard-to-reach former or currently functioning UET systems, noted that 'by 1990 Central, Eastern Europe plus ex-USSR had the worldwide largest complex of networks of passenger electric transport (…) concentrating more than two thirds of trolleybus networks, two thirds of tramway networks and one quarter of world`s subways'(Ziuzin 2013).

Despite significant technological differences, the tram and trolleybus systems in the USSR presented an administrative, legislative, statistical, and imaginary entity called 'urban electric transport' (*горэлектротранспорт* in Russian, *місьекелектротранспорт* in Ukrainian). This differed from Italy, USA and other countries where one would often find one

line served with both buses and trolleybuses, at random; such a line would be generally called bus line. In many socialist cities the numbering of lines was separate for every mode of transport, so that bus number 6 and trolleybus number 6 could have common stop but follow two different lines afterwards. UET was subordinate to the Ministry of Housing and Utilities of the RSFSR (*Министерство коммунального хозяйства*), unlike buses and subways. In 1937 – 1988 the Main Department of Tramways and Trolleybuses, Glavtramvai (*Главтрамвай*) existed in Moscow and was a coordinating state body that actively intervened into the management of urban electric transport on the local level.[17] In cities, the local responsible body was usually called the Tramway and trolleybus Department (*Трамвайно-троллейбусное управление,* ТТУ).

The trolleybus was perceived and managed as closer to the tramway than to the bus, because of the materialities like specific overhead wiring and rails. In some way the public transport niche of tram and trolleybus was intermediary between bus and subway. To promote these two modes, apparently, different advantages were stressed: the trolleybus was perceived as more independent and mobile, while the tram as more metropolitan and capacious. In particular cases the trolleybus was promoted as a more contemporary successor to the tram. In Soviet and especially post-Soviet practice, trolleybus lines were promised and, eventually, constructed in order to reduce discontents from the removal of tramway as a more legitimate substitute than bus.

Tram and trolleybus were united by electricity, which was both victory over darkness and a process of power injection (Hughes 1993; Coppersmith 1992; Stancu 2014), largely overlooked by anthropologists (Gupta 2015). Electricity was also considered as a tool of dystopian capitalist displacement of personal time including time for sleep (Crary 2013). On the other side, if coming from renewable sources of energy it can oppose oil that hinders democracy by concentrating the revenues in the hands of repressive, conservative state governments (Ross 2001; Mitchell 2011). Li (2008) connected the urgency of transition to renewable electric energy with the imperative for socialism, and in the USSR, quite straightforwardly, the ‚electrification of the entire country' was claimed as a defining element of communism. Electricity, though not fully renewable in today's sense of renewability, was created by one of the largest socialist infrastructures – hydroelectric stations and nuclear

[17] *Трамвай был в НКВД (продолжение)* http://forum.tr.ru/read.php?1,104748, Постановление СНК РСФСР от 10.05.1940 N 334 "О структуре Народного Комиссариата Коммунального Хозяйства РСФСР" http://lawru.info/dok/1940/05/10/n1194688.htm

power plants. In such a way, the choice of energy sources can carry sociopolitical meanings, and transportation is one of the mediums to express them. The introduction of electric transportation at fin-de-siècle in Western Europe, McKay (1976) argued, was discovered as a source of profit for transport companies and simultaneously proved to be revolutionary in connecting working class to the social and cultural life of the city. In a different historical setting – state socialism – the development of electric transport should be approached from a governmental perspective rather than an entrepreneurial one. The construction of a transport infrastructure was conducted by the state and expressed its most general concerns. In Romania after WWII 'a policy of self-sufficiency and energy conservation switched the focus back to the railways' (Turnock 2005). In USSR, Zjuzin (2012, P. 7) argues, trolleybus networks were constructed en mass after the 1st (1973-1974) and 2nd (1979-1982) energy crises. In the USSR the development of tram and trolleybus systems envisioned a spatial structure of power supply that contested, or at least diminished the dependence on oil resources. Intended or not, this made UET into a part of communism as well, which was illustrated by the phrase attributed to a Soviet politician Mikhail Kalinin: 'If the tramway works in the city, it means that here works the Soviet power'.

Mentions of tramway and trolleybus in socialist block are dispersed across historical accounts dedicated to urban life in general (Kotkin 1997; Fitzpatrick 2000), which don't go into much detail though. Particularly overlooked are differences between 'first' and 'second' world in what Schmucki called 'technological fashion' (Schmucki 2010): on example of East and West Germany Schmucki shows how a socialist state develops trams just at the same time as a capitalist state removes them. Geography of tramway and trolleybus proliferation in socialist decades illustrates the inherent political nature of technology described by Winner (1980). An especially clear example is Berlin, where tramways were fully dismantled in the Western part, but preserved and developed in the East. Soviet technical publications from the 1980s feature some ideas ‚ignored' in Western Europe in the 1950s and ‚re-discovered' in the early 1990s: e.g. the advantageousness of separate tramway lanes, the prioritization of the tramway by traffic light systems etc.[18] While in London, Paris, Stockholm, New York, Hamburg streetcars were scrapped, 'ugly' wires removed, and automobile infrastructures extended, in socialist Kharkiv, Riga, Bucharest, trams and trolleybuses were seen as a

[18] See, for example (Veklich, Zbarskij 1980).

promising technology. With very few exceptions (e.g. Albania) urban electric transport developed all over socialist Europe. Socialist urban planners envisioned the tramway as the spine of the transportation system, exceeding the capacities of trolleybus and bus. The vehicles were designed correspondingly: the Romanian double-articulated tramways V3A could carry up to 350 passengers and thus were purposed for the larger passenger flows along the wide avenues.[19]

The socialist epoch developed and exploited the tramway and trolleybus as tools for building the reliable, stable urban space that stitched socialist cities together. Trams and trolleybuses had (more than bus did) capabilities to change the urban landscape visually with their catenary poles, wires, and rails: for instance, Ackerman wrote about Vilnius as an entity linked together by trolley wires (Ackermann 2017, P. 42). Tramway rails brought coherence to the space in the neighborhoods where asphalted roads were still absent and after rain the street would literally lose its shape (such streets still could be found in Mariupol as of 2013). Rails, poles, and wires were the artifacts produced by planning that created a feeling of durability. Unlike buses, throlleybuses and especially trams were driven by women (Schmucki 2002), implying that these two technologies were easier to master because the trajectory of the vehicle was bound to overhead wiring and, for the tram, to rails. Tram and trolleybus could not be hijacked and indecently used for private purposes. The colloquial sayings stated: ‚not a tram – will drive around' (*ne tramway – objedet*); ‚if there are rails, it won't turn aside' (*raz est provoda – ne svernet*). Not infrequently, UET artifacts delineated urbanity geographically: 'the city' ended where the rails and wires ended, and the territory next to the end loop was referred to as 'outside the city' (*za gorodom*).

UET as promise for the future

In his book about the construction of the socialist city of Magnitogorsk, Kotkin writes that 'in January 1935, the first streetcar was ceremoniously put into operation, bearing a portrait of Stalin' (Kotkin, P. 131-132) and 'received considerable publicity as an emblem of the city's modernity' (P. 132). Despite many *parts* of Magnitogorsk lacked trams or any other means of communication for a long time after, the city as a whole already had a tram.

[19] In post-Soviet countries separate lanes for tramways were more widespread in socialism then afterwards: contemporary criticism of moving the tramline from separate line onto street running track is often supported with an empirical evidence that the inverse transformation does not occur – so the tramway`s status is usually downgraded and not upgraded.

Tramways and trolleybuses evoke hope in a long-term perspective. It takes a while to construct the infrastructure for them; it is also impossible to remove this infrastructure at a whim. The construction process promises a future improvement; a normalcy to be achieved gradually. The indirect social effects of tram and trolleybus infrastructures take place already at the stage of construction, long before vehicles actually start to run the line and carry passengers: the landscape changes, the maps include the new line with a note 'under construction', and the media detail the forthcoming start of operation. A tourist guide of Gorlovka of the 1970s mentions something that is not there yet, but *will* be in the city: a trolleybus network on the main avenues (Zhil'cov 1977, P.22). Trolleybuses and tramways appear eight times on the first 22 pages of this thin book, presenting Gorlovka as an example of '*prescriptive'* socialist city (Hirt, Ferenčuhová, Tuvikene 2016, P. 504) which is planned rather than really happening. Being constructed for the future, UET is hard to criticize from today's viewpoint: the system is permanently under construction, and the insufficiency of what it *is* now becomes rhetorically neutralized with what it *will be*, reproducing patience and hope. The material artefacts foster believe and hope even when they cease functioning – and the vignette opening this chapter exemplifies the persistent importance of the former plans for their consumers. Plans thus can be present not only in unfinished constructions, but also in unfinished demolitions.

Tram and trolleybus systems in the socialist block were most intensively constructed during the 1980s. The following decade was in a radical contrast with only a few line construction projects (mostly those started off in the 1980s) finished and even a smaller amount of new extensions started after 1990. Several cities remained with unfinished construction sites. Among them, Kamianske (Dniprodzerzhinsk until 2016) where the fast tram line was to connect a large sleeping area with the old districts over the river Dnipro. Construction has started in the late 1980s, to be never finished. However, a strip of land reserved for the line, as well as wiring stalls and staircases leading to the platforms of half-built stations still remind of these plans.[20]

Beyond being a symbol manifesting the state's power and ability to construct, UET infrastructures among some others shaped different dimensions of socialist urbanity: such as planning discourses, everyday mobility practices, and the social perceptions of the functioning

[20] More photos and historical details here http://transphoto.ru/articles/3339/

city. Tellingly, in 2017 local historians and transport fans in Iași, Romania, chose the tram to be a moving platform for an exhibition about influences of the communist period on the city's space.[21]

1.3 Tramway, trolleybus, and the calibration of places in and after socialism

Along with subway, trolleybuses and trams serve as tools for the *calibration* of places in socialist space. Particularly, they enabled cities becoming mid-sized cities – a negotiated form between provincial and metropolitan cities. As one of the Soviet urbanist ideas was to overcome the opposition between city and village, the small and mid-sized city were important intermediary formations (Bakanov 2003). Different norms defined the amount of infrastructural provisions for particular groups of cities and towns. UET-enthusiasts believe[22] that quantitative criteria existed for a choice of transit mode to be constructed. Amateurs suggest that in the USSR the subway was envisioned for cities of over one million inhabitants, and tramway – for cities with half a million people; trolleybuses, finally, were to be expected in a city with above one hundred thousand residents.[23] However, the list of cities with subways, trams, and trolleybuses is not identical to the list of cities largest in population. For instance, in the capitals of the Armenian and Georgian socialist republics, Erevan and Tbilisi, a subway had been opened before their population reached one million. At the same time, in some cities in the RSFSR with over one million inhabitants the construction of a subway had not even started.

Typically, tramways and trolleybuses would appear in an administrative center of a province (*oblast'*). In the Ukrainian SSR by 1983 (when the trolleybus in Ivano-Frankivsk was opened), Uzhgorod remained the only oblast center without a UET, and this peculiarity is even mentioned in the city's Wikipedia page. Similarly to the situation with subways, the formal requirements for providing cities with UET were sometimes competing with other rationals. Czechoslovakia was characterized by high concentration of trolleybuses and trams, probably because it manufactured them; Georgia could justify the use of trolleybuses in so many small cities because of the country's mountainous terrains (on which electric engines

[21] https://www.facebook.com/Tramvaiul-Comunismului-Ia%C8%99i-304682610008002/
[22] *Численность населения и виды транспорта* http://forum.tr.ru/read.php?2,354074,page=all. Accessed 24.12.2015.
[23] It is also believed that Soviet transit planning was taking into account rather population size than city`s morphology – while nowadays, planners define need in rail transport often by outstretched shapes of settlement and correspondingly a strong load on the main corridor along which locals commute.

need less energy than diesel ones); and the Crimea boasted the world`s longest trolleybus line between Yalta and Simferopol being an all-USSR health resort. In the Latvian SSR every city with a population above 100 000 had a tram. In the Belarusian SSR two fast tram lines were constructed in the industrial mono-cities of Navapolatsk and Mazyr, of ca 200 000 each, while four larger oblast centers had to content themselves with trolleybuses. Vilnius and Bishkek, more than half a million residents each, did not have trams despite being the capitals of socialist republics. Finally, some tramway systems were dismantled in the Soviet Union as well as in Eastern and Central Europe: for instance, in the 1950s and 1960s the Ukrainian tramway networks were curtailed in Zhytomyr and closed in Simferopol and Chernivtsi; trams closed in the Moldovan capital Chișinău. Obviously, the logics for tramway and trolleybus systems were flexible and overlapping.

The most frequent reason for privileging a city with the tram or trolleybus network was a high degree of its industrialization. Upper Silesia in Poland, Kuzbas in the RSFSR, and Donbas in the Ukrainian SSR as showcases of socialist industrialization were particularly remarkable in this regard since here UET operated in dozens even in 'mining' cities with less than 100 000. The cities of Yenakiieve, Druzhkivka, Kostiantynivka, Kramatorsk, Avdiivka in the Donetsk oblast enjoyed tramway systems (sometimes *together* with trolleybuses), while many oblast centers around the Ukraine had only trolleybuses. In Russia, in the Rostov region, the heavily industrialized city of Shakhty (meaning 'Mines' in Russian) was probably the smallest one provided with both tram and trolleybus networks. Horlivka, Druzhkivka, Konstiantynivka, and Makiivka seemed to be unusual names for cities with tramways, because -ovka/-ivka in Slavic toponymy implies a settlement small in size and population, mostly of agrarian, non-urban character[24]; the life in these places was changing faster than their names.

Most electric transport networks in the Donetsk oblast' were opened in two waves, the 1930s and the 1970-1980s.[25] During these periods, the opening of tramway or trolleybus in a smaller city both expressed an expectation and a promise of its rapid growth and development in the near future. A plan also existed to connect several tramway cities into a big interurban

[24] Also I recall how the Internet users, outraged by complete removal of UET from city of Shakhty in 2007 suggested to 'rename the city back to Aleksadrovsk-Grushevskiy (city's names until 1921 – A.V.)', implying that short and catchy name does not any more fit to the place which was as less ambitious to demolish tram and trolleybus lines.
[25] Druzhkivka stands out of pattern, having its tramway proudly opened in 1945.

network similar to the Silesian interurban in Poland that covers more than a dozen cities. Avdiivka would become linked to Donetsk, Kostiantynivka to Druzhkivka, Lisichansk to Severodonetsk and so on – like the cities in Upper Silesia.

In a provincial city electric transport was not only a means of commuting but a matter of status. Contributing to its construction and operation was prestigious: the largest local enterprises in smaller cities often assisted the UET with electric energy (Tarkhov Kozlov Olander 2010, P. 382 on Kramatorsk, P. 498 on Makiivka), supplies, and workforce (ibid, P.438 on Luhansk, P. 371 on Kostiantynivka). In a few cases Ukrainian tramway and trolleybus networks were build at the initiative of the local executive power authorities (*vykonkomy*) (ibid, P.364)[26] or industrial enterprises (P.11). Also, there is evidence of the Gorkovsky method of 'people's construction' (*narodnaia stroika*) – that is, the engagement of large groups of non-professionals in the process of the installation of infrastructures: the tramway in Konotop is the best known but not the only Ukrainian example: ‚in Druzhkivka all city residents weekly took part in laying of the roadbed and rails' (P.200); in Horlivka the construction took place as all-city *subbotniks* [Saturday volunteering work] (P. 97). Also, at the initiative of the local authorities trolleybus systems were constructed in such small settlements as Solonceni, Moldova and Novaya Bukhtarma, Kazakhstan. Although both networks existed for a few years only, they exemplified the possibility of circumventing the standardized quantitative criteria of ‚necessity for UET'.

Also in Romania the development of UET infrastructures was connected to industrialization. Practically each tramway city had tram lines to the industrial zones, and for many cities (Craiova, Cluj-Napoca, Brașov, Botoșani, Reșița) this was the only type of destination where the lines from sleeping areas led to. Several tramway systems – mostly in the Western part of the country – existed here before socialism, but the boom of tramway construction – seven tramway systems opened in seven years (Taplin 1993) – happened here at the very end of Ceaușescu era, with the newest tramway network opened in Botoșani as late as 1991. The smallest tramway city in Romania, Reșița, with a population of 95000 in 1992 and declining afterwards was called the 'village with tram' (*satul cu tramvaiul*), but in fact the tram line here connected high-rise apartment blocks with the machine building factory RENK. Similarly to the USSR, in Romania some cities with smaller populations like Reșița (96,918)

[26] Consider, in Konotop 'The tram was constructed without the approval of the project and the permission of Council of Ministers of Ukrainian SSR' (Tarxov, Kozlov, Olander 2010, P. 364).

and Botoșani (126,145) enjoyed the tram prior to, for example, the city of Pitești (179,337), which never had UET (populations indicated as of 1992 (National Institute of Statistics)). Trolleybuses in Romania kept on proliferating even after the fall of the Ceaușescu regime, in the first half of the 1990s – probably in an attempt to preserve the market for the manufacturer of trolleybuses, ROCAR, which only became defunct in 2002.

Although in totalitarian states the capital city acquires exclusive meaning and receives overt attention (De Betania 1992; Daum 2005), sometimes at the cost of other cities within a country (Rossman 2016), socialist urbanism demonstrated more complicated distinctions – particularly, between province and periphery. Urban electric transport was a tool of putting the geographical periphery into the center of planning attention, of contesting the provinciality – understood as mediocrity and banality of the place. Transport infrastructure influenced the urban imagination and the quality of local urbanity. UET, starting from the planning stage, was a means of communication between the structures of power and citizens. Being constructed by the working class and for the working class, it both responded to the 'need for a tram' and shaped the idea of such need in the socialist city. Simultaneously, UET mediated the circulation of material supplies, of specialists, and technologies between distant locations including the less central (but not less urban) ones.

Post-socialist urbanism. The end of the socialist era brought about multiple transformations in how cities were managed and how they functioned. One of the ways to think about urban practices in Eastern Europe after 1990 is to view them within a broader context of post-socialist change. This means the sudden introduction of 'civil society, marketization, privatization, and nationalism' (Verdery 1996, P. 334), or of the 'transition, markets, and democracy' (Chari, Verdery 2009, P. 11) into the once socialist city, foreshadowing the imposition of neo-liberalism through 'consumerism, gentrification, gating, privatization of public space' (Jakobsson 2014, P. 20). Of course, I cannot deny the importance of these trends for the cities where I worked. The urban life after socialism here does bear the traces of the free market and the weakening of state control – but does so in a way different from what 'the winners of transition' experienced.

Post-socialist urbanism – as the implementation of ideas about urbanity in a specific historical setting – is often expressed through changes in patterns of housing development (Florea, Gagyi, Jacobsson 2018), suburbanization (Hirt 2007; Sýkora Ourednek 2007), and mall-ization (Zhelnina 2011), as well as conflicts around public space, monuments, and

historical heritage (Darieva, Kaschuba, Krebs 2011; Hirt 2012; Tykanova, Khokhlova 2013).[27] Post-socialist mobilities are described in the terms of an emerging car culture: with car on credit, traffic jams, chaotic parking and its side-effects like semi-legal, precarious *parcagii* (parking assistants in Romania) compensating for the insufficiency of infrastructure for stationary automobiles (Chelcea, Iancu 2015). This description usually puts the post-socialist city in opposition to the Old Europe with its 'tramway renaissance' (Topp 2005): the removal of trams between the 1930s and the 1970s is widely acknowledged now as a mistake, and about 50 new tram systems have been opened in the cities of Western and Southern Europe since 1990. However, there was no homogeneity in the UET domain in the post-socialist region, just as there was no single post-socialist urbanism. Instead, the countries of the former socialist block differed radically in their approach towards public transit provision.

Table 1

Country	**Number of UET networks closed in 1991 – 2013**	
	Trolleybus	**Tramway**
Belarus`, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Czech Republic, Slovakia (in all)	**0 of 28**[28]	**0 of 17**
Romania	**8 of 19**	**4 of 15**
Russia	**6 of 91**	**10 of 75**
Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia (in all)	**16 of 18**	**4 of 4**
Ukraine	**3 of 46**	**2 of 25**
Uzbekistan	**9 of 10**	**0 of 1**
Bulgaria	**6 of 16**	**0 of 1**

[27]See also (Andrusz, Harloe, Szelényi eds. 2011).
[28] The higher figure is the number of all networks of trolleybus or tram correspondingly that existed between 1991 and 2013. That is, networks opened after 1991 are also included.

Table 1 shows that UET transportation in post-socialist countries developed in opposite directions. In some countries the tramway and trolleybus completely disappeared: consider Georgia where the tramway system in Tbilisi and all – more than a dozen – trolleybus systems have been dismantled.[29] In other countries, mostly in Central Europe, urban electric transport have remained the spine of public transit systems and have developed further. This disparity might reflect broader differences, e.g. those created by regional transnational regulation frameworks like the European Union that has transportation among its major points of concern.[30] The synchronous development within some countries may also testify how UET infrastructures depend on national and regional policies.

Bulgaria, Romania, Russia, und Ukraine find themselves in an intermediate position – in these countries some of the UET infrastructures were removed, but most remained in place. In many cities networks, although having survived, were curtailed (or: curtailed but survived?). Within countries themselves, patterns also differed. Several cities in Russia, the Ukraine, and Romania experienced *tramway pogroms* (*трамвайные погромы,* tramvainyie pogromy) – the rapid, deilberate eradication of tram networks, sometimes followed by use of the depot territories for real estate development.[31] Such pogroms obliterate considerable material assets within a short period of time. In the Ukraine tram networks were obviously a target for the authorities in Kyiv and Kharkiv, the two largest cities of the country. In Kyiv under the mayorship of Oleksandr Omelchenko several dozen of kilometers of tramway tracks were removed; in 2009 even the Livoberezhnyi fast tram was closed, yet again extended and re-opened in 2012.

The cities presented in my research experienced processes somewhat different from the intended rapid eradication of tram and trolleybus transport. My realization of the diversity of post-socialist urbanisms started as a result of my constant wanderings between two home cities. From 1995 to 2010 I travelled monthly between Rostov-on-Don, Russia, where I went to school and did my bachelor, and Mariupol, Ukraine, where my relatives lived. In my trips I could not fail to see two very different sets of urban transformation. My teenager's curiosity

[29] There is a functioning trolleybus system in Sukhumi, de-facto capital of unrecognized state of Abkhazia, not controlled by central Georgian government.
[30] "*The European Commission strongly encourages the use of public transport" (https://ec.europa.eu/transport/themes/urban/urban_mobility/urban_mobility_actions/public_transport_en)*
[31] For instance, the former depot territories were used for high-rise buildings in Voronezh and St. Petersburg.

about these two sites cannot count as an ethnographic observation, but some differences were more than obvious. New office and apartment buildings, regional supermarket chains, traffic jams, fancy chains, and posters with European bands were visible in Rostov, but not in Mariupol. The latter was unchangingly dominated by an industrial landscape with smoking chimneys of factories, petty trade, and ascetic grey-black outfits – the only one affordable for the local majority population. Some differences, however, could not be easily linked to Rostov's success and Mariupol's stagnation – precisely in regard of public transportation. Both in Mariupol and Rostov trams and trolleybuses were managed by municipal enterprises[32] and carried a lot of concessionary passengers, while marshrutkas made a commercial affair. However, the pattern of further UET development in the two cities was strikingly different. In Rostov the tram and trolleybus infrastructure was curtailed radically. The city of one million, having 22 trolleybus lines and 17 tram lines in 1995, kept only five tram lines and eight trolleybus lines in 2010. Throughout the same period in Mariupol only one section of tram track (line 2) disappeared, whereby the trolleybus network had been even extended with a section of ca 1.2 km (line 1). Later in Rostov-on-Don, a growing city of over a million inhabitants and official center of South Federal District of Russian Federation, I could easily recognize the scholarly descriptions of neo-liberalized cities and post-socialist privatization, in contrast with Mariupol, with population ca 463 000 as of 2011 and steadily declining since the early 1990s – midsized, shrinking, and not even an oblast center – differed. There was no housing construction boom, no traffic congestion, and, no malls until the 2010s; despite cuts in the schedule, there also was no removal of wires and rails. To make things more complicated, the city of Taganrog, Russia, with a population of ca 260 000 as of 2008, located half-way between Rostov-on-Don and Mariupol, showed similarities with Mariupol in regard of trams and trolleybuses: it retained all its tram lines and built two trolleybus sections within the same 15 years frame. Several cities in the Donetsk oblast', such as Druzhkivka, Horlivka, Kostiantynivka, and Vuhlehirsk, all shrinking and fairly unattractive for investments, preserved their electric transport infrastructures until 2013. As of 2013, there were very few exceptional cases of the complete disappearance of UET in Ukrainian cities. UET was removed in Stakhanov, arguably the smallest post-Soviet city with both trams and trolleybuses, though not the smallest one to have any of these two separately. In 2007 and

[32] Although there was a notable exception in Rostov between 1998 and ca 2007 – commercial and privately owned trolleybus line 6

2010 trolleybuses ceased operating in the small cities of Toretsk (until 2015 – Dzerhynsk) and Dobropolye (Dobropillia), having at the moment of closure ca 70 and 30 thousand inhabitants, respectively. Remarkably, a rushed sudden complete demolition of all tram and most trolleybus lines[33] in the mid-sized city of Makiivka (360,989 as of 2010) was believed to be caused by the city mayor's activity in the shared taxi (marshrutka) business. The rest of the UET systems persisted, despite recurring talks about their possible dismantlement. Since 2008 I followed the news about UET in Donbas online and became increasingly informed about several local initiatives in support of trams and trolleybuses – marginal, though not disappearing modes of transport.

Physical and virtual wandering allowed me to formulate several narrower questions which my future fieldwork addressed. What has the size of the city to do with patterns of urban transport development? How and in what ways is the state important for local histories of commuting? In which kind of city the preservation of socialist infrastructure was possible? How are inherited infrastructures invested with new meanings? Who formulates and mobilizes these meanings? In small Ukrainian cities, where different social groups acted in support of trams and trolleybuses, it was especially hard to locate this technology within specter of backwardness and progressiveness. Was the support for UET driven by nostalgia for socialism and the tram, hence, conceived of as a socialist heritage? Or, probably, the cities were leapfrogging the stage of intensive motorization in their development and proceeded directly to livability and sustainability? As my next chapters will show, it was none and both: the struggle for trams and trolleybuses was a struggle around their meanings.

1.4 Crisis and commuting in a midsized city

The following pages will introduce the two cities where I did most of my fieldwork. I will also briefly discuss other cities where some material for the research was gathered. When calling these cities 'mid-sized' I do not follow any strict quantitative classification of cities by size or population. Instead, via this adjective I refer to a situation where the quality of urbanity can be negotiated and labelled as provincial, rural, or, on the contrary, 'properly urban' – whereby public transit infrastructures play an important role in such negotiations. In midsized cities, the re-calibration of place and the contestation of previously experienced

[33] See the historical map visualizing demolitions here http://transphoto.ru/photo/107553/

urbanity became an additional dimension of an evolving crisis. For my ethnography, trams, trolleybuses, and share taxis were objects that per se materialized decline, uncertainty, poverty, and inequality; at the same time, from these vehicles passengers observed the signs of crisis in other domains of everyday life.

Participant waiting in a metallurgical city

Mariupol, located at the Azov Sea coast, is constituted of large industrial areas, spacious wastelots and unpretentious dormitory areas at the outskirts. The historical center of the city, with its 19th century low-rise housing and leafy streets produced a somewhat different image – of a seaport and even a resort, both of which Mariupol was, but to a far lesser extent than the industrial center.[34] Both the industrial areas and high-rise quarters are adjacent with terrains of shabby adobe housing, colloquially called *hatostroi* (*hata* means 'house' and *stroi* – is the stem of the verb 'to build').[35] The hatostroi next to the industrial facilities in the Illicha (since 3rd of March, 2016 – Kalmius) city district communicated a specific type of memory: locals remembered the plans of its demolition in Soviet decades. The residents of the adobe houses must have been resettled into new high-rise houses, and the demolition would provide space for the sanitary green zones. However, the demolition never happened. In this, the hatostroi simultaneously represented the failed plan of apartment blocks' construction and reminded about the failed plan of removal. While the combination of high-rise and 'rural' low-rise housing was typical of any Ukrainian city, visitors of the city were amazed by the gap between the green streets and boulevards near the seaside and the brutal industrial landscape of the Illicha district. The steelworks affected the specific toponymy that was colloquially used by the elder generations in Mariupol. For example, they used to denote some of the locations in the Illicha district by the number of the closest factory gate (*vorota*, with emphasis on a), so that in their mental maps the 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 5th and 8th *vorota* featured prominently, largely ignored by the official toponymy of tram stops and postal addresses.

Typically for any Ukrainian city, the tramway appeared in Mariupol earlier (1933) than epy trolleybus (1970) and later survived a serious re-structuring: early lines, connecting

[34] According to local media, in 2015 altogether parts of Metinvest industrial holding made up 42,2% of city's tax collection, whereas sea port made 3,8%. https://www.0629.com.ua/news/1627919

[35] In the context of Soviet Siberia Stas (2014) was writing extensively about the slum-like unplanned housing in industrial towns in the 1960-1980s inhibiting the formation of urban identity of their inhabitants.

the old city center with the port, were replaced by trolleybuses (starting from year 1970), and new tram lines were constructed between the industrial areas in the north of the city and the high-rise sleeping areas. The center and particularly the main Myru Avenue (Lenina until 2016) was serviced by trolleybuses. Housing construction happened before the construction of new lines: people would often be moved to a sleeping area without proper transportation being in place. In 1986, the newly build microraion Vostochnyi (Shidnyi), was serviced by a single bus route 22 that did not even connect the area to the city centre; instead, line 22 just took people to the steelwork in the rush hours. Nevertheless, the UET infrastructures were regularly extended: between 1970 and 1980 alone in Mariupol new tramline extensions were opened in 1973, 1982, 1983, 1988, and the pace of the UET network expansion was high even if insufficent. Also, a tram line to the suburb Staryi Krym was planned, as well as a line between Mariupol and Donetsk, and there was even an earth fill along the Mariupol – Donetsk roadway that reminded passers-by of the extension plans.

At the time of my research, the pensioners in Mariupol were closely relying trams and trolleybuses. Seniors were entitled to use the UET for free and they made up majority of its passengers; UET was the preferred and often the only type of transit used by seniors. Trams and trolleybuses were also important venues of social life. This sociality was not entirely anonymous – not so much because of the city's relatively small size, but due to scarcity of vehicles and consequently limited number of users. Waiting at stops I overheard numerous conversations about the city, rising prices, family life, and domestic issues. Also I conducted a survey among passengers waiting for the tram and trolleybus. The Mariupol Tram and Trolleybus Department kindly provided me with the schedules of tram lines 13 and 14 servicing the Illicha district, so I calculated the departure times for the six main stops on these lines and could provide each participant with an A4 paper print-out of the schedule. Some participants kindly agreed to be interviewed, which was a valuable addition to the interviews I did using the social networks of my family in Mariupol. My itineraries around the city as well as spending time with the elderly of Mariupol while talking and interviewing them, and importantly, waiting together with them formed the first empirical basis for the research and especially for chapter 3 on aging of bodies and vehicles in cities after socialism.

Looking for the periphery

In 2014 I could continue the research extending my fieldwork to Eastern or Southeastern Europe. With a vague idea of other countries in the region, I made urban electric

transport my lens criterion for selection. Romania as of 2014 had still trolleybus and/or tram networks in 17 cities, the largest number in South-Eastern Europe.[36] Most of them were a socialist legacy, just like 57 of the 66 Ukrainian UET systems. Both Ukraine and Romania during socialism were subject to a top-down command administrative planning divided in periods of five years (*п'ятирічка* in Ukraine and *cincinal* in Romania). While some regions in both countries were rather agrarian, others, mostly in the south-east in both countries, developed in a heavily industrial mode.

After the fall of the socialist regime, the two countries followed different trajectories in regard of their relationship to Europe and Europeanization. Romania, developing an intensive connection to the European Union, accessed it in 2009, and experienced rapid economic growth, despite remaining one of the poorest countries in the EU as of 2014. In socialist Romania the tendency to electricity use had been boosted by legal limits on petrol purchase and car use; correspondingly motorization was the lowest among the Socialist Bloc states (Siegelbaum 2013, P. 8). During the 2000s, several Romanian cities considered the removal of UET infrastructures. Remarkably, the complete removal was realized only in two cities, Constanță and Sibiu – burgeoning economic and tourist centers. Constanța is often called the second city of Romania as of size and importance – however, both trolleybus and tramway networks had been closed down here by 2010. As of 2017, Romania was the only EU country to have dismantled tram networks while being in the EU. Similarly to the Ukraine, in Romania some cities like Botoșani, Brailă, or Ploiesti preserved their tramway system, being smaller than Constanță. Interested by these parallels, I tried to select a Romanian mid-sized city with UET. As of 2015, there were five such cities in Romania with both trams and trolleybuses: București, Cluj-Napoca, Galați, Ploiești, and Timișoara, and I invested some time reading about those four that were not the capital city.

One more metalurgical city

Galați was peripheral in several respects. It was located at the border of Romania's and the EU, next to two non-EU countries – Moldova and the Ukraine. Galați was far removed from the touristic routes – be it domestic or foreign tourism. Having the eighth largest population in Romania, Galați was not well known even amongst those who regularly travelled around Romania. Romanians, when hearing that I planned to start my Romanian

[36] The second one was Bulgaria with a dozen of trolleybus systems and the only tramway network in Sofia.

fieldwork in Galați noted that I would not get a proper image of the country there. These aspects of peripherality were something that Galați and Mariupol shared.

In April 2015, the first thing I saw after entering Galați for the first time, from the side of the checkpoint, was the tramway loop Bazinul Nou near the entrance to the river port on the Danube. The tramway line however was defunct due to reconstruction works on the adjacent rail section; after being reactivated in June 2015 it was closed down again in March 2017; the rails however were not removed. The presence of inactive rails ready for later use proved later to illustrate well the urban condition in the region: infrastructural potential, suspense, hope, and uncertainty blended together here.

At some momentes Galați was strikingly reminiscent of Mariupol to me. Both cities were remote from the nearest airports: Chișinău, Iași, and București, or Rostov-on-Don and Donetsk were all no less than three hours of travel. In both cities, the gigantic steelworks MMK Illicha and SIDEX, formerly the workplace for many thousands, were acquired by international investors (Arcelor Mittal Steel and Metinvest correspondingly). Galați used to have an entire service infrastructure depending on SIDEX – a mineral port; liceums training specialists for the combinat; a football team; recreation facilities and hotels. After socialism these were transformed into ruines or replaced by commercial spaces.[37] The same could be said about Mariupol; here, however, the owners of the Steel Work also owned pharmacies, foodstores, and agronomic facilities. In both cities the housing built in the 1960-1980s was divided into microraions (*mikroraiony* in Mariupol and *micro-uri* in Galați) denoted by numbers instead of names etc. One of the principal avenues in both cities was named after the steelworkers (*вул. Металургів* in Mariupol, *strada Siderurgiștilor* in Galați). Galați and Mariupol had similar morphologies: an archipelago of micro-uri (microraions) separated the old part of the city from the steel works. It meant that many usually travelled only between the housing blocks and the factory, rarely seeing the city centre with its narrow streets and pre-socialist architecture. Galați, bordered by the Danube to the south, Steel Works to the west, and the Republic of Moldova to the east, was, under state socialism, supposed to grow in the direction of the nearest city of Brăila, ca 18 km up the Danube and south-west on the map.

[37] http://www.digi24.ro/special/campanii-digi24/romania-furata/romania-furata-sidex-combinatul-vandut-pe-nimic-269700

Galați and its Steel Works were connected by a viaduct featuring a tramline. The first tram in the city appeared long before socialism, in 1901, but in the 1970s it was in fact revived – as the city itself underwent transformations due to the metallurgy industry. The narrow gauge of the old tram had to be replaced by a standard gauge. During a period of time parts of the new and the old tram networks were working in parallel, so a complicated and convoluted layout of tram rails remained in the quarter around Piața Energiei. Between 1980 and 1991 the length of tram tracks in Galați doubled.[38] The tram tracks to the steel works were the busiest ones. More than half of the lines, some servicing during rush-hour only, connected different part of the city to SIDEX. Until the early 1990s the tramline on the viaduct was intensively used by multiple-unit tram systems approaching the factory gates one by one.

New tram lines were planned to connect Galați with Brăila as well as with the suburb of Bârlad, and memories of these plans still occasionaly circulate on the Internet. Trolleybuses were absent in industrial zones, instead – like in Mariupol – they served the main street of the old city, str. Brăilei.

Using a tram in Galați in 2015, was both similar and different to the east Ukrainian experiences. Like in the Ukraine, a lot of time I just waited with other people. Despite ongoing motorization, public transport still had an important share of trips made here. Similarly to Mariupol, Galați was full of maxi taxis – though they were not midi-buses but rather microbuses, like in Mariupol of the 1990s. In Galați, I spent a considerable part of my time in the library trying to reconstruct the post-socialist dynamics of the 1990s, including the arrival of maxi taxis, the decay of the metallurgy industry, and the preparations for EU accession. Together with the library research in Mariupol, as well as the interviews I did with local residents, this provided the bulk of the material for chapter 2 on shared taxis as an informal response to the fall of the socialist planning paradigm. I also met with a couple of local UET amateurs, who shared a lot about the organization of the public transit system in the city.

Unlike cities of Eastern Ukraine, due to Romania's EU accession people in Galați had higher expectations for the nearest future, so that the absence of tram services on some lines was explained as being the result of reconstruction. The trope of reconstruction, or rehab

[38] https://ro.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tramvaiul_din_Gala%C8%9Bi

presents a complication in terms of 'strengthening the historical perspective in research on so-called post-socialist cities by better recognizing the historical rootedness of their contemporary situation' (Hirt, Ferenčuhová, Tuvikene 2016, P. 506). The tram system in Galați did undergo a 'complete renovation' starting from the late 2000s. This meant that some lines were suspended long-term, while others were re-opened after rehab. Some would disappear after having been closed for reconstruction, so that the whole network was significantly curtailed compared to the time period before the general rehab started. When characterizing the transport system as good or bad, the locals relied on how it was before and what was awaited to change as much as to the current state-of-art. However, this historicity was also non-linear: rehab was a trope to counter the picture of linear decline.

During my stays in Galați I visited the neghboring city of Brăila several times. Brăila, with a population of about 180,302 (2011), was comparable with Galati. It also had a spatial radiant structure of ‚old centre – multistory dormitory area – industrial zone', though it was different in some details: for instance, it has a suburban tram line that connects to the resort lake Lacu Sarat, passing through extinct and decaying industrial facilities, to a ghetto called Colonia de Km. 10 – an ethnographic vignette of which I will provide in chapter 3.

Constanța: A place without crisis?

Among the other locations I visited for fieldwork in Romania, Constanța was a special one. Being located at the Black Sea coast, the city was re-establishing itself as a tourist resort. New shopping centers and real estate were growing along the coastal line, while industrial zones still existed at the periphery of the city, hidden away from the gaze of tourists. Another invisible feature was that local authorities had dismantled the extensive network of urban electric transport, consisting, at its peak, of five tram lines and a dozen of trolleybus lines.[39] Both modes of public transport started to be obliterated away swiftly in the mid-2000s and were completely eradicated from the city by 2008 and 2010 correspondingly. Locals and transport fans told me that the eradication of UET was carried out by Radu Mazăre, an infamous city mayor who was running a petrol business and was later persecuted for corruption. Traces of electric transport were hard to find, especially in the city center and the adjacent residential areas. Belarusian MAZ buses were purchased en masse to replace the

[39] Map of the network at the peak of its development http://transphoto.ru/photo/355098/

trams and trolleybuses. Tramway rails and catenary poles were still visible in some places (like viaduct Pasajul Cumpenei, from the Ceasescu period) and present in some local memories. An apartment block where I rented a room stood next to the bus stop Eforia Nord, formerly a busy trolleybus loop. People were crowding here to get onto one of the buses. The service, though frequent, was quite unpredictable – some cars went to the garage in the middle of the day; and all the vehicles were permanently crowded. Buses were approximately three times smaller than the V3A tram wagons that previously operated in Constanța. Before the demolition of the tram, one of its stops was just one street away from Eforia Nord bus station. Discontented passengers called Mazăre names and sardonically 'thanked' him for substituting the UET with something that they considered substandard.

In the media and in conversations I heard about plans for a light metro (*metrou ușor*): it would be a suitable mode of transit for the long extended shape of Constanța with its pronounced north–south passenger flows, but it was very expensive in construction – more expensive than a tramway, it was said. In the absence of a *metrou ușor*, taxi drivers met arrivers near the exit from the railway station and offered their services. Special buses would take passengers to the Mamaia coast for a higher price but at a faster speed than regular buses. My host in Constanța, a young manager who happened to have moved here from Galați six years ago, drove a car and did not know whether trolleybuses were still operating there. Interestingly, he was sure that trolleybuses functioned in his home city which he visited frequently. Other locals with whom I spoke about how they get around the city, did not mention the eradication of UET in Constanța. Probably, its *disappearance* was meaningful for them, but its *absence* was not; and the process of disappearance did not *last* long. Constanța was a vivid case of developments such as these can and can be *not* conceptualized as crisis. Instead of crisis, the abandonment, decay, and dismantlement proceeded here in the form of an official swift campaign. The UET infrastructure did not remain for long in *between* socialist normality and post-socialist extinction. One of the limitations of my work is that it cannot pay attention to cases such as Constanța. Instead, I focus on the cases where crisis does appear as a discursive construct and a way of life and how decay and disappearance last, retreat, and recommence.

Anti-crisis urbanism?

My multi-sited ethnographic evidence of post-socialist urban change has been compiled of different situations of peripherality, uncertainty, and crisis in the city – a

condition that I can label ‘crisis urbanism’. It is something different than crisis urbanism in the Global North ‘characterized by new forms of social inequality, heightened housing insecurity and violent displacement’ (Brickell, Arrigoitia, Vasudevan 2017). Particularly, there has been no construction boom in post-socialist Mariupol or Galați (and other cities I visited, except Constanța). Instead, the microraion Vostochnyi in Mariupol was full of sites of unfinished structures – skeletons of apartment blocks which became a dangerous playground for children. Ironically enough, this stagnation made these places less vulnerable for aggressive neo-liberal projects. If elsewhere a tram depot terrain was appropriated by developers to build a skyscraper (and I am referring here to particular post-socialist cases in Voronezh, Kyiv, Sankt-Petersburg, Rostov-on-Don and many other post-Soviet places), similar terrains formerly used by UET were left untouched for decades in Mariupol, Kamianske (Dniprodzerzhinsk), Galați, or Constanța. If in the first set of cases the tram rails were frequently removed to broaden the streets for cars, in the latter rails of suspended lines would remain on the road surface for decades. In Druzhkivka, in the mid-2000s the rails were buried under asphalt because it was too expensive to remove them, and a decade later those rails enabled an easier re-introduction of the tram service – rail workers had just to shovel the asphalt away.

The urban crisis in the mid-sized industrial cities has provoked unplanned changes in mobility practices, but also explains the absence of particular changes. First, the majority of the local population cannot afford buying an automobile, and car ownership in these cities even now remains relatively low. For many of the urban poor, one of the most common ways to get around in the 1990s were bicycles, partially replaced by mopeds and scooters after 2000. Using public transport has remained a common practice and as such has hardly acquired a class connotation.

People living in Mariupol, Galați, and Kostiantynivka experienced different types of crises and did so under different conditions. To be more precise, after they all faced the fall of the socialist planning system in the 1990s, they have been going through the specific sequences of ‘troubles’. In Mariupol the socialist practices and legacies of Soviet temporal order were being reproduced, quite efficiently in some aspects: large industrial enterprises continued to work and maintained a feeling of stability at the city level, despite the utter uncertainty in the region. The economy in Kostiantynivka entered into a deep depression: the glass factory, one of the largest in USSR, was closed down, and precisely its apparent failure to reproduce the previous order was palpable and important. In Galați the crisis was

articulated through the transition from an industrial site to a European city – a process that harnessed a great deal of trust but lasted longer than expected and was not quite going in the direction people expected. What connects these 'crisis urbanisms' with Arrigoitia's concept of crisis urbanism is the blurring of boundaries between normalcy and phenomena that could be seen as anomalous but still 'inside of normality' possible under the auspice of crisis and waiting.

The cities I studied were also similar in that they all were losing their importance as industrial centers, and this change or 'update' of identity was a challenge to many residents. Probably it is the spatial constitution of post-socialism that has led the researchers' attention away from smaller cities to the 'main cities', with entire volumes dedicated to post-socialist capitals (Makas, Conley eds. 2009) or even one particular center, for instance, Warsaw (Grubbauer, Kusiak 2012). As Kovács (1999, P.5) noted, though many cities were counted amongst the winners of transition, there is a significant number of cities in poverty, recession and decay following the end of socialism. Such cities, apparently, might be found in post-socialist states undergoing spatial re-configuration and re-balancing between regional and provincial centers. The Katowice conurbation in Poland, Daugavpils in Latvia, Ostrava in Czech Republic, and Košice in Slovakia are among those 'losers of transition' that have faced the hardships of reforms in an especially troublesome way although they have endured them in different ways. Crisis urbanism is thus the urbanism of the periphery; the provincial leftover of the socialist command economies. Such peripheries, where there often is a special engagement of different social groups in the city's management, are characterized by the absence rather than the presence of the state. That is why zooming into these mid-sized heavily industrialized cities I on purpose avoid staying inside of the realm of the national state. The structure of the text is thus not case- , but topic-oriented: by comparing the overlooked mid-sized cities at the European periphery chapters 2 to 5 will analyze the specific assemblages of infrastructural crisis. We will see how the tram and trolleybus crises may contest provincial urbanity, remind of previously existing aspirations, undermine mechanisms of social assistance, and signal cultural shifts in urban life. Through crisis assemblages tram and trolleybus technologies may drift between the past and the future, recalibrate cities, and locate these cities inside and outside of the European map. If trams become vehicles of what Green (2013) calls 'relocation of Europe' – that is, of redrafting of European borders and ideas, – one can ask: where are the passengers when they are in a tram? Is it Europe already happening to them or is it only a way to move closer to it and to accelerate its coming? The

locating in time and locating in space are closely intertwined phenomena at the periphery, since the boundary between spaces or regions is often articulated though categories of backwardness and progress.

For all that, I am probably writing about *anti*-crisis urbanism instead. Not only entrepreneurship and civic activism, but the mere being at a tram stop means hoping for the better, resisting the crisis, and protesting – a function of waiting that Jansen (2015) observed in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Urban crisis and waiting at the Romanian and Ukrainian peripheries are connected in many ways. People have had to wait because of the crisis quite literally – at the tram stop. Waiting has also been related to uncertainty about the future in the place where people live; it expresses a 'yearning for a normal life' – a kind of aspiration familiar to other peripheries of Europe, particularly, Balkans (Jansen 2015; Brkovic 2017, P.48). However, the fact that urbanites try to tackle the situation means that for them the situation has not become normality – which is the opposite of crisis. Here crisis as a performative category exists until their plans and hopes for the better are still there. When such plans and hopes, efforts and aspirations cease to exist – it is impossible to talk about the crisis: the absence of tram at the formerly busy line becomes a new norm. My ethnographic goal is therefore to understand what do people wait for when they wait for a tram? Which wishes, expectations, and ideas of the future are eradicated together with the rails and wires, even abandoned ones?

Post-socialist trams and trolleybuses can be both an embodiment of crisis and a means to counter the crisis, and the following chapters will show social groups engaging with UET under uncertainty and disorder. Like other urban infrastructures, trams and trolleybuses are only two among many elements that can constitute a perceived quality of life; however, they are often used to estimate the general quality of life in a particular location. Malfunctioning, agonizing, and indefinitely suspended tram and trolleybus systems are still functional insofar as aspirations and expectations can be included into this 'quality of life'. If we assume they can, the breakdown of aspirations is experienced as a degradation in itself. When old aspirations go and new ones come, the pre-existing material armature of trams and trolleybuses can be reinserted into the new futures.

2. Commuting during the collapse of planning: shared taxis after 1990

In 1990 transport in Mariupol suffered from strong shortage of diesel fuel, and even worse was the situation with petrol. The last years of the Soviet Union and the first years of the independent Ukraine brought about substantial difficulties in energy provision. Prices for electricity, gasoline and diesel fuel increased rapidly, in line with inflation and the economic disintegration of the former Soviet Union. Buses were the first mode to experience the fuel shortage (petrol and diesel oil) and thus severe cutbacks of service occurred. In early 1994 almost every issue of 'Priazovskii Rabochii' (*Приазовский рабочий*, literally 'The worker of Priazovia', hereinafter *PR*), the most popular local newspaper of Mariupol, opened with reports about buses in trouble:

> *Practically all the bus stops are full of passengers unable to get to the workplace in time [...] overall, 4,300 engineers, technicians and workers were late for work [...] Thereby, only during this one morning the combined losses made up 268 man-days. [...] In units and sections of our manufacture where continuity is pressing the employees had to stay at their workplace until their colleagues from next shift arrived.*[40]

During the rush hours people queued at stops, were unable to enter the overcrowded buses and unwillingly broke doors when trying to board by all means. In order to get into a vehicle they walked to the end station, or took the bus in the opposite direction and stayed inside a vehicle around the terminus – if the driver did not object to that. Drivers used to pass crowded stops without stopping and halt half-way to the next one – only to let some people out. At the time, there were also fake conductors who sold tickets simultaneously in the second carriage of a two-unit tram: so by the moment the real conductor came out from the first wagon to enter the second one the passengers would already have given their money away.

In Galati during the early 1990s public transit was in a similarly desperate state. Along with crowdedness, the shortage of vehicles, and dangerous travelling hanging onto a vehicle or standing on the last stairs with the doors open, my interlocutors also recalled the pickpockets; a special publication in *Viaţa Liberă,* the main local newspaper, was dedicated to

[40] Автобусы: на том стояли, и стоять будут? *PR*, 09.02.1994. Hereinafter *Приазовский рабочий* will be referred to as *PR*.

describe and avoid these kind of crime teaching passengers the rules of cautiosness at the stop.[41]

At that time, in Mariupol, the PR wrote: *Giant factories are dictating the rules to the buses.*[42] City administration was *borrowing the fuel from Azovstal and Illich Iron & Steel Works to facilitate operation of the main bus lines during rush hours in the coming days.*[43] During peak hours there are less buses on the lines located outside of industrial areas. Weekends only minimal amount of buses operate in order to save some fuel for the weekdays.[44] The newspaper headlines during those weeks were reminiscent of frontline reports:

> *Ten tons per bus line were lent by Illich Iron & Steel Works for peak hour operation of bus lines 8, 19, and 39. Ten more tons come from the Azov Sea Shipping Company; these are for the lines number 11, 34, and 12 (to carry people up to the trolleybus line). Supposedly, we are provided with fuel until Tuesday.*[45]

The 'until Tuesday' timing differed radically from the temporality of socialist transport planning that counted in years, quinquennials, and decades. Media reports were still claiming that new lines would cover the city districts in the future, but the everyday commuting experiences only showed disruptions and utter unpredictability. The collapse of planning, as lived by citizens, did not mean the formal closure of planning institutions or the denunciation of planning documents – it manifested itself through the complete loss of confidence in the planning narrative.

Turn from the future to the now

At the macro-level the break-up of the Soviet Union and the Romanian Revolution of 1989 brought with them new promises, ideas, and possibilities. For individuals, however, these perplexing events meant also, though not only, a growing uncertainty and the necessity of immediate decision-making. During the 1990s reactions to the collapse of the planning paradigm varied from mass emigration and courageous entrepreneurship to nostalgia and a suicide epidemic in the ex-Soviet republics (Brainerd 2001). Some survivors of state

[41] O stație de autobuz fără hoți de buzunare, Viața Liberă 05.08.1999
[42] ibid
[43] ‚Обращение исполкома горсовета народных депутатов' *PR* 08.02.1994
[44] ‚Топливо для автобусов пока не найдено' *PR*, 15.02.1994
[45] На ‚экономном' ходу. *PR*, 11.02.1994

socialism, pushed by new possibilities and/or poverty, riskily chose a place to live in, businesses to invest into, and ways of managing their monetary savings; many others just tried to make ends meet. Since state-owned services and infrastructures failed en masse, for many relying on the state now made much less sense. The survival often required refusal from the earlier long-term plans. The discrepancies between the previously planned socialist future and the 'unruly present' (Melly 2013) resulted into people abandoning unfinished constructions; cashing their bank savings; and swapping up their prestigious education for risky start-up businesses. The material environment of the cities changed in tandem with the social one. The early post-socialist city faced the collapse of the large-scale infrastructures via disconnection of electric service, shortages, and blackouts caused by inflation, unemployment, criminality, and mismanagement etc (Shevchenko 2008). Public transport, as a visible, frequently used, and technologically complicated public service clearly manifested this temporal conflict between the ideal future and the chaotic present in the streets.

This chapter deals with the effects of the abrupt state's withdrawal from the public transit domain during the 1990s and 2000s: the experiences of radically reduced access to bus transport, the entrepreneurial response in the form of *maxi-taxi* in Romania and *marshrutka* in Ukraine, the adaptation of citizens to these new conditions of urban travel, and the emerging social stratification on the basis of public transit use. While planning requires formalization and standardization, the crisis triggered different forms of informality, spontaneity, and austerity. The chapter explores the linkages between public acceptance of such forms and the expectations regarding how temporary they are. In the post-socialist region 'temporary' and 'normal' are especially difficult to separate from each other. Hartman (2007) described Transylvanian lives in Romania of the 2000s as 'a temporal space that is by popular consent a transition to normality rather than a realization of regularity' (P. 188). To analyze the social effects of such a deferral of the 'normal', I will focus on three aspects of the functioning of public transit in the early post-socialist period. The first aspect is the role of the future in urban management and decision-making. Unlike socialist transport, which was planned in a centralized way, post-socialist mobilities – booming shared taxi (ST) and decaying electric transport (UET) – grew on the basis of diverse and occasionally conflicting visions of the future. The second aspect is a change in the everyday habits of planning and waiting as well as in ideas of security, prestige, and comfort which followed the decay of UET and the proliferation of ST. The third aspect is the transition from a situation of coordination between different modes of mobility (so called intermodality) to rivalry between them. Competing

transit modes in post-socialist cities follow different economic logics and produce new relations between groups of commuting citizens. Through these rivalries and tensions mobility practices mirror more generally the fragmented realities of post-socialist societies.

The chapter focuses on the drift of the time horizon which public transit stake-holders have had to come to terms with. My source material here is the local press of Mariupol (Ukraine), Galați, and Constanța (Romania)[46], but I will also refer to the interviews I conducted in the two countries.[47] The way in which the emergence of the shared taxi is remembered by my interlocutors in the Ukraine and Romania reflects the drift of perspective: first come the expectations and longings of socialism, and then follow the practices of everyday resistance to the hardships of transition. The hardships, however, are seldom described as something new or something temporary. Instead of asking ‚whom is to blame for the decay of electric transport' I focus on 'how the dissassembling of infrastructure becomes normal'.

What is shared taxi?

I am using the word *shared taxi* has appeared in the title of this chapter with reluctance, as it was never an emic (that is, used by community itself) term in my fieldwork. There is no better acknowledged generic term for this dazzling variety of mobility practices that *shared taxis* refers to. The knowledge of this variety around the world is dispersed across disparate articles, notes and blogs[48], as well as publications focusing mostly on the local histories of this transit mode (Silcock 1981; Davis 1990; Humphrey 2004; Mühlfried, Diakonidze 2006; Müller-Schwarze 2009; Bratanova 2009; Akimov, Banister 2011; Burchardt 2015), its present and potential economic and infrastructural effects (Enoch 2005; Finn 2008; Kumar, Barrett 2008; Suzuki 1985; Wondra 2010), or its cultural entrenchment (Ivanova 2007; Kuznetsov, Shaitanova 2012; Sanina 2011; Tikhomirov 2011). Apart from

[46] Articles from the newspapers Priazovskij Rabocij (*Приазовский рабочий*, PR) in Mariupol, Viața Liberă (hereinafter VL) in Galați, and Cuget Liber in Constanța were analyzed. Digital audio records and anonymized transcripts of interviews are kept at the University of Regensburg.

[47] The data from my research in Donetskaya oblast`, Ukraine, years 2011-13 includes two participant observation diaries (with me being a passenger in Mariupol, Horlivka and other cities of the region); questionnaires mostly consisting of open questions (40 sheets); focused interviews with lgotniki (20); 2 expert interviews and some subject-related literal documents (job instructions, technical manuals, legal acts etc.) as well as a sample of mass-media publications focusing on transit. After the beginning of the war in Donbas I am conducting only ‚remote ethnography' in this area interviewing people via Skype or contacting them in written form. My Romanian fieldwork in years 2015–16 resulted into several dozens of oral conversations with locals, fourteen interviews and over one thousand photos of local publications on issues of public transportation in post-socialist decades (years 1991–8 and 2005–13). All interviews conducted with interlocutors residing in their city at least since early 1990s; most of the interviewed were of retirement age.

[48] https://mondaybazaar.wordpress.com/2013/06/25/managing-marshrutkas/ , http://www.joewangphoto.com/collections/ukrainian-marshrutkas, https://deathbydolmus.wordpress.com/

marshrutka and *maxi-taxi* that figure in this research, there are many other labels which are regionally specific (*jitney, dolmuş, matatu, bush taxi, dollar van, tro tro, collectivo etc*[49]) and thus are unsuitable as generic terms. The terms *‚para-transit'* and *demand-responsive transport* (Enoch et al. 2004) are sometimes proposed; yet, they imply marginality of this transport mode or its difference from the rest of public transport on the basis of the demand sensitivity: both of these definitions would be confronted with multiple counter examples. In studies of post-Soviet countries the word *marshrutka* (a shortened form of the original full name *maršrutn(o)e taksi* (route taxi)) is frequently used, signaling the influence of Russian in the region. This term however is not used in Romania with its *maxi-taxi* (or *maxi taxi,* both spellings are used). I am using the term *shared taxi* as a neutral one for Romania and the Ukraine and yet retaining the *taxi*-element with its connotations of semi-privateness and informality. Finally, ‚shared taxi' figures as a generic term on Wikipedia.[50]

Although I write about the ‚emergence' of shared taxis in post-socialist countries, the phenomenon has a longer history in the region. For example, route taxis (*maršrutn(o)e taksi*) were already present in large cities during Soviet times (Kuznetsov 2015). As of the early 1980s, both Romania and Ukraine already had some form of shared taxis. However, socialist shared taxis were different from the post-socialist ones. Although some maxi-taxis circulated in Bucharest in the 1980s, they were owned by the state and served night or secondary lines (Banister 1981, P. 261; Pârvulescu, P. 239). Route taxis in Soviet Kyiv were also only auxiliary to the intermodal system of public transit. Locals in Galați and Mariupol reportedly did not have any maxi-taxis under Ceaușescu, respectively the Soviets. Interestingly, in the smaller city of Konstantinovka locals remembered the mini-buses with a trip fare of 15 kopecks (0.15 ruble) and the larger buses for 5 kopecks on the same route; there were also the express routes for 10 kopecks that skipped some stops and so made the trip faster.[51] Nevertheless, for the majority of passengers, route taxis were not a common way of getting around. Former drivers recall that the *‚usual'* buses were far more numerous than the mini-buses. Many of them would bring people to locations visited only on 'special occasion': the railway station, beach, theater, or exhibition venue. The first marshrutka lines in Mariupol connected the residential districts to the sea coast. Thus the socialist marshrutkas or maxi-

[49] See a more complete list here https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Share_taxi.
[50] ibid
[51] A discussion on how marshrutkas appeared in Kostiantynivka, initiated by my entry on 24.05.2016 in the public page Типичная Константиновка https://vk.com/kon_vk?w=wall-43869160_847519.

taxis can only to a limited extent be seen as precursors of the post-socialist phenomenon. If in the socialist city shared taxis were an addition to the intermodal system of public transit, after socialism they tended to completely replace the latter.

The wide proliferation of *marshrutkas* in the Ukraine and *maxi-taxi* in Romania was one of the most radical developments in post-socialist mobility. It changed the cities` ecology, people's commuting habits, and the image of public transit in the urban imagination.[52] Furthermore, a history and geography of decay and death of the tram and trolleybus systems are closely connected to the rise of shared taxis. In most cases one can observe a negative correlation between the significance of trams and trolleybuses and the presence of private mini-buses in particular locations. In the Czech Republic, where electric transport was maintained throughout the transition period, including the 1990s, shared taxis were absent. In South Caucasian cities where about 20 trolleybuses and 4 tramway systems were dismantled in the late 1990s and 2000s, shared taxis were close to forming a monopoly in the public transit domain. The Ukraine and Romania were in between these two extremes; here shared taxis co-existed with other modes of transportation, whereas the realtive status of both ST and other modes was constantly questioned, negotiated, and modified. The post-socialist history of shared taxis in the Ukraine and Romania revolves around the decay of electric transportation and competing preferences of urban inhabitants. It is also a story of hard labor and a rapidly developing enterprise in the context of the outdated legislation. Here it will be told as a story of unnoticed change and normalcy growing out of an emergency.

2.1 Bus into shared taxi: immediacy of gasoline crisis

Both in Mariupol and Galați, the end of normalcy occurred differently for buses, trolleybuses, and tramways. Municipal companies were all largely mismanaged during the early 1990s, lacking sustained repair facilities and spare parts. Nevertheless, despite occasional power outages, most of the time trams and trolleybuses were running according to the schedule. Buses, on the other hand, disappeared from the streets immediately after the disruption of fuel supply stagnated. Here we see a difference in how electricity and petrol function in society, reminiscent somehow of Bruno Latour`s actor-network theory: different material agencies produce different social contexts. Electricity is contained in the grid; tram

[52] Private minibuses are also of high importance for interurban transportation in many regions, which I do not consider here.

and trolleybus work when connected to the grid, unless someone actively stops them by disconnecting the overhead wiring from the electricity network. The lack of action of the city authorities in the 1990s made the functioning of the electric transport system technically possible. Buses physically connect to the oil grid only at the petrol station and hence their carry their energy after being disconnected from the grid; but they need such connections regularly because the volume of their tank is limited. When buses need a regular supply of fuel to be able to continue functioning, a lack of action is sufficient to stop them. Plans were irrelevant as the buses stood still in their garage right now. So the citizens had to switch from the planning and expecting to the search of immediate solutions.

First reactions

The urban inhabitants responded to the bus disruptions in various ways. Apart from criticizing the authorities, several stakeholders voiced constructive ideas on how to alleviate the shortage of transport. Readers of local newspapers were asking for example whether it would be possible to adjust the buses to work on gas.[53] Specialists from the Pryazovskyi State Technical University offered their expertise to optimize the route network in order to reduce costs.[54] Enthusiasts proposed to reorganize routes in order to *save oil, reduce fuel expenses and travel time,* as well as to *increase the number of passengers 1.5–1.8 times.*[55] Others were skeptical about the passengers` discipline and suggested to improve the system of trip fare collection:

> *The city authorities are mistaken in their expectation that they can increase the profit after rising the trip fare to 800-1200 karbovanets.*[56] *To the contrary, the higher the price, the less the profit will be […] I suggest to close down all the functioning ticket kiosks and to retrain sellers a bit in order to do conductor's work [in vehicles].*[57]

Yet, other readers compared the ticket price to other prices and noted that the former does not correlate to the actual costs.

> *It would be better to increase trip fares to 1000 – 1500 krb in all buses, in order to give many a possibility to get to work without jitters.*[58] *Does the*

[53] Читатели сообщают *PR*, 16.02.1994.
[54] Наладить работу транспорта? Поможем. *PR*, 07.06.1994.
[55] Если продумать транспортные маршруты *PR*, 07.06. 1994.
[56] Karbovanets (abbreviation krb) was Ukrainian currency during years 1992-1996.
[57] Транспорт – не только средство передвижения *PR,* 15.01.1994.
[58] Читатели сообщают *PR* 07.06.1994.

> *price of 100 karbovanetses really correspond to the expenses of the transportation companies? When one matchbox cost one kopeika, transport cost five. Today matches are sold for 400 – 450 karbovantses, that means the trip fare should be set around 2000 – 2500 krb.*[59]

Finally, some proposed to withdraw the zero fare for pensioners and to compensate them directly from the state budget by adding this money to their pension. As we see here, crisis-responsive propositions from the 1990s urged municipal transit to adjust the new economic context, not suggesting a swift privatization of the sector.

Short agony of buses

Striving to somehow reduce the losses, municipal bus garages in Mariupol introduced *express* bus lines. On these lines buses skipped some of the less popular stops and therefore could make more roundtrips during the day; they were faster and therefore the trip fare was higher than on regular lines. Newspapers published the list of the express bus stops[60] which was approved by the city administration under the condition that half of the buses on the line would operate according to the regular (non-express) regime.[61] In late February 1994 the new trip fare was introduced for express bus lines and private bus lines (route taxi) – 3000 and 6000 karbovantses, respectively.[62] These trip fares were 30 respectively 60 times larger than the fares for municipal buses, tramways, and trolleybuses. However, according to a local newspaper, '*Most part of judicious PR readership evaluated the implementation of express bus lines and trip fare rise positively'.*[63] Complaints came from people living close to the stops that were skipped by the express-buses, but the trip fare as such did not meet much discontent.[64] So, in this situation of sudden dysfunctionality part of the citizenry demonstrated a clear readiness to participate, compromise, and experiment. Another part of the population distinguished between private enterprises and state-owned bus services. For them, high fares on private lines were tolerable, while the rise of fares in municipal buses was not.

> *Considering the numerous complaints from labor collectives, schools, universities, medical institutions, employees of cultural industry, and low-income groups of population, through the initiative of the Mariupol city*

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[59] Читатели сообщают *PR*, 18.05.1994.
[60] Где в пути останавливается экспресс, *PR,* 04.03.1994.
[61] Пришла пора подкручивать гайки, *PR,* 18.02.1994.
[62] К сведению пассажиров! *PR,* 19.02.1994.
[63] Читатели сообщают *PR,* 22.03.1994.
[64] Читатели сообщают *PR,* 11.03.1994.

mayor […] it is decided to set the trip fare on the express bus lines at the rate of 1000 karbovantses as of the 13th of June 1994 (as we know it used to be 3000 before)'.[65]

It did not take long until the Mariupol municipal buses disappeared during the second half of the 1990s.

To better understand of how the proposals to remedy the bus disruptions were formulated, and accepted by society, I refer to an analytical distinction between crisis and disaster. Disasters and crises, according to Boin and Hart (2007), have not the same temporality and dynamics. A disaster is acute, sudden, strongly tangible, and relatively short. A crisis gradually emerges and is often identified with some delay. Unlike a disaster, a crisis can occasionally last as long as 'normalcy' does. In such cases, the duration of a crisis acquires political meaning, and it takes 'a critical leadership challenge to make this [comeback of normalcy] happen in a timely and expedient fashion' (Boin, Hart 2007, P. 51). Crises and disasters also trigger different social reactions and experiences. While a disaster is characterized by a high degree of unexpectedness, a crisis is potentially detectable at an early stage (if not always completely foreseeable). Since a crisis emerges gradually and often subtly, it requires expertise and attention to be detected. The very concern and attempt to detect crisis at an early stage is part of society's engagement with the future. Hence, calling something a 'crisis' (depression, decay, recession, stagnation, and so on) or a 'disaster' (catastrophe, blackout) may imply different levels of responsibility and controllability for stakeholders. Nevertheless, I see crisis and disaster not as a dichotomous opposition but rather as a continuum where individual cases are somehow positioned between these two extremes. Bus transport in the first years after state socialism disappeared in a manner close to 'disaster' (unlike trams and trolleybuses). In the absence of a credible future perspective, a wide range of responses seemed acceptable, higher trip fares being amongst them. Bus failure vividly demonstrated the costliness of public transit – which the socialist state covered by subsidies, as in many other domains of urban life. To make thing worse for the buses' reputation, some municipal bus drivers behaved in ways unacceptable for 'normal' transport. For example, they skived from doing late evening tours or sold the diesel provided to taxi drivers. They also blackmailed passengers:

[65] На темы дня *PR,* 10.06.1994.

In front of the crowd at the stop he [the bus driver] declared that the bus would only ride if everybody pays, including pensioners and concessionary passengers (lgotniki). And people had no choice, they needed to get home as soon as possible […]. Such acts seem to go unpunished and have become normal.[66]

The 'municipal bus' became synonymous with 'state transport' and in the popular imagination distinguished from the 'normal transport' able to satisfy the real needs of citizens.

Public transit crisis in Galați

The predicament of municipal transportation in Galați, according to local press sources and memories, is as turbulent and in many respect very similar to the one in Mariupol. This Romanian city also experienced fuel shortages, difficulties in tickets sale[67], lack of subsidies[68], derailments[69], the suspension of municipal bus lines[70], and steady growth of private initiative on the public transit market. The combination of circumstances differs slightly from Mariupol in that there were strikes of transport personnel[71] and that electric and bus municipal transport were maintained by a single enterprise, R.A.T.U. Galați.

***Pic. 1**. A tramway in Galați. The caption 'We are commuting in a not too civilized way, as can be seen' Viaţa Liberă 19-20.12.1992. Photo taken from blog 'Despre transportul public in Galați'.*[72]

Under these circumstances, one can easily observe how taxis started to function as public transport. Users started to regard this mode as accessible and acceptable for everyday

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[66] Читатели сообщают *PR,* 28.01.1994.
[67] "Biletul la control" *Viaţa Liberă*, 10.02.1992; hereinafter I owe my thanks for the high-quality scans of publications in local daily newspaper *Viaţa Liberă* (1992-1995) to Amiral Aov, author of blog http://transportlocalgalati.blogspot.com/. My library research was also planned as a contribution to the archival part of this blog (years 1996 – 1999).
[68] Despre abonamente, subvenții, chioșcuri și burlane cu fum *Viaţa Liberă*, 26.02. 1992, RATU blocat de lipsa resurselor financiare *Viaţa Liberă* 19.10. 1993.
[69] Eveniment rutier Coliziune *Viaţa Liberă* 08.07.1993.
[70]"Trasee suspendate! Precizări importante de la R.A.T.U. *Viaţa Liberă* 03.02.1995.
[71] Șoferii sunt în grevă generală! Galațiul va fi blocat *Viaţa Liberă* 06.05.1993.
[72] Despre transportul local din Galati http://transportlocalgalati.blogspot.com/ .

use, in spite of huge price differences for taxi and bus. The author of an article in *Viața Liberă* (*VL*) mentions that a 6 km trip was 'cheaper than a dollar' – meaning ca 2900 lei[73], compared to the price of 225 lei for a tramway trip.[74] This review of a taxi trip itself reflects a change in how transport is evaluated: *small heaves, honking, hard braking are forgotten at the moment when you pay.*[75] That is, even being a dozen times more expensive than tram, the taxi is not considered too expensive. The comfort and the security of commuting are sacrificed to a speedy journey without waiting.

The cultural shift in perception of public transit pricing might also have been due to the general dynamics of prices: while everyone was complaining about inflation and the rapid increase of living costs, the public transit remained very cheap in relation to other things, although later this gap was narrowed.[76] In the Ukraine, an additional possible explanation for the discrepancy in price dynamics is bureaucratic inaction: to raise the price, the municipal transport enterprise had to get the permission from the authorities of the oblast' (e.g. in Donetsk) and republic (e.g. in Kiev), as was mentioned in the newspapers of that period.

(There have never been) the first shared taxis

If the launch of a tram or trolleybus line was preceded by a long period of anticipation thanks to montage of catenary poles and wiring, shared taxis, on the other hand, appeared without much fuss or preparation, so that it took time for the residents to realize the novelty. Quite opposite to the arrival of UET, the introduction of ST is not precisely remembered as having happened on a particular day or moment. Both in my interviews and in newspaper articles shared taxis are always 'already there'.

In Mariupol, a remote Eastern district (*Skhidnyi* in Ukrainian/*Vostochnyi* in Russian), with a growing population of more than 11 000 residents at the time, became an epicenter of public transit disruption. The buses servicing Vostochnyi operated exclusively on petrol which was even scarcer than diesel fuel. Moreover, until 1995 Vostochnyi had not any trolleybus or tramway line. Given the severe lack of commuting options, the residents of this hard-to-reach neighborhood began to seek for alternative solutions. The early attempts took an

[73] Data from National Bank of Romania was used http://www.bnr.ro/Raport-statistic-606.aspx .
[74] Noile tarife la biletele R.A.T.U. *Viață Libera,* 28.03.1996.
[75] Taxiul că mijloc de transport... în comun *Viață Libera,* 28.03.1996.
[76] In 2013 I`ve found the statistical data for Russian prices in 1990 and next 5 years which showed that in 1980 one loaf of bread costed equal to 9 tramway trips, with corresponding indicator 26,7 in year 1992, 33,2 in 1993, 8,4 in 1994, and 3,7 in 2011.

intermediate form between mutual help and business initiative. For some residents, carpooling became a way to commute to work. Another solution was the so-called *levaki* (леваки/ліваки in Russian/Ukrainian), which literally translates into English as, or 'shady' buses, or 'buses from the left':

> *So, levaki were riding, and they were taking the same trip fare… or not the same, I do not remember… But such a bus would come up at the same time every day, it waited for us, we gathered and rode those buses… Then they… probably they were prohibited. Well, that is how it was: a bus used to come before the driver`s own working hours… say, it was the property owned by some organization used there for other service purposes… But for us it would come before working hours. I don't know, maybe drivers just parked it near their houses. And it had been going on for a long time and regularly. It was not deception, they did carry us. If we stood and waited for that bus, we knew that it would arrive. It did not fail to come; they were quite responsible about it (Inf. 1).*

The vehicles in the quote are not yet called marshrutkas, but they already demonstrate a specific way of organization. This is the only long citation I have dedicated to the earliest forms of ST; usually my interlocutors had difficulties recalling when exactly and how the marshrutkas appeared. Similar evidence came from Galați where locals recall the small mini vans without any line numbers, just 'assisting' the state transport on the most heavily charged connections, on the busiest streets of the city. The ST had its disadvantages, triggering new patterns of exclusion and transgressing the established norms, but it was adequate for the emerging crisis situation. Newspaper readers soon noticed gradual improvement in the quality of private marshrutka operation:

> *Before March [1994] it was only a matter of luck to catch and ride a marshrutka. After they set the trip fare at 6000, they became pretty regular. More than that, they previously operated only until five o'clock in the evening, but now they go on until six or seven.*[77]

Along with that, passengers started to have expectations with regard to the quality of the public transit service:

> *In my view, the driver, who gets 6000 from us, should only take as many passengers as he has seats. Not a single person more. […] For such a*

[77] Читатели сообщают *PR,* 22 марта 1994 года

normal marshrutka I am ready to pay even 16 000. I am sure, there will be enough of others […] who would wish the same. Thus bus garage won't be out-of-pocket, and the number of runs will increase.[78]

According to Marius Mototolea, author of numerous publications about transport in *Viaţa Liberă*, Galaţi was the first city in Romania, where entrepreneurs oriented themselves towards carrying passengers in a maxi-taxi regime.[79] One of the early local mentions of 'alternative buses' dates back to 1995; it appeared in a complaint about the unsatisfactory quality of service of R.A.T.U. (Regia Autonoma De Transport Urban), the local municipal public transport authority. In an open letter, an outraged passenger points out that, unlike the R.A.T.U. vehicles, there are other buses 'where passengers are treated with respect'.[80]

Meanwhile, the shared taxi services excluded the most vulnerable social groups, such as elderly. Contented shared taxi riders were resented by the *lgotniki* – passengers with *lgota (льгота in Russian*), that is the right to use municipal transport for free. Lgotniki in Mariupol wrote letters of discontent[81]; similar voices could be heard in Galaţi: *we have to take maxi-taxi, and it is costly. For a pensioner, two thousand lei means a bread for three days.*[82]

At the margins of the diesel-driven phenomenon of shared taxis one could also find a few attempts to organize commercial trolleybus routes. The idea was economically challenging at least because the trolleybus is critically dependent on infrastructure that is not needed by any other transport – overhead wiring, substations, and catenary poles – and hence it requires exclusive investments. Shared taxis do not create any extra expenditures of maintaining the road infrastructure. Furthermore, trolleybuses and tramways use tracks and rails which make it impossible for one vehicle to overtake another – an option that is needed on express routes. In parallel, the endeavor to commercialize UET was a risky strategy because it de-legitimized state subsidies. Municipal transport was recognized as a public service of social importance[83] and thus recipient of subsidies like compensation payments for commuting costs[84] and later zero fares for a wide range of social groups. Probably that is why

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[78] Читатели сообщают *PR,* 22 марта 1994 года.
[79] S-a dus vremea taximetriei "de voie", *VL* (VL) 29.03.1999.
[80] *VL*, 30.06.1995.
[81] Читатели сообщают *PR,* 28.01.1994.
[82] Telefon de serviciu *Viaţa Liberă* 03.11.1997.
[83] *Про міський електричний транспорт* [Act On urban electric transport] *(Відомості Верховної Ради України (ВВР)*, 2004, N 51, ст.548) http://zakon4.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/1914-15
[84] Act of Cabinet of Ministers of Ukrainian SSR, *Про соціальний захист населення у зв'язку з реформою роздрібних цін* [On social protection of population in view of reform of retail prices], N 72 28.03.1991, with multiple amendments until final repeal in 2003.

the executives of trolleybus departments preferred to refer to these attempts of commercialization as temporary experiments.[85] Petrol-based transport became clearly 'private', while electric transport remained 'of the state'.

2.2 Shared taxis as fluid objects in fluid spaces

Ever since *marshrutka* and *maxi-taxi* spread, the phenomenon that they denoted continued to change. Practically every element of ST infrastructure – its rolling stock, its legal status, its degree of integration with other modes of PT, its scope of liability, and pricing – changed throughout the first two decades after socialism. In practice this means that the terms 'marshrutka' and 'maxi taxi' carry quite different meanings, sometimes highlighting at other times concealing the object's properties. Hence post-socialist shared taxis can be described as *fluid objects in fluid spaces* (Sgibnev, Vozyanov 2016). Fluid objects – a concept coined by Law (2002) – have no stable qualities and boundaries, they change together with the relations in which they are involved, but those relations 'change bit by bit rather than all at once' (P. 99-100). At the same time, 'mobile boundaries are needed for objects to exist in fluid space' (ibid.), otherwise those objects cease to exist. It means that the current infrastructure immanently carries the legacies of previous versions.[86] In this text[87] I use this notion of fluidity to explain how ST persisted throughout these years without becoming completely 'normal'. 'Normalcy' in this context means a stable interface, a defined scope of liability, and a clear correlation between the formal and informal rules of use. To show that such normalcy was never realized, I will outline the mutations of shared taxis in Galati and Mariupol along the following parameters: people, vehicles, rules of use, and legal status.

People. Shared taxi services produced new social relations and new mobile subjects in the city. Drivers, conductors, and passengers interacted in a different way than they had done in municipal transport. These relations however continued to transform as the shared taxi gained a larger share of the public transit market. Shared taxi drivers are largely absent from the oral accounts about the early 1990s. My informants only briefly mention them as males of

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[85] http://te.20minut.ua/Podii/u-chernivtsyah-zyavilisya-komertsiyni-troleybusi-2407.html.
[86] Unavoidable inheritance of a technology to its previous versions has been described by historians of technological progress and decision-making, see (Collingridge 1979, Johnston 1984).
[87] There is a collective research project with five case-studies of marshrutka in Caucasus and Central Asia launched by Leibniz Institute of Regional Geography where Law`s model is mobilized to embrace the broad set of social transformations triggered by post-Soviet shared taxi.

different age groups. In some accounts they figure as former municipal bus drivers, often – ex-employees of factories. In Mariupol the municipal transit authorities recommended large private employers not to hire those (former) municipal bus drivers who had voluntarily quit their job[88]; the same I heard in Galați during an interview. This advice was ignored, however, since these private companies were growing and needed a workforce. Conductors (*konduktory,* or ticket-sellers), both male and female, were present in the larger vehicles often being relatives of the driver. If conductors in the 'state transport' system often worked in random vehicles and with random drivers, on marshrutka driver and ticket-seller usually worked together on a regular basis. Unlike the municipal conductors whose primary role was to control and disciple, shared taxi conductors were 'just earning their bread'. This major distinction was especially visible in the conflicts between formal and informal rules (see chapter 3). Altogether, this specific social setup created a context of semi-privacy for the marshrutka, where the 'crew' was personally responsible for the quality of the service. Those passengers who were not content with the service could change back to a 'public' trolleybus. Within this semi-private context, riding black became not only virtually impossible in these small, easily surveilled vehicles, but also personally offensive for the conductor and the driver.

Shared taxi implied the application of an informal set of rules for its use. Often such rules (concerning when and to whom passengers should pay for the trip, for example) remained unwritten or only appeared on ironic notes above the door. Such half-serious texts were not legally obliging but nevertheless gave a clear idea of the to-be-expected behavior. At the same time, marshrutkas and maxi-taxis were freer, imposed a less regimented behavioral codex and as such attracted customers and adherents. Shared taxis allowed flirting or a loud conversation on a mobile phone or even smoking.

The then-entrepreneurs still recall the shared taxis as a much better alternative compared to the 'state transport'. In Galați I had phone conversations with two directors of formerly ST companies, both having been in the business from the 1990s until 2016 when maxi taxi services in the city were suspended. They mentioned that Galați faced huge unemployment during the first years after Ceaușescu, and the maxi taxi was a way for people to find a job. Sirex, the city`s largest enterprise, was cutting the number of employes from 31000 to 9300 between 1999 and 2009 only, given that over 50 000 still worked here during

[88] *Транспорт – не только средство передвижения* [Transport is not just a way of getting somewhere] *PR* 15.01.1994.

the 1970s and 1980s.[89] The idea was also conceptualized as providing local passengers with *civilized transport* ('transportul civilizat'), much better than the overloaded and deteriorated municipal tram, trolleybus, and bus services ('transportul de stat'). Along with a reliable, speedy, and frequent service, shared taxi won the people's sympathy for the possibility to stop and board the taxi at virtually any place: a person had just to raise the hand when on the street; while inside it was enough to ask the driver to stop. Unlike other post-Soviet cities, in Mariupol stops on demand were not a common practice. However, the marshrutkas skipped stops where no one wanted to get off or on – and by doing so they minimized the trip duration for passengers.

Ironically, 'civilized transport' was exactly the motto under which maxi-taxis in Romanian cities had to give way to trolleybuses, buses, and trams in the 2010s. Two decades after the shared taxi had appeared, their drivers were described most critically, being accused of dangerous driving, listening to loud music, approaching the passengers in a hob-and-nob manner, practicing flat jokes and obscene language, or even beating passengers.[90] In addition, the Ukrainian marshrutka and Romanian maxi-taxi systems were criticized for confusing foreigners as the rules of use were never written in foreign languages. Sometimes, as was the case in Galati, any indication of the trip fare was missing, so a passenger had to ask the ticket price. Reacting to popular criticisms of marshrutka drivers, Rekhviashvili and Sgibnev (2018) have explored their working conditions in post-Soviet countries. These conditions obviously did not improve since the 1990s due to the increasing traffic and growing rivalry between ST companies. People had little hope to expect smiles, politeness, and knowledge of foreign languages from precarious workers making many extra hours (often close to their personal physical limit), without social guarantees and a stable income. The example of shared taxi drivers demonstrates how mobility justice, particularly, the equal opportunities to get around, in the post-socialist city is closely connected with labor justice.

Vehicles. Shared taxi vehicles differed in Galați and in Mariupol. In Galați the 'maxi-taxi' referred exclusively to minivans catering for eight to thirteen passengers, with two seats near the driver. It was reminiscent of a private car more than of a big capacity bus, having seats only, a low ceiling, and hand-operated doors. Those sitting near the driver had the same

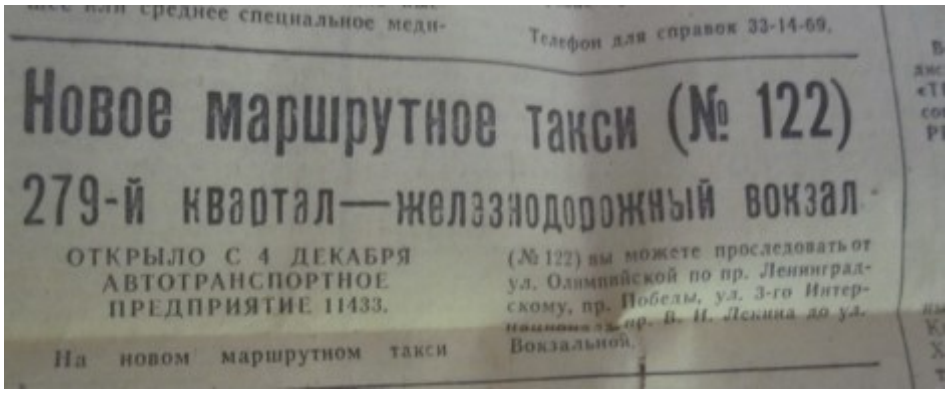
[89] https://ro.wikipedia.org/wiki/ArcelorMittal_Gala%C8%9Bi
[90] Viață Libera describes such story in an article "Un şofer de maxi-taxi... îşi bate călătorii" *Viaţa Liberă* , 27-28.06.1998

view on the road, which one never gets in a tramway. Private ownership allowed some personalized elements to be brought in – like posters or souvenirs attached to its interior. As I was told, the shared taxi era began with RAF minibuses from Latvia and other vans imported semi-legally from Hungary, Poland, and Germany: '*when Romanians started to travel more abroad, these vehicles appeared. Some have bought them, some have stolen them*' (Inf. 17). All these were later replaced with newer vehicles, mostly manufactured by Mercedes. Unlike the pudgy RAF, which is lower than the average height of a human being, the Mercedes microbuses' ceiling was above two meters, which allowed people to travel standing in upright position.

In Mariupol the first private bus enterprises of the 1990s used the same vehicles as the municipal public transport. Partly these vehicles just migrated to the newly organized private transit companies. Hence, 'route taxi' lines in the Ukraine were served by a fleet indistinguishable from the municipal bus lines (for example, the Icarus, LiAZ-677, or LAZ-695)**.** Approximately until the middle of the 1990s the main difference between municipal bus and 'route taxi' was in the rules of use and not in the vehicles.

In the mid-1990s the marshrutka fleet in Mariupol changed to mini-vans for 8 to 16 passengers. In August 1996, the mass production of the micro-buses GAZ-322132 (Gazelle) started. A larger number of smaller buses allowed more drivers to get a job in the marshrutka business and to minimize headways. However, for a city of half a million inhabitants with increasingly scarce municipal transit, the minivans did not have enough capacity. Drivers allowed passengers to travel standing so that more people could get inside of the marshrutka; although it became a common practice soon, it was widely acknowledged as illegal and insecure.

In 1999 'Bogdan' mini-buses started to be manufactured in the Ukraine. Bogdans gained popularity soon: they had more seats (23-26) and could carry standing passengers as well. In these vehicles staying while travelling was legal; the passengers were obliged to hold on to the handrail. Ever since the early 2000s, Bogdans constituted the vast majority of passenger rolling stock in Ukrainian cities; their number on lines is often higher than of all other public transit vehicles together.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На новом маршрутном такси

Pic. 2. *Advertisement of new shared taxi line 122 in "Priazovskii Rabotchii" newspaper. December 1993.*

Pic. 3. *A maxi-taxi on one of the main routes in Galați, having the same number as the trolleybus line 102, with which it shares the same route. VL 8.1.1997.*

Routes and schedules. Shared taxis represented fluid objects in quite a material sense: their routes and schedules were changing constantly throughout the 1990s and early 2000s. With some early exceptions (e.g., I found an ad for line 122 in *PR* – see Pic. 2), new lines appeared and disappeared confronting the passengers with fait accompli. Some of the new lines did not succeed and were closed soon after (like the line 122 between Vostochnyi and the railway station, or line 114 linking Vostochnyi with the sea coast), but most of them were still operating as of 2014. After the marshrutka lines 113 and 119 connected Vostochnyi district to the Illicha Steelwork, entrepreneurs introduced new routes between residential areas. By the beginning of the 2000s, marshrutkas made the peripheral Vostochnyi district into a public transport hub. Before that, it used to be the largest and most remote 'dormitory

area' of Mariupol; now it got connected to virtually all other parts of the city – through marshrutkas.

Any of these changes in schedules and routes were visible only through these moving objects, as the static urban environment did not display the transformation: shared taxis, of course, did not have rails and wires; they also used the very same shelters and roads as the municipal transport. In Mariupol during the 1990s old timetables at stops featured information only for trolleybuses and trams, showing the first and the last departure, as well as the average headways between two departures for different parts of the day. Later, these old timetables were replaced with new ones, also featuring the numbers of shared taxi lines. These new notice boards, however, did not indicate any schedules at all, leaving passengers of tramways, trolleybuses, and shared taxis in the same kind of uncertainty. Passengers had to rely on previous experiences, ask others for information, or just wait. Many did indeed wait, expecting the shared taxi to come soon – and it usually did not fail then.[91]

Legislation. Shared taxi services had eluded regulation because any legal definition of the phenomenon only appeared years later. For some time, shared taxis were not mentioned in the road code as a particular kind of vehicle or mode of public transport. This was understandable since the ST constituted itself primarily through social conventions more than physical properties. The Ukrainian traffic regulations only distinguished between clearly distinguishable objects – microbuses and buses. A bus was defined as a vehicle with more than 17 seats[92], so that most marshrutkas, particularly Bogdans, fell into the bus category. Contrary to the prescriptive modalities of planning documents, the shared taxis presented a challenge: legislators had to describe an already existing reality.

In Galați, the acknowledgment of shared taxis proceeded through the introduction of a licensing procedure, as well as several specific traffic rules and material censuses. Drivers thus faced a higher threshold to start a business and additional expenditures for the continuation of their activity while not getting any reward from officials apart from a work permit. To legalize their shared taxi business, entrepreneurs had to deal with a total of eight

[91] It is interesting that on rare occasions – for instance, the sun eclipse of 11th August, 1999 – when "state transport" paused operation, maxi-taxis continued working. See ‚Eclipsa transportului in comun' *VL* 12.08.1999

[92] Paragraph 1.10 in *Правила дорожнього руху, постановою Кабінету Міністрів України від 10 жовтня 2001 р. № 1306*. Available at http://zakon3.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/1306-2001-%D0%BF

controlling bodies.[93] The tax was fixed and did not depend on revenues – i.e. authorities refused to spread the risks and accomodate for the unpredictabilities of passenger flows. On the other hand, drivers were not keen to provide accurate data on revenues to tax-collecting agencies. In an open letter addressed to the city mayor, the Galați Club of Private Carriers bitterly critized the tax policy. The letter spoke of the drivers' goodwill to enter the maxi-taxi business legally,

> *with empty hands, not wanting to enter the ranks of the oficially unemployed, drawing upon a loan on the own risk (which was impossible to obtain as the activity itself was not authorized), offering a glimpse of civilization to the citizens and an important sum of money to the state*.[94]

Despite these protests, the private bus drivers were not given any tax relief. On the contrary, experts proposed to restrict shared taxi to routes outside of the city center, according to capacities of small vehicles.[95] In spite of the authorities creating obstacles, maxi-taxi continued to operate in the city centre, contributing significantly to the municipality's budget through tax payments.[96] Despite the tax burden, shared taxi business remained an attractive option for many.

Shared taxis as unnoticed majority?

Not being the outcome of a centralized policy, shared taxis were only partly accounted for by statistical bodies, as it's hard to gather data on something that is not formally defined. As a result, the statistics on marshrutkas and maxi-taxis were often unavailable or misleading. The available figures are not easy to interpret: for example, the Romanian Statistical Yearbook for 1999 states that there were 377 maxi-taxi vehicles with 10 mln passengers in 1993, then 250 vehicles and 19 mln passengers in 1995, and finally 156 and 5 mln in 1996 (Romanian Statistical Yearbook 1999, P. 522). There are clear discrepancies between the official number of vehicles, the official number of passengers, and the data reported orally and in the local press. Therefore it remains unclear what the registration rate of shared taxis was (especially since vehicles were illegaly brought from abroad), what the categories ‚shared taxi' and ‚mini-bus' included (different sources counted them as either bus or car), and whether they were all used for regular services on a line.

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[93] S-a dus vremea…
[94] Scrisoare deschisă, adresată domnului primar Eugen Durbacă. Pentru un transport în comun eficient. *VL* 23.06.1998.
[95] ibid
[96] Maxi-taxiurile - în viziunea legislativului local! *VL* 15.12.1998.

When the authorities in Galați decided to make an end to the ‚chaos' of ST, they also discovered that there were no available statistics on *particularii* (‚the privates', a frequent designation for maxi-taxi operators pointing at their private ownership of the vehicle). The authorities then started to regulate the phenomena by producing some statistics. The statistics were gathered by different actors resulting in quite inexact figures; but even so they demonstrate the proliferation of ST in the city. In April 1998 *Viața Liberă* first publicized a figure of 870 'privately owned vehicles on the lines of municipal buses, trolleybuses and trams'[97]. Then the figures rose to 'more than 1000' in June 1998[98] and 1500 in June 1999.[99] Shared taxis thus by times outnumbered the other means of municipal public transit.

From the passengers' perspective, there is a little evidence indicating how 'permanent' shared taxis were in their eyes when they appeared. Some galațeni did not take them as anything more than a temporary and auxiliary measure. Some hoped them to be just temporary until the renewed and hoped-for comeback of state socialism. Some wanted them remain, but were not sure it would happen. The continuously changing shared taxis' interface was perceived as a sign of its very transience. From the users' standpoint ST never remained the same for long; before it could be publicly accepted or denounced, it had become something else.

Still, after all the permutations and speculations about its durability in the city, maxi taxis and marshrutkas became a pretty common and routinized phenomenon. It developed into something that was present 'by default'. By the beginning of my fieldwork in the Ukraine, the marshrutka had even established in the language. What was now referred to as 'marshrutka' would be called 'micro-bus' in my childhood, in the 1990s. Even when they talked about the period before the appearance of the shared taxis, they often started saying the word 'marshrutka', then correcting themselves to 'bus'. Both the Romanian maxi-taxi and the Ukrainian marshrutka became part of local urban folklore – there were jokes, anecdotes, and songs which even attracted the attention of researchers.[100] Such folklore is dominated by a black humor aesthetics usually referring to breaches of etiquette or political incorrectness. In doing so, it probably echoes the flexibility of norms that is embedded in the very idea of the shared taxi.

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[97] Cine se teme de maxi-taxi-uri? *VL* 07.04.1998.
[98] Scrisoare deschisă…23.06.1998.
[99] Consiulul Local va dezbate ‚centrifugarea' microbuzelor-taxi *VL* 21.06.1999.
[100] On Russian-language material see (Ivanova 2007; Tikhomirov 2011); on predominantly Romanian-spaking space of maxi-taxi of Chișinău see blog https://culaxiz.wordpress.com/2011/05/16/perleglume-auzite-in-rutierele-maxitaxi-din-chisinau/

Despite the similarities between public transit problems in Galați and Mariupol, there are also salient differences that shed some light on the limits of the shared taxis' ‚fluidity'. While in the Ukraine marshrutkas were ubiquitous, in several big Romanian cities (e.g.Timișoara, Arad) maxi-taxis apparently never appeared. Moreover, if we look at the map, we see that maxi-taxis were most widespread in the eastern part of Romania and in the Republic of Moldova, in the border regions with the Ukraine. One can deduce from that that for the transfer of the shared taxi phenomenon, its artefacts and practices, geographical proximity was more important than national borders.

At the time of the maxi-taxi and marshrutka's introduction, municipal public transit was in a different condition in Galati and Mariupol. In Galati, apparently, public transport had already deteriorated substantially during socialism – and the 1990s seem to have not brought a noticeable decline in comparison to the 1980s. In Mariupol such decline was sudden and rapid and, apparently, led municipal public transit to a collapse: so the marshrutkas could set the ticket price much higher than for the tramway and not be rejected by passengers. In Galați, when they tried to rise the price from 1500 to 2000 lei, they cancelled this decision two days later – because of the passengers massively returning to municipal transport.[101] In 2016, the ticket price for maxi-taxis and municipal transport in Galați was identical, which was not the case in Mariupol where UET was 2 – 2.5 times cheaper than the marshrutkas.

In Mariupol, the marshrutkas gradually lost their advantage as an alternative to the ‚state transport': to travel standing became quite common again, and during rush-hour people would have to let several vehicles pass because they were overcrowded – just as they had done with trams in the early 1990s. The marshrutkas caused public discontent, but there was no alternative. In contrast to the marshrutkas in Mariupol, maxi taxis in Galați did not change much since the 1990s. They occupied a particular niche and were not contested. This more or less peaceful co-existence of transit mode relieved them from a necessity to change. Such a necessity, however, persisted in Mariupol, where the legal and social status of the ST was unstable.

2.3 Urban electric transport: Rust, electricity, and postponed crisis

[101] Legea sărăciei: Daca n-ai banii de maxi-taxi, o iei pe jos 23.03.1999 *Viața Liberă*

Problems with the trams and trolleybuses appeared much less in the chronicles of the 1990s than bus disruptions. Until the shared taxis served only the former bus routes, UET was overloaded with passengers. Yet, UET was still seen as the future. As of the early 1990s there were plans to build a tram line to Vostochnyi. Experts also commented that buses would not provide a sufficient solution for districts like this and that the 'Ordzhonikidzevsky city district is in urgent need of a branched trolleybus net'.[102] As a child living in Mariupol in the early 1990s, I remember adults talking about how the trolleybus line might be extended to the northern industrial park, and how the trams might go to the suburb Staryi Krym and to Vostochnyi – plans that informants were only able to recall with my help in 2011 – 2013 even though these plans were clearly publicized in newspapers and other written sources from the 1990s.[103] The tramway line to Vostochnyi was never built; the trolleybus line was belatedly opened in 1995. In the Romanian recollections of such unrealized plans, the tramway connection between Galați to Brailă, and the suburb of Smârdan figured prominently (this was after EU accession, during 2015-2016, when I stayed in Romania).

The closures of tramway in the Ukraine and Romania occurred only in the 2000s. The trolleybus network in the Ukraine even showed an increase in length from 4148 to 4453 km between 1993 and 2009. Of the 25 tramway systems in that existed in the Ukrainian SSR as of 1989, there were 24 still working in 2009, with the total length of networks slightly falling from 2109 to 1976 km between years 2000 and 2009 (Tarxov, Kozlov, Olander 2010, P. 12). A few new trolleybus and tramway lines were built in both countries during the 1990s. These were mostly a delayed and partial realization of projects from socialist period (Botoşani, Yenakiieve, Mariupol, Ploiești, Vaslui, Baia Mare and other). For example in Slatina the plan to construct a trolleybus network from the 1980s was realized in the 1990s; instead of the initially planned 37 trolleybus cars only three arrived.[104] Some of the trolleybus systems were even planned as late as the 1990s, in response to the fuel crisis: in Kyiv oblast 'the situation with fuel was so bad, that the authorities decided to build a trolleybus line' between Radomyshl, Vyshevichi and Irsha (Tarkhov Kozlov Olander 2010, P.826). The latter project, however, was never realized, like many others.

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[102] "О бензине, требованиях депутатов и здравом смысле." *PR*, 2.11.1990.
[103] See for example http://transport-mrpl.narod.ru/history/chronology/1970_1990.html.
[104] Slatina: troleibuze http://www.transira.ro/bb3/viewtopic.php?t=1988 .

Urban electric transport as ‘state transport’ existed within another temporal order than the shared taxis. While private bus operators were acquiring new vehicles, and were experimenting with and practicing situated management, tram and trolleybus infrastructure remained the same on familiar routes. While peoples’ mobility patterns were changing, urban infrastructures like buildings, factories, communal utilities acquired new meanings and names despite remaining the same physically. If at the beginning of the crisis rails and wiring stood for stability, hope, visibility, and perceived reliability, later symbolized stagnation, slowing down their speed and failing to adapt to the new everyday geographies of their passengers.

My informants recalled the decay of UET differently than the bus disruptions. No one could tell when exactly the UET system went bad. Instead, the times when trams went regularly ‘one after another’ gradually blended into the current situation where trams only appeared ‘once an hour’. A detailed description of the post-socialist flaws and breakages of UET below will serve the reader to better understand why such decay was only identified at an advanced stage.

UET mostly continued to work unabatedly in the first half of the 1990s. The average lifetime of a trolleybus is 1.5 – 2 times longer than for buses, and it is even longer for a tramcar. Electric vehicles age, to a great extent, without visible signs because of corrosion that affects inner parts. Iron oxidation is a permanent process; but it does not manifest itself at the early stages. Later it does so, but only through tram’s decreased speed and increased hum and not through a complete interruption of its work. For the regular passenger, a slow decrease of amount of vehicles on a line was not so noticeable. The busiest tram and trolleybus lines also did not have fixed schedules – instead the average headway between two trams was slowly became longer. When commuting often, you could only notice after some time that the service became less frequent but not that the particular tram at 7:47 did not arrive. Thus, unlike the abrupt fuel crisis of early the 1990s, the ageing of UET was not perceived as an urgent crisis that needed an immediate solution.

Mariupol did not receive a single trolleybus between 1995 and 2001, or any tram between 1993 and 2006. Only six trolleybuses arrived in Galați in the years 1992 – 2008. The number of trolleybuses fell steadily until there were only three left in the late 2000s. Using the trolleybus now meant a lot of waiting for the passengers – waiting outside at the stop watching others getting onto marshrutkas; waiting in the freezing trolleybus at a stop when the driver wanted to wait for some extra passengers; noticing during the ride how shared taxis

cut in ahead of the trolleybus. Sometimeses trolleybuses had to wait just before the stop with the doors closed because the stop was occupied by a micro-bus or two.

The situation was slightly different for trams that served in industrial zones and took most of their passengers during the rush hours. Share taxis did not appear in these remote zones where factories such as Aglofabrika in Mariupol or Steelworks in Galați were located. Private buses would not pay off since except for the peak hours they would be empty. Still, even though experiencing less competition, tramway infrastructure remained in a state of advancing decay. By the end of the 1990s, public confidence in municipal transport ceded to pessimism. It was common to hear conductors blaming the passengers for 'destroying the last trams'. Some second-hand tramways episodically arrived to Galați from Germany, but no new trams were delivered after approximately 1994 (as of April 2016). New second-hand tramcars and a handful of new trolleybuses could be seen on the streets allowing for a sense of current renewal, but more often people just saw the old trams. These had broken doors that did not work, window glass replaced with plywood, leather seats replaced with wooden ones. Twin units of tramcars were uncoupled, and several lines (for example, the lines 3, 7, 9, and 11 in Mariupol) were shortened or they switched to a rush-hour-only mode of operation. The situation was aggravated by growing crime: rails and wires were stolen and not once. A former tram driver in Mariupol recalled how the late evening trams going to the industrial zones at the periphery of the city suffered from hooliganism, such as vandals throwing stones into tram windows. Carriages often missed one or both headlights.[105] Occasionally fire broke out in tramcars, and a frequent scene was trams with low beam switched on at daytime, meaning that the carriage was defect and headed back to the depot without passengers. Tramways were not only unsightly but also noisy – the hum was produced both from the outside, by deformed rails, and from the inside, by ungreased bolts and bearings. Wiring break-offs and derailing became frequent phenomena. The number of tramcars staying still due to lack of spare parts increased. Such tramcars formed so-called 'cadaverous rows' (*trupnye riady*) of rusty carcasses in depots. Electric transport became much less frequent, unreliable, slow and, consequentially, unpopular. In the Ukraine, the number of passenger trips felt drastically from 2006 million in 1989 to 800 million in 2009 for tramways (Tarkhov

[105] http://transphoto.ru/photo/574020/ ; http://photo.tramvaj.ru/images/mariupol/739.jpg

Kozlov Olander 2010, P. 12), with a similarly dramatic reduction for trolleybus – from 2295 to 1294 million between the years 1993 and 2009 (ibid, P. 29).

Generally, the municipal tram and trolleybus systems in post-socialist Romania and the Ukraine were excluded from the market economy and were not intended to be cost-efficient. The Ukrainian transport specialist Boris Bakhteev sharp-sightedly observed and commented on the ongoing trends at that time in UET (Tarkhov Kozlov Olander 2010, P.830): the delivery of a competitive service ceased to be a priority, while the continued existence and minimal maintenance of tramway and trolleybus was justified by its social function (i.e. by carrying lgotniki). The managerial and material remnants of state socialism made the tram and trolleybus infrastructure obsolete. The patterns of managing UET differed from city to city, also within one and the same state. In many cases the city mayor – a figure irrelevant in Soviet times – was usually the person responsible for the survival or collapse of communal transport. Genuine support for UET was quite exceptional amongst city administrations; especially since in some cases the authorities were affiliated with the shared taxi business. Electric urban transport was now regarded as a remnant of the socialist state as well as a reminder of its failure; a worn-out ghost of an erstwhile shining future. While bus disruptions caused immediate dismay amongst commuters, authorities, and entrepreneurs, tram and trolleybus disruptions were taken with relative indifference. Maybe, UET infrastructure was too complicated to be dealt with informally; maybe, the solution for its failure seemed to be already there in the form of shared taxis.

In Mariupol, the marshrutka lines began to overlap with existing trolleybus routes or they combined them, offering a quick direct connection that trolleybuses failed to provide. By the beginning of the 2000s all parts of the extensive trolleybus network were served by marshrutkas. When the Ukraine has introduced its new currency (in 1996) and inflation slowed down, the new, more stable fares for trolleybuses and marshrutkas were respectively 30 and 50 kopecks; this ratio persisted ever since, with slight variations.[106] Thus the gap between a trip fare in the municipal transport system and shared taxis decreased significantly. Passengers started to choose the marshrutka even on connections serviced by electric transport. For instance, it became common to use marshrutkas for travel from Vostochnyi to Victory Square (Russian: *Plotschad Pobedy* (*Площадь Победы*), Ukrainian: *Площа*

[106] 100 kopecks = 1 hryvnia. Hryvnia is Ukrainian currency since 1996.

Перемоги (*Ploshcha Peremohy*)) – the busiest location of the Ordzhonikidzevskyi city district, now accessible by trolleybuses and tramways as well as private buses.

Yet the municipal transport providers did try to resist the crisis. Transit companies attempted to make the route schemes more effective. In Mariupol the trolleybus lines 12, 13 and 15 were extended through the merger of shorter lines in order to provide direct trips without changes for a larger number of passengers. The new tramway lines 3a, 15 and 16 were organized in order to increase the ticket sales. Also other Ukrainian cities experimented with route networks during the 2000s. In order to attract more ticket-paying passengers amongst workers, tramway schedules were displayed at the entrances of factories. Various forms of economizing were introduced, for example, reserve tracks at the loops were dismantled to renew the main ones. Also, some tram-trolleybus departments employed a maximum number of vehicles on one or two lines to make them competitive against shared taxis, while the remaining lines provided a minimal service 'for pensioners'. 'Donor vehicles' (*donory*) of broken trams that were difficult to repair were disassembled in order to provide spare parts for other, less impaired tramcars. Another reason for repairing the old vehicles instead of buying new ones was that the KTM-5, the most widespread tramcar model in Eastern Ukraine, was not manufactured anymore after 1992, whereas newer models needed unavailable spare parts. New tramcars were only few, and the first breakages would result into their shutdown – as it was impossible to find spare parts for them in other broken tramcars. On the one hand, short-term trouble-shooting was detrimental on the long run: for example, dismantling reserve tracks disabled maneuvers in case of accidents or schedule changes, and thus it reduced the overall stability of the system. On the other hand, such trouble-shooting delayed the decay, preventing the closure of services and removal of the infrastructure. Although some predicted a quick disappearance of UET within a few years, for many municipal transit companies the long struggle for survival, that will be described in chapters 3 and 4, had only begun.

2.4 Disassembling of the city

The proliferation of shared taxis and the decay of municipal transport in the post-socialist midsized city represented more than a simple normalization of what used to be a crisis solution. Troublesome mobilities in the age of marshrutkas may be seen as part of a wider process of fragmentation of the city and of the urban dwellers' detachment from the

state. There are several dimensions to this 'collapse of planning' as seen from the perspective of citizens, and I will sum them up to conclude this chapter.

The various material disruptions in Romanian and Ukrainian cities triggered the *unblackboxing* of infrastructures: the operation of municipal transit became more visible, transparent, and understandable to citizens, producing new competences and ideas amongst the general public. Public transportation was now widely recognized as a service that costs money depending on the variables of comfort, speed, and price.

The collapse of planning paradigms brought about a *change in the status of the future.* The adverse conditions in which public transportation found itself revealed how much infrastructural performance depended on an orientation to the future and planning. Instead of regulation and planning, there was now an urgent need for improvisation and self-governance. Planning for shared taxis was conspicuously absent in the masterplans and other documents produced by authorities[107] as well as in media publications and oral histories I encountered. If the socialist future was the object of planned responsible and zealous construction, the post-socialist present emerged from the ‚mangles of practice' – a de-centered series of intertwined, incremental, and uncoordinated actions (Pickering 2010). Now the future was perceived as independent from ‚us' possesing a strong, sometimes irresistible agency. As Kelly shows in his study of everyday life under the second Palestinian intifada, the impossibility 'to bring together hopes and desires, on the one hand, with direct experiences, on the other' (Kelly 2008, P. 366) causes a sense of frustration. Facing a similar impossibility, citizens at the outskirts of Europe drifted in their expectations from plan to dream. That is to say, plans were now proclaimed with a lesser degree of confidence; one could wait and hope for something but one could not count on it anymore.

Postsocialist discourses on the future and contemporary realities overlapped with discourses on provinciality, so that the periphery was presented as outdated and backward. The first Ukrainian cities to massively dismantle tram lines in the post-Soviet period were Kyiv and Kharkiv – the two largest and most important cities of the country. Many people

[107] For Sustainable mobility plan, *see* in Galați the 'Planul de Mobilitate Urbana Durabila Galati', available at www.transira.ro/bb3/download/file.php?id=74707 (Planul Integrat de Dezvoltare al Municipiului Galati 2009) and at http://www.eltis.org/ro/content/seminar-sustainable-urban-mobility-plans-romania-15-6-2015. General mobility plan for Romania is available at http://mt.gov.ro/web14/strategia-in-transporturi/master-plan-general-transport/documente-master-plan1. For Ukrainian legislative and planning acts, see zakon.rada.gov, particularly 'Transport Strategy of Ukraine till Year 2020' (Decree by Cabinet of Ministers N 2174-o, 20 October 2010 http://zakon2.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/2174-2010-%D1%80 or Targeted Programme of Development of Urban Electric Transport till Year 2017 (Bylaw by Cabinet of Ministers N 1855, 29 December 2006) http://zakon2.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/1855-2006-%D0%BF

disparagingly characterized tramways as *sovok* – a noun derived from 'Soviet' – to stress their backwardness. Yet it did not mean that shared taxis were seen as a sign of the future: the small buses reminded of those used in suburban and rural areas during socialist time. Shared taxis were reminiscent of ‚rurality' and were adressed with epithets like ‚regress', ‚degradation', and ‚savagery'. For many, the use of public transit was erased from the future as they imagined or wanted it.

The public perception of urban problems in early post-socialist Galați and Mariupol showed that expert knowledge was now less confidently perceived as something to be realized on practice. Certain developments in public transport definitely deserved criticism such as tax evasion, CO2 emissions, insecurity, and the exclusion of low-income population groups etc. However, such criticisms, if uttered, were perceived with irony, as something irrelevant. In conversation ordinary citizens dismissed any talk about sustainability, liveability, environmental responsibility, and the social state, not because they opposed these ideas, but because criticizing the given reality seemed futile to them: of course, ‚we' are living in the ‚wrong' place and time, so transport malfunctions are no surprise.

Maxi-taxis in Romania and marshrutkas in the Ukraine operate along the same streets and stops as the municipal transport if it survived. These two infrastructures overlap; they sometimes compete and rarely complement each other. None of the competitors made steps to coordinate or collaborate. On the contrary, they competed using deceptive practices. In the evening, when headways on tram, trolleybus, and marshrutka lines were equally long, a marshrutka would come to the crowded stop just two-three minutes before the tram's arrival. As a consequence, some tram and trolleybus companies refused to display schedules at the stop, claiming that shared taxi drivers would steal their permanent passengers. In Mariupol people gossiped that marshrutka drivers gave bribes to trolleybus drivers so that the latter would skip the last evening tour and not take any of the passengers.

Rivalry between municipal and private transport companies led to growth of geographic inequality in the city. If the most attractive routes in the city were shared by both municipal and private transit companies, the less attractive locations suffered from further cutbacks in their already meager schedule. Such cutbacks especially affected the low-rise neighborhoods near the industrial zones (in Mariupol, for example, Zirka, Mirnyi, Guglino): the young ticket-buyers voted with their feet and the remaining pensioners were not counted as passengers by entrepreneurs.

Shared taxis did not show any corporate social responsibility, instead giving way to individualist self-interested tactics. They did not display schedules at stops, their timetable was only visible inside of the vehicle. Similar form of fragmentation was applied to maps: instead of exposing the whole network, drivers preferred to show their line only; in Mariupol, a map of the entire network of marshrutka lines did not exist as of 2011. Individualist tactics attempted to tie passengers to this particular bus on this particular line. Given that every driver had to pay daily a fixed sum to the company owner, he was not motivated by the income collected by other drivers on the line (as an example of alternative, in some Western European public transport companies the day income of all drivers on the line is equal and it is calculated as a function of total income on this line).

Urban electric transport was re-defined in popular discourse as a form of social assistance.[108] If in Galați the municipal authorities spoke about letting maxi-taxis step in on ‚marginal lines', in Mariupol they openly acknowledged being uncapable of carrying all passengers in the city without marshrutkas. At the same time, UET and shared taxis tended to function within parallel social realms, serving different urban milieus that met less and less in the city. The new economic context excluded trams and trolleybuses from the newly emerging market relations – as it did with many pensioners, who were dependent on their pension and free public transportation. Such discrepancies in the ways different transit modes worked meant tensions between their users. Many of those for whom trams and trolleybuses were of crucial importance, perceived the rivalry from shared taxis as unfair because it increased the losses of municipal transit. The passengers of shared taxis accused the authorities, on the other hand, of wasteful investments into electric transport that they considered outdated.

Local corporations intended to compensate for the deficiencies of municipal public transit. In the 1990s the steelworks in Mariupol offered direct help to the municipal tram and bus companies, defining the scope and form of such assistance themselves. Similarly, factory workers increasingly relied on another type of service, provided and often fully paid by their employer – the so-called service buses (‘curse de conventie' in Romania and ‘*служебный/службовий автобус'* in Ukraine)**.** A novelty compare to socialist times, corporate buses started to carry factory workers because of the disruptions in the municipal bus system. These buses usually stopped in special locations that did not feature any signs or information about schedules. A staff pass was required to use such a bus. Unlike trams,

[108] *Viaţa Liberă* Cine se teme de maxi-taxi-uri? 07.04.1998.

service buses were not available for the former employees, but one could not blame them for this – they were not considered part of the state or municipality. Unlike the public tram, a service bus was a symbol of stability, security, and also of power; a local power which was more real and tangible than the distant power of the capital center and which some years later was identified as 'oligarchy' (chapter 3 elaborates more on intricate relationships between factory oligarchies and the city dwellers).

The frictions between shared taxis, municipal transit, and service buses brought about new divisions within the sector of public transit, which had been relatively homogenous before. It is not only car drivers who separated themselves off from public transit users: pensioners in trams, youth in shared taxis, and workers in factory buses were divided into different niches conceived of as unequally prestigious and worthy. Modes of transit became markers of age and income, which also implied different degrees of control over one's own time.

Passengers of electric transport experienced this disintegration and fragmentation in numerous ways – for example, during derailments which became menacingly frequent. Such incidents disrupted schedules and sometimes turned into dreadful tragedies.[109] The dissembling was literally audible the tram passengers: '*one of the indicators telling that the tramcar is 'clapped-out' [or, 'likely to break'] is a sound originating from weakly bolted details, seats badly bolted to the floor'* – as a transport expert from Kyiv told me characterizing the audibility of disruption. For some citizens the physical fragmentation of the material infrastructure entailed the ideational fragmentation of the urban community as a whole. I consider the stealth of overhead wiring as a vivid example of how these two go together. In post-socialist Mariupol and Kostiantynivka the wiring was often stolen from functioning tram lines – which meant that someone considered them totally irrelevant (but relevant in terms of being able to sell it), while for others they secured everyday mobility. Yusuf (2012) provides a similar example of stealing from railways supplying indigenous blacksmiths in colonial Northern Nigeria. 'Reusing' wires, rails, and vehicles as scrap metal reflects the collapse of the public sphere. The exclusion of UET from the newly emerging

[109] On July 2, 1996, an accident happened in Kamianske (then Dniprodzerzhinsk): the KTM-5 tramcar had its brakes failed when running down from the hill with high speed. 34 persons killed and over one hundred injured made it one of the most infamous accidents in tramway history. The tragedy led to the closure of the line and removal of all KTM-5 tramcars in the city from operation.

mobility discourses mirrored the exclusion of particular social groups (like *lgotniki*) from the urban public sphere.

In spite of the general distrust towards institutions, experts, and the state, as well as the on-going privatization of public assets, at least two groups – elderly passengers and enthusiasts of electric transport – attempted to support trams and trolleybuses in Romania and the Ukraine after 1990. They not only had to find a way of lobbying or supporting tram and trolleybus technology, but also to redefine its status: urban electric transport had to be recalibrated into a fluid object that was capable of change together with the environment. Although UET was a shared cause unifying the elderly and the enthusiasts, these two communities rarely encountered each other in urban ilfe, as they had different reasons to support trams and trolleybuses. Moreover, the enthusiast community existed primarily online, while the elderly had virtually no access to digital technologies. Thus, joint efforts to support trams and trolleybuses was hindered by social, economic, technological, and epistemological boundaries.

3. These trolleybuses are like us: old bodies and old vehicles aging together

On a gloomy December morning in 2011 I was waiting together with my grandparents for the tram on Mamina-Sybiryaka Street in Mariupol. Across the street a woman was exclaiming a loud, nervous, and agitated monologue about *marshrutkas* that were passing by: *they just ignore me, as if there is no me….as if I do not exist…they just pass and don't stop, they even do not slow down…as if I am not a human, as if do not exist…* Passers-by, many of whom were about the same age, particularly women staying and waiting for the tram at the opposite side, displayed a mixture of concern, understanding, and embarrassment: although the lady could be easily labeled mentally disturbed, her rant was dramatizing a part of the everyday realm that they too had had to get used to. Marshrutka drivers and conductors indeed had no financial interest in picking up the elderly – because, according to a law from 2005, the elderly in Ukraine were entitled to free rides. So drivers did not bother about taking pensioners; and it did seem as if drivers looked right through the senior ladies and, less frequently, the gentlemen staying at the stop and spending dozens of minutes, sometimes hours, until a tramway or trolleybus would arrive. The zero fare policy – one of the key forms of social assistance in the Ukraine – was having contradictory consequences in the urban space, in vehicles and at the stops. Pensioners were many, but they mattered as little as none.

Seniors in the post-socialist city are often described as the actual or would-be beneficiaries of forms of social assistance as well as of sustainable city-making. Socialist cities were not only cities for the future; they were also cities for the young and the new – due, among other things, to the social focus on the working class and the demographical age structure of the post-WWII generations. It is therefore not surprising that these cities needed to put a lot of effort into making them more livable for people of all ages. Post-socialist cities, on the other hand, faced demographical recession due to lower birth date and higher emigration. Romania faced more demographic losses than most of the other Eastern European countries. Ukrainian situation is described as one of the worst worldwide – with country having lost about a quarter of its population since 1991. Both due to the emigration and low fertility rates in these countries, the elderly people are a growing part of post-socialist societies. The need for an environment that would be friendly to an aging population, along with disabled people and other low-income and vulnerable social groups, is important for discourses of social protection and social aid in the post-socialist states. While Western

European policy makers are starting to mention the potential benefits of the inclusion of elderly into urban life, in Eastern Europe infrastructural decision-makers often refer to age-groups and generations in a rather instrumental manner, in order to gain political support or win their loyalty. This chapter will show how pensioners are important participants in city-making in the post-socialist Ukraine; and how, given all the practical obstacles, they have contributed to the preservation of UET infrastructures.

Ageing and seniority in this chapter will be understood as culturally constructed. Given that the older age became a predictable expectation of the lifespan in many places (including Romania and the Ukraine), ageing cannot be further understood as a 'common or totalizing experience' (Gilleard, Higgs 2000, P.1). This means that we should speak of multiple, regionally and socially specific practices and experiences of ageing. Until now only a few authors have dealt with these regional specifics of ageing in post-socialist cities.[110] Two observations in this regard will be of importance to my further analysis. One is made by Monika Wilinska in her studies of the culture of ageing culture in Poland. She found that even in the welfare states people are not expected to grow old, and spaces where ageing occurs might foster the idea of old age as something immoral (Wilinska 2012, P. 88). The second observation, dispersed across the literature on post-Soviet nostalgia and post-socialist cities, is that the post-socialist material transformations of large architectural and infrastructural forms build under socialism often have been lagging behind the ideological changes that have taken places after 1989 (see Ukrainian example in Wanner 2010). While discourses on the nation, its pre-socialist history, and projected new futures were reconfiguring the discursive media spaces of transition, urban material spaces were conspicuous for their blatant pastness. The production of artifacts such as houses, schools, roads slowed down – as a part of the general trend towards de-industrialization. What used to be replaced earlier, now was being used again and again, and often recycled after that. Cities which were once constructed for the future, were now critically charged with the past and with ageing, both of people and of artifacts. With no resources available for their renovation, the 'old' and ageing artifacts had to be adapted to the new ideas about the livable city.

First this chapter will trace how fare exemptions for pensioners and people of pensionable age informed mobility practices within the given cultural setting of an industrial

[110] One of the few sociological account explicitly dealing with urban context of senescence was focused on Czech cities, however not making an emphasis on socialist infrastructural heredity, see (Sykorova 2012; Galčanová, Sýkorová 2015).

post-socialist city. The usage of 'concessionary transport' in the Ukraine was perceived, at the same time, as a right deserved by the elderly, as their obligation, and as their opportunity resulting from the state`s mercy. For elderly people, these concessionary provisions determined the logic and practice of getting around the city. Secondly I will show how, under these rigid concession policies, tramways and trolleybuses actually became the spaces of segregation of the elderly urbanites from the young. While urban electric transport (UET) during the 1990s was re-conceptualized as an outdated infrastructure with the only function of social assistance, elderly passengers were also imagined as free-riders dependent on and parasitizing on infrastructure. Thereby, elderly urbanites and UET infrastructures found themselves in a kind of symbiotic 'assemblage'. Third, I will describe the failure of a legislative attempt to disassemble this symbiosis in 2005 through the extension of concessionary fares for the elderly beyond UET to share taxi, an innovation that was boycotted by drivers and passengers alike as an illegitimate and unethical measure. Finally, I will consider how, subsequent to this failure, elderly passengers heightened the political meaning of UET in the city through their electoral choices, civic activities, and informal payments, by doing so contributing to the preservation of tramways and trolleybuses in the region.

3.1 Concessionary fare as an opportunity and burden. The ambiguities of social assistance after socialism

Free or discounted public transportation for people of older age is common across many countries including in Western Europe: for instance, the authorities in London developed a Freedom Pass policy giving those of pension age the opportunity to travel freely. Although trip fares are a crucial element of economies of transportation (Balcombe et al. 2004), they are widely known to have extra-economic effects, influencing the accessibility of mobility for particular populations (Putcher Renne 2003), in the worst cases leading to their geographic exclusion. Debates on trip fare rates were conceptually related to the state`s social functions, the class structure of society, and principles of social justice. Informal social networks such as German *Schwarzfahrerversicherung*[111] in the 1980s, or the Swedish

[111] Schwarzfahrerversicherung can be literally translated from German as 'fare-dodger insurance'.

Planka.nu[112] nowadays, have provided informal insurance networks of for fare-dodgers and have promoted an ideological message that public transport must be for free for everybody.

Forms of social assistance to different groups of urban infrastructure users are indicative of the social order; so are practices of use or non-use of such assistance that are rooted in the local evolution of relations between citizens, service providers and the state. The ethnographic study of concession and exemption usage in the domain of public services shows us how socially selective monetary mechanisms can have benevolent or discriminatory effect depending on the relation between users and infrastructures. They also show how these regulations can support up-to-date or outdated, and mainstream or marginalized life patterns. Concessionary fares for public transport in post-socialist Ukrainian cities have reshaped the mobility patterns of citizens, as well as the temporal regimes of urban infrastructures, and the social relations around them; they have also been constitutive of the local urban culture of ageing.

The socialist camp: fare exemption as a form of honors

In the scantily motorized Soviet Union public transport fulfilled an important social function whereby its economic viability was fairly secondary (Korobeinikova 2012). Ticket prices remained unchanged for decades, while the quality of service differed radically between particular locations and thus the relation between passengers` monetary contribution and the quality of service was non-existent. In some industrial cities (e.g. Magnitogorsk, Taganrog, Miass in the Russian SFSR) public transit was free for everyone, which was widely believed to be an early feature of the final stage of communism. In the rest of Soviet cities fares were very low, varying from three kopecks for a tram ride to five kopecks for the metro (all of my interlocutors who had commuted then recalled this stable price). In communist Romania the fare did not exceed 'a few bani'[113] and, reportedly, also remained fixed for long periods. Fare-dodging was understood not so much as economically damaging but as indecent. In the Soviet Union of the 1960-1970s conductors selling tickets were replaced by ticket-boxes where passengers had to leave money and take a ticket themselves. The tramcar model LM-68 projected and manufactured in St. Petersburg between 1968 and 1992 did not

[112] http://planka.nu/

[113] 1 Romanian leu = 100 bani. According to other memories, loaf of bread coasted ca 3.25 lei in 1977, and ticket for tram – 2 lei, source https://www.dcnews.ro/amintiri-din-epoca-ceausescu-care-erau-preturile_265574.html. 1 leu was equal to 0.18-0.25 USA, source http://filme-cu-prosti.blogspot.de/2015/07/cursul-dolarului-pe-vremea-lui-ceausescu.html.

feature a seat for conductor present in previous model – and through this feature of design promoted the new social order. On the inner walls of vehicles you could see a slogan saying 'a sense of conscience is the best inspector' (*Совесть – лучший контролёр*) that induced the interiorization of obedience in a Foucauldian manner.[114] To deceive an inspector was not perceived as obstructing an employee to do her job, it meant resistance against the system. A scene in '4 Months, 3 Weeks and 2 Days'[115], a movie by Cristian Mungiu, features bus passengers in communist Bucharest who pass the ticket over to each other in secret: the inspector was made to think that everyone had bought his or her own. The perception of ticket control in public transport as a manifestation of power and surveillance is still present in many contexts, especially in transport provided by the state, the municipality, or a large company. As we will see later, this can be different for smaller enterprises, but in the Soviet Union public transit was a monopoly of the state.

Concession-holders in Soviet times formed a fair minority, and were usually people with some outstanding qualities for whom exemption was more of an honor than a material need: for instance, veterans of war, personal pensioners[116], and 'veterans of work' (formal title awarded to persons with a long service record – usually starting from twenty or thirty years). Apparently, all groups of people eligible to exemption were very small, and statistically insignificant within the entire flow of passengers. Travel benefits could also be a privilege or reward for some special achievements (for example, honorary donors and 'Heroes of the Soviet Union' had been entitled to free travel) and were hardly ever a matter of economic policy. Pensioners of age (mind the difference from retirement pensioners who get their status when they stop working) were not eligible for concessions or exemptions in public transport, a fact which is often mentioned by my elderly respondents.[117] However, none of my now-retired interlocutors recalled it as a problem; on the contrary, they stated, the trip fare was so low that it did not matter much for any of them. Since public transport was a state monopoly, all passengers shared the same spaces and schedules when commuting; almost all of them paid the same price.

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[114] On pitfalls of implementation of self-ticketing in USSR see *Совесть - лучший контролер? Как идеалы коммунизма не прижились в советском народе (на примере общественного транспорта)* http://shkolazhizni.ru/archive/0/n-50647/. See also (Utekhin 2004, P. 204).

[115] 4 luni, 3 săptămâni şi 2 zile [2007] dir. by Cristian Mungiu. BAC Films. 10th minute.

[116] 'Personal pensions' could be awarded for outstanding political, cultural, scientific, or economic service to the state.

[117] Details of Soviet policies regarding concessionary fares can be found, for example, in paragraph 12 of the 'Rules of Use trams and trolley buses in the city of Zhdanov'on June 3, 1981 (*Правила пользования трамваем и троллейбусом в городе Жданове* от 3 июня 1981 г.).

Post-socialist fare exemption as social assistance

In the late 1980s and the early 1990s additional concessions were introduced for a considerable number of passengers in the Ukraine, first of all, for pensioners of age: 55 years for women and 60 years for men. Given the rapid decrease of average income and the rise of prices during the aggravated economic crisis, large segments of the population found themselves in need of social assistance. Such assistance was taking various forms including direct humanitarian aid with food and cloth supplies; treatment sessions; health resort vouchers; exemption in utility payments and so on. Many of these forms of aid were unusual to the Ukrainians, present for only a few years after which they disappeared. However, concessionary prices for public transport survived long after what some called the 'Golden era of humanitarian intervention' (Wheeler, Bellamy 2008).

Since the early 1990s legislation further enlarged the list of beneficiaries including, amongst others, pensioners of age. Exemption from the trip fare in this context was a form of *help*, or a *social guarantee*. In 1993 the Council of Ministers of the Ukraine passed the Decree 'On the free-of-charge use of public transport for pensioners', which consisted of only one short sentence with no clarification or explication of the goals: pensioners by age were from now on entitled to free-of-charge use of all modes of public transport except the subway.[118] In 1994 the workings of this Decree was extended to handicapped persons ('invalids').[119] At the local level the application of Decree underwent further specifications, particularly, in regard to who should be counted as pensioner of age. For instance, in 1994 Mariupol pensioners of the armed forces, the state security services, and internal affairs bodies successfully lobbied for their inclusion into list of concessionary passengers by decision of the city council.[120]

Apparently, no one foresaw how much changes the concessionary trip fare would bring to the different spheres of everyday life of the urban elderly. I am going to describe how the fare exemption triggered a chain reaction of shifts in mobility practices; how it framed, and at times 'othered' the elderly in urban spaces. Even though unnecessary such othering took place as the direct consequence of the concession itself, it originated from the negative

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[118] *Про безплатний проїзд пенсіонерів на транспорті загального користування* [On free-of-charge use of public transport for pensioners] Decree by Council of Ministers of the Ukraine, № 354, 17.05.1993 (http://search.ligazakon.ua/l_doc2.nsf/link1/KMP93354.html Accessed 27.07.2017).

[119] http://search.ligazakon.ua/l_doc2.nsf/link1/KP940555.html *О распространении действия постановления Кабинета Министров Украины от 17 мая 1993 г. N 354 КМ Украины.* Постановление КМ от 16.08.1994 № 555. Accessed 19.05.2018.

[120] "Военные пенсионеры удовлетворены" *Приазовский рабочий,* 17 June 1994.

societal perceptions of social assistance in the region. In the Ukraine, concessionary pricing for public transit fostered the construction of 'concessionary passengers' as a specific type of urban dwellers and, as I will show later in this chapter, this policy also constructed tram and trolleybus infrastructure as a ghettoized space.

Reduced or zero trip fare for public transport is a feature of social assistance systems in many countries, not only in the post-socialist countries of Europe.[121] However, similar policy solutions may have different social effects depending on the local circumstances. 'Exemption' in a post-socialist context often turns out to be ambiguous – it gives opportunities; it imposes behaviors; and it produces cultural meanings. The translation of the Russian word *lgota* (льгота) or the Ukrainian *pilga* (пільга) into English commonly causes semantic misunderstandings. Dictionaries may suggest 'exemption', 'benefit', 'privilege', 'discount' as a valid translation equivalent but *lgota/pilga* has a number of other stable connotations in colloquial speech, mostly of a negative or critical kind; hardly ever it refers to something positive. Moreover, across the former socialist bloc there are informal terms for people using social assistance. In Romanian, the word *pomanagiu* ('basket scrambler', 'beggar') is sometimes used as despising denotation of those who benefit from social aid or live at the cost of other. My Serbian and Montenegrian colleagues reported just the same despise in the local discourse about *socijali*. Similarly, in Russian and Surzhyk spoken by the population in the Donetsk oblast, the adverbs *lgotnyi* and *socialnyi* could mean 'bad' and 'of poor quality'. Below I will occasionally use the word *lgota* to denote the statutory right to commute for free. The categories of passengers entitled to lgota, whom I find incorrect to call 'beneficiaries' or 'privileged' except in inverted commas, will be referred to as *lgotniki*. In case of lgotniki policy-making not only responds to the already existing milieus but also produces these milieus. Here I draw on a Foucauldian understanding of classification as an act of power (Foucault 2002) and believe that the current profile of a social group is subject to an archeology of both texts and artifacts. This is especially so in the case of Ukrainian concessionary passengers, whose stigma itself became material and influenced the public transit hardware: the vehicles 'for concessionary passengers' and for 'social transport'.

Trip fare policy also stood out as an important tool for the social construction of age in urban public space. The issuing of a pension certificate – a scratch of paper necessary to take

[121] E.g., a single ticket in Stockholm public transit as of August 2017 had a standard price of 60 SEK, but 40 SEK for seniors over 65 years https://sl.se/sv/kop-biljett/.

a tram for free – was not connected to the biological or visual age of the person; in the 1990s many such certificates did not contain a photo at all.[122] Paradoxically, passports which did contain a photo and a date of birth were not a valid license for a free-of-charge commute, even if age was the only formal requirement for becoming a 'lgotnik', a pensioner of age. A pension certificate, a piece of paper to be shown in public, activated the age-related stereotypes (e.g. that pensioners always travel somewhere just to buy cheaper) and competed with visual, physical identification. The passenger`s public age (unlike the age performed in private or family spaces) expressed spatially and temporally: in vehicles and at the bus stops; in planning practices, in regard of waiting times, and trajectories of getting around. Exemption fares, and the documents confirming the right to use then became not only identifiers of age; they themselves configured the experiences of age, ageing, and senility in the city.

Trip fare concession and everyday life of the post-socialist pensioner

While public transport became free, prices for basic goods had grown considerably during the 1990s. The Ukraine faced hyperinflation in the first half of the 1990s (in 1992 alone the inflation rate was 2000%) and the rise in prices continued even after that, during the 2000s. Prices were not only growing rapidly, they also differed depending on the particular market or stall. Buying cheaper food, cigarettes, and medicine were by far the most important trip purposes named when I conducted the survey, interviews, and conversations with the concessionary passengers: some 90% mentioned it as the most frequent reason for the commute. In absence of state price regulation prices could vary significantly, so that calculating expenditures on edibles and finding cheaper places was a common practice amongst the elderly, reflected in their trajectories through the city. Back in 2011 most of my Ukrainian respondents reported having a pension of 1000 to 1500 UAH[123] with the prices for a bread loaf varying between 2.5 and 4.5 UAH:

> Inf. 7: *To the pharmacy [we go] by feet, to buy bread with this [public transport]… Well maybe also once a week*
> Int.: *Where do you commute to buy bread?*

[122] Baiburin (2009) in his historical anthropology of Soviet passport wrote on a relatively late emergence of photo in documents.
[123] Approximately 90-135 EUR according to oanda.com.

Inf. 6: *To Blazhevicha street. It`s in the same rayon, in our Illyichevski rayon. To Blazhevicha. It's two stops [by transport]*.

Inf. 7: *There's a market.*

Inf. 6: *There's a market, there`s cheaper bread for us. There we buy loafs, a loaf coasts two [hryvnia] 85 [kopecks], by no means four [like in the shop nearby]*.

On the one hand, these journeys and calculations owe their existence to the *lgota*. So do the patterns of commuting – a daily or weekly practice for the elderly (predominantly female) urban inhabitants. Trips to cheaper pharmacies, markets, and clinics would not happen in the absence of trolleybuses and lgota**;** hence, the absence of free transport could well cause the cancellation of the trip. On the other hand, in the context of the financial crisis and empoverishment lgota was perceived as a critically important form of assistance to obtain affordable food: 'If not from the exemption trip fare, we would live from hand to mouth *(на хлебе и воде'* (Inf. 5).

Lgota has deprived the private time of the elderly of its worth, in their own eyes and in the eyes of others. Due to the form of its implementation, lgota – as an unlimited right *not to* pay for transport – was uncountable and could not be directly converted into countable goods and benefits. When a pensioner was wasting her time at the stop, it did not generate any additional good. In other words, to use lgota did not mean saving money to the elderly; instead, not to use lgota meant to be a spender. With such perception of lgota, the time of the elderly acquired a negative value: it could not bring any good; it could only seize from the good.

Using the concession as a cultural imperative

Within a few years after introduction of exemption for public transport, the elderly started to perceive it as possibility and necessity at the same time. They had it to take it into account; they had to benefit from it; they had to suffer from it. Probably, a legacy of chronical deficiency of goods in Soviet time, lgota was something that one could not but use, or *must* use; the trip on share taxi resulted into a vexation or even feeling of guilt for squander. About one half of my elder informants in Mariupol reported they refused from the trip, if a tram did not come: so that unreliability of the tram turned into unreliability of their own lives.

In the Ukraine, the so called *market basket* (*спожившчий кошик*) – an officially approved sample of expected minimal expenditures of the residents on goods and services – indirectly asserted that the elderly should use only municipal transport. The document features

separate figures for working age population and for pensioners. In the column 'transport services' we find an amount of 524 trips per year for people of working age. For pensioners, however, the same column features zero *no* (0, zero) trips, assuming that they simply would not use other transport than municipal one.[124] Constructed in such a way, the exemption in fact eliminates and deprives the elderly from the freedom of choosing the transit mode.

The social imperative of thriftiness was overlapping with other characteristics of the lgotniki. Particularly, there was also a gender dimension in the societal shaping of the lgotniki as of milieu: colloquial speech clearly referred to 'grannies' rather than 'grandfathers'. Women were the vast majority in the tram, in the trolley, on the market, and in the shop. Firstly, at the level of demographics, the average life expectation differed for the sexes. In a given cultural context, older age women more often than men retained a high level of mobility after retirement. The survey and interviews revealed that some of them have their husband at home, and one interview directly explicitly stated that the decay of mobility for the male family member was caused by his inability to drive car. Mobility patterns bore the imprint of a social gender contract where female family members were expected to care about food provision, accompany minors on trips to school or hobby groups, help their male spouses or even queue up at the policlinic in order to reduce waiting times for the other, younger family members. Fare exemption enforced such microsociological patterns within families, increasing the mobility load on senior commuters who did not have to pay and thus had to do the tasks that other family members would otherwise have done. The rationality of zero-cost fares clashed with other rationales – for example, of spending time with family members or of being helped with carrying heavy bags from the food market. So, grandmothers would in principle refuse to take a grandson with them to the food market, because they would have to buy a ticket for the junior (no matter who would carry these costs). If taking the grandson, these grandmothers would risk having to decline lgota – because children did not like the long waiting at the stop and wanted to take a share taxi; so grandmothers preferred to make their trips alone. This visibility of elderly ladies in a specific public space illustrated, in a way, thesis of Vaiou about gendered nature of crisis that is often missing or overlooked even in Left criticism (Vaiou 2014). Indeed, as the transport was intensely criticized by media,

[124] *Об утверждении наборов продуктов питания, наборов непродовольственных товаров и наборов услуг для основных социальных и демографических групп населения*. Постановление КМ Украины от 14.04.2000 № 656. Section «Транспортні послуги» http://search.ligazakon.ua / l_doc2.nsf / link1 / KP000 656.html.

politicians, and passengers, it was never stressed than women are the first to be affected by this crisis.

Having done a substantial social promise at the fall of state socialism, the state tried to retract from it several times in the following decades. In the Ukraine (e.g., in the cities of Zhytomyr, Yenakiyevo, Ivano-Frankivsk) the city authorities tried to reduce lgota to a few hours a day: in Enakievo zero fare only applied to time between 8:30 and 14:00. Such measures were perceived by the majority of pensioners as wholly illegitimate and discomforting: first of all, the concession holders suspected (not without reason, as practice showed) that the carriers would radically reduce the service within the given hours. As of 2011, however, no time limitations for the use of lgota within the day applied in the cities of my fieldwork.

To sum up, trip fare concessions generated a mobility with many meanings that combined the opportunity to be on the move, the necessity to save money, and the elderly's will to preserve some independency. Concessions created a demand for and expectations towards urban electric transport (which it could not satisfy for long). Also, while not being linked to biological age, physical well-being (in case of pension of age), income status, marital status, family duties or any other socio-demographical criteria, fare exemptions were instrumental in terms of constructing a the specific social group, or a specific group of mobility subjects – the concessionary passengers, lgotniki. Such passengers acted in line with a distinctive economic logic within a specific paradigm of social assistance – assistance that was at odds with an emerging free market.

3.2 Old bodies and old vehicles

In the years following the mobilities of ageing people in various ageing Ukrainian cities were shaped by schizophrenic contradictions between the officially declared focus on social assistance on the one hand and the obliteration of the material infrastructure purposed to provide such assistance on the other. As the municipal bus disappeared from most of the Ukrainian cities, and the demand for concessions remained, tramway-trolleybus infrastructures became both a social guarantee and necessary precondition of affordable mobility for the elderly. The concessionary ticket-holders were the first group to experience changes, mostly discomforting ones, of passengering in trams and trolleybuses. A specific

connection emerged between UET and concessionary ticket holders: they were linked in the city space, in urban rhythms, and in the urban imagination.

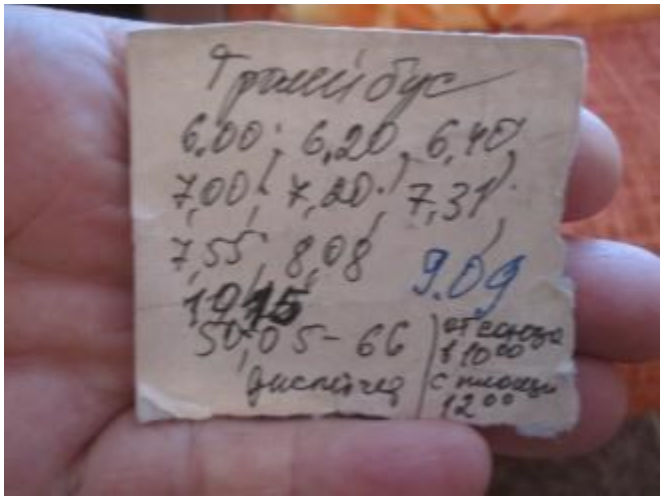
Notes about waiting

Tramway and trolleybus infrastructures made their users have to deal with inflexible and often weird timing conditions. The end of the 1990s and first decade of the millennium marked a significant decrease in reliability, speed, convenience, and number of vehicles available to elderly for the free-of-charge use. While in Mariupol shared taxis normally provided frequent service with headways of less than 10 minutes for one line (many lines converging on the most important city roads), schedules for trams consisted of odd intervals like 58, 34, or 65 minutes. The clock interval – a type of schedule in which departures are carried out on the same minute of every subsequent hour – was often considered impossible due to length of the tour which slightly exceeded 30 or 60 minutes. Mariupol's ring lines 13 and 14, not having an endpoint, made a tour in 55-58 minutes, which resulted in arrivals at stops on a different minute every hour. These two lines served the run-down settlements (*poselki*) of Mirnyi and Guglino, consisting of shabby private housing without any supermarket chains. Local residents, mostly seniors including my informants, had either to buy foodstuff in the neighborhood for significantly higher prices, or to make a tram trip, as they would say, 'to the city'. Schedules were not put up at the stops, although for the tramway lines 7, 9, and 11 that ran to an industrial zone at the northern outskirts of Mariupol it could be found at the gates of the steelworks. Yet, locals knew the schedule since it remained unchanged for years – and if it changed, the conductor informally announced it in advance. So passengers on Mirnyi would come to the stop some 10 minutes before the tram arrived. This fact complicated my survey research significantly, as I basically could poll only one or two persons per hour (one survey form took five to ten minutes on average).

Along with lines 13 and 14, tram line 11 also connected Mirnyi and Guglino with the Ordzhonikidze rayon at rush hours; however, not many pensioners benefited from it, avoiding trips in the rush hour. The reason for such avoidance was that they did not want ‚to worsen the conditions of commuting for factory workers'. In order to explain this consideration

pensioners used words like awareness (*сознательность)*, or conscience (*совесть)*: ‚we, pensioners, are conscious people'; ‚we are not paying but we do occupy the space'.[125]

On many other lines the frequency of service was low, so those people wanting or having to use the tram or trolleybus had to be prepared for dozens of minutes, if not hours, of waiting. In Horlivka, Mariupol, and Kostiantynivka many tramway and trolleybus routes were served with one vehicle only, so that the headway was no less than the duration of a return tour, which meant less than 10 departures a day. Information about schedules was shared by word of mouth; old ladies would write it down on a scrap of paper and carry it in their wallet.



Pic. 3. *Schedule for trolleybus line 15, used by* Inf. 1*, as told by traffic dispatcher via phone*.

Not infrequently, the vehicles would break down – in that case the depot usually sent a replacement car. Passengers with mobile phones would keep the phone number of the dispatcher to inform themselves about current changes in the schedule. During my fieldwork I shared the uncertainty with elderly people waiting at the stop of trolleybus line 15, connecting the city centre with remote sleeping area of Shidnyi (Vostochnyi) where I lived. In its considerable duration, our waiting was similar to how Stef Jansen (2015, Ch.2) described his experience at the bus stop at the outskirts of Sarajevo, in Dobrinja district.[126] Yet, in

[125] Interestingly enough, we can find evidences of similar logic in Soviet time. A collection of articles about Soviet etiquette features the episode with the old lady that ‚got used to go to the market precisely when transport carries people to work'. The elderly villain ‚hurries to occupy a seat', and after that bothers people with a loud talk (Grinberg, 1971. P. 114). Similarly, the tram driver in a film *The Tram Runs through the City* (Dir. Lyudmila Stanukinas, 1973, St Petersburg Documentary Film Studio) recalls how: ‚the senior passengers are being nagged: why do you travel in working hours, why wouldn`t you sleep?' (time mark 10:48).

[126] Interestingly, Madeleine Reeves described a similar importance of waiting for her fieldwork on Kyrgyz labor migrants in Moscow.

Mariupol, waiting for public transport was a stratified practice. Here marshrutkas passed by constantly, and some senior persons hesitated whether to give up waiting and get onto this paid-for transport. Finally, the forthcoming arrival of trolleybus would become visible – the dangling overhead wiring started to vibrate a few minutes before the trolleybus arrived.

Such a waiting became socially stigmatized practice, associated exclusively with electric transport. In Guglino and Mirnyi the bus and marshrutka stop Myslyvska St. (then – Ohotnicha st.) was a bit removed from the tramway stop, so that old people, dispossessed of their time, waited in a space where young faces were utterly absent. In the city centre or high-rise districts, where share taxis and trolleybuses shared stops, elderly people were singled out by a longer waiting time and by a passive manner in which they were waiting. Other passengers were swiftly catching marshrutkas that arrived to the stop and left it thick and fast.

***Pic. 4**. Seats of wooden planksin a tram in Mariupol.*

Most electric vehicles in Mariupol[127] were officially too old to be used and often stopped functioning properly. If in the 1990s the abrupt decay of tram and trolleybus transport

[127] As of 2010 the rolling stock consisted of ca 33 trolleybuses ZiU-682B manufactured in 1992-1993, 14 trolleybuses Skoda 14Tr manufactured in 1983-1990, 18 trolleybuses YMZ-T2 manufactured in 1994-2008, circa 80 tramcars KTM-5 manufactured in 1977-1988, 6 tramcars K-1, manufactured in 2006-2008 (licensed copy of the project dating back to 1983);

dismayed a wide range of urban dwellers, in the 2000s many did not notice the continued dynamics of deterioration – as most people started using marshrutkas, becoming the mainstream of commuting. Most of the remaining trams in Mariupol and many other cities were the rusty KTM-5 cars. Far from being barrier-free, these vehicles had the first bottom step no less than 30 cm above the ground. The inner space of these trams often degraded beyond recognition in post-Soviets years. Originally the tram had 'anatomical' seats that were in some cases upholstered, but since from the 1990s onwards one could frequently find them replaced with hard wooden planks (see Pic. 4) in order to prevent vandalism by hooligans who used to stab the upholstery. Wooden planks apparently were so uncomfortable to sit on that some younger passengers, if at all riding a tram, preferred to put their bags on them and keep standing.

The rattle of rusty trams on rusty rails was not only audible at a large distance in streets, it also presented a hindrance for communication for those sitting inside of the tram – words seemed to drown in a deafening vibration. Steady passengers got accustomed to that background though, so did I within a few days. Such an adaptation of hearing allowed me, for example, to interview a conductor on a tram and to be confronted several days later with an audio-recording consisting of noises that completely obliterated our voices. A friend of mine, who once visited Mariupol in 2011, could not hear a single word inside while being on the tram. Producing a wall of noise for the stranger, for the elderly a tram was still a space to listen to others, to talk to them, and to discuss news. The tram in the Kalmiuskyi (until 2016 – Illichivskyi) rayon of Mariupol was also a place for occasional encounters between former employees of steelworks. During these encounters, which I observed travelling with my granny and on my own, old friends also exchanged all sorts of news about their common acquaintances, such as the birth of grandchildren, moving homes, illnesses, and sometimes deaths. My grandmother, who went into the Illichivskyi district mostly to visit her friends and go to the local cemeteries, was always dropping a typical 'Again I will meet someone at tram…' with a mixture of anticipation and apprehension.

In the context of a steadfastly ageing and transforming infrastructure, the practical effects of the legislation on concessionary fares changed. As municipal transport was becoming less and less attractive and frequent, sticking to the logic of using lgota entailed an

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several trams and trolleybuses of other models. Consider a decline in number of vehicles: in year 1996, there were 157 trams and 132 trolleybuses in Mariupol; in 2006 there were only 69 trams and 45 trolleybuses. Data from http://transphoto.ru/list.php?did=310 and http://transport-mrpl.narod.ru/history/chronology/1991_2008.html.

ever growing time expenditure. At the stops I heard grotesque stories from pensioners how the milk got sour because they had to wait for the tram/trolleybus in a fervent heat; or how they ate the fruits they had bought – because they had got hungry before the trolleybus arrived. The rigid social imperative of using *lgota* was therefore at odds with the changing environment, causing feelings of deception and unfairness as well as triggering surprised comments from relatives:

> *So you will wait for half of a day and you will still take marshrutka after all and pay. My son tells me: 'So what have you profited, staying half a day, having nothing done. You would better get on marshrutka at once and pay'. But why the hell they pretend then that they provide free transport?* (Inf. 11)

The 'social' becomes pejorative

Even if initially zero-fare on municipal transport for vulnerable social groups (that is, *lgota*) was seen by Ukrainian society as a benefit, the subsequent technical deterioration resulted into the word 'social' acquiring strong negative connotations in colloquial speech. The adjective *'social'* when combined with some kind of stately provided assistance, be it accommodation, medication, or public transport meant bad quality and the inability to afford something better for a price dictated by the market. Many passengers of working age avoided using ‚social transport' in their everyday lifes. They took a tram only in cases of winterly snow drifts when marshrutkas functioned erratically; they got on a trolleybus only in the midst of the rush-hour when marshrutkas could not take everyone. Otherwise they viewed the tram and trolleybus as a contemptuous form of transport for themselves and for the young: ‚*For my children it is such a crying shame to go with a tram or trolleybus… Well probably because it is a social mode of transport, and it is used only by lgotniki'* (Inf. 12). Once I observed a young family of three making photos in the trolleybus: parents, in their early thirties were laughing, and the father told to his son of primary-school age: 'when else will you ride a trolleybus'. The stereotype was strong enough to produce confusion on the Metallurgists Avenue – the only transport link of Mariupol where UET operated with a frequency of less than 10 minutes, comparable and competitive with marshrutkas. Here I saw two school pupils arguing whether to take a new tram – one of the two that the city received in 2012. One boy was pulling the other's sleeve saying 'This is a new one'. His answer was 'I won't get on the tram. Go and tell me afterwards how it was'. Both left and continued separately. Such incidents were apparently noticed by the elderly, who often called the tram

and trolleybus ‚means of a transport for the old'. As of 2011, all bus enterprises in Mariupol were private, only a few ‚social buses' continued to operate at suburban lines. In colloquial speech people of different ages would call a trolleybus 'free transport', either referring to their price or the stereotype of electric transport being for the lgotniki. Despite the lower ticket price in comparison to marshrutkas, the trolleybus was the space for frequent fare dodging – passengers did not take the economic reproduction of UET infrastructure seriously.

Pic.5. *Elderly ladies are waiting for a tramway. They are sitting on a handkerchief which they place on the stairs by the shop entrance near public transit stop (as the stop itself does not have a shelter and/or bench).*

The use of public transit therefore became stratified and segregated in several ways. It was not quite like the stratification between 1st and 2nd class in trains. It segregated the elderly into a separate space with slower speeds and longer temporalities. In the context of discounted trip fare regulation and ageing material assets, the elderly became distinct subjects of urban mobilty, the ‚othered' passengers. These distinctions manifested themselves through patterns and logics of mobility, and related attitudes and self-perceptions; and through the spatial segregation in mobile spaces of vehicles and transit spaces of bus and tram stops, terminals, and loops. Identifying urban electric transport with the elderly was something the elderly themselves did through the pronouns they used: 'the tramway is *our* means of transport', ‚they acquired some new trolleybuses *for us, pensioners*' (Inf.3).

The discrepancies between discourses about forms of mobility for the elderly in research, politics, and everyday life became striking. In the West scientific papers traditionally wrote about how to increase accessibility, safety, and support of mobility in the 'third age' (as the period in life of active retirement) – be it through walking, bicycling, or

public transit use. There the *problem* rather was rather undiminished automobility – since, due to demographic and historical reasons, lots of senior persons keep driving their cars, risking accidents and missing possibilities for socialization through other mobility modes (Benekohal et al. 1992). Far removed from such a vision, local politicians and policy makers in the Ukraine were rather perplexed by the 'army of thousands of lgotniki' (with this phrase media referred to elderly commuters were referred to in the media). My interlocutors in Mariupol genuinely believed that their commuting was a problem for others; that other citizens and the authorities would be happy if the elderly completely abstained from the use of public transport. Some survey participants thought that the basic goal beyond my research was to curtail tram services in a cleverer way.

Trolleybuses like us

In this given context, pensioners articulated a peculiar relation to electric transport. They compared themselves with the ‚elderly' vehicles, and in a sense committed themselves to them tramway and trolleybus. Such responses were simply mirroring the multiple forms of ageism that pensioners encountered in the region. Alongside, they were indicative of shortcomings of social assistance system, failures in coordination between different levels of government, and consequences of infrastructural mismanagement in Eastern Ukrainian cities.

My senior informants articulated an identification with vehicles in two ways. First, the elderly saw a peculiar parallelism between processes of ageing of the body and the vehicle, as well as its social connotations. Not infrequently, senior persons would say 'like us, the trolleybuses' (*какие мы, такие и трамваи*), with slight variations. 'Still working' vehicles were often compared to the ill, weak, and unpredictable bodies of old people. On the one hand, such expressions were metaphorical explanations and legitimizations of the disadvantages and malfunctions of trams and trolleybuses. Criticism of the low quality of municipal transport was seen as inappropriate simply because the transport was old. Noise, vibration, and high stairs were excusable for the old tramcar. Just like pensioners had a pensionable age, trams had a foreseeable lifespan. Just as for the elderly person a gradual loss of control over one's body became routine, the breakages at the line did not cause shock, disappointment, or outrage amongst senior commuters.

Another parallelism between 'us' and the vehicles concerned time – elderly people said 'for our life this [transport] will do' (*на нашу жизнь хватит*). In saying so, they were comparing the infrastructure`s life and their own lives, putting the two into a temporal

contingency or synchronicity. The 'late life' of the vehicles came together with the late life of the elderly; both were rendered as futureless and unimportant. Pensioners were saying 'we have had our day' (*мы своё отжили*), while trams had also 'had their day' (*отъездили своё*), and it was 'time for them to retire'. Both pensioners and trams/trolleybus were ‚not living, but surviving' – this common metaphor was used to describe the economic situation for many individuals in this post-socialist reality. Particularly, 'existing, not living' was how Georgian internally displaced persons described their state-of-being in ethnographies written by Elisabeth Dunn (Dunn 2018). For seniors in Mariupol not knowing and not being able to plan the future had to do both with the general uncertainty in the Ukraine and the stages in their lives in which they found themselves – the stage that in post-socialist legislation was defined as 'dozhitie/dozhyttia': a factor of 'dozhitie' (*коефіцієнт дожиття/коэффициент дожития*) is translated into English as 'ageing factor'. Yet, in Russian and Ukrainian the noun 'dozhitie/dozhyttia' is formed by adding suffix 'до-' (with the meaning of 'over' or 'till') to the stem «житие» (living), so that these word points to the alleged inferiority of a pensioner's life on pension – as if it lasted longer than should be.

There was also room for the topic of death in these ageing after-socialist contexts. Particularly, the tramway was said farewell through the organization of funerals when the end of its operation was announced. In the highly industrialized Polish city of Gliwice, after the authorities decided to close the tram despite protests, the locals organized black shrouds for tramcars.[128] In its most dramatic form, the coupling of one's life with the life of electric transport was articulated by one of my elderly interlocutors, who while being in his 70s made lobbying for the tramway in his city into his life-work. 'They can disappear only over my dead body' – he told me once in our conversation.

It is not only the uncertainty that the elderly shared with UET infrastructures. The elderly urban population and 'their' tramway-trolleybus transport existed in a kind of socio-material symbiosis. Public transport for the elderly did not save them any time, but it protected their body from excessive expenditure of energy[129] and it allowed them to spend this energy on other activities. Tramways and trolleybuses in a way guaranteed and provoked these alternative expenditures of energy – incentivizing people to make trips. At the same

[128] Similarly, in Rostov-on-Don local activist constructed a hearse for tram, when city administration announced the closure of the main line in the city.
[129] Another example appears in memories of Leningrad during Blockade: the tram, which kept working under those extreme conditions, helped to save 400 calories per day to the starving residents (http://leningradpobeda.ru/vse-dlja-pobedy/26/).

time, though senior persons called UET ‘our trouble’ as trips were not an easy undertaking, these trips helped them to maintain a minimum of independence and autonomy. Also, trams and trolleybuses offered opportunities for socialization, especially for those elderly who lived alone.

Similarly, tramways and trolleybuses were dependent on the elderly – in that sense that those people provided a stable reason for the preservation of UET infrastructure. Proposals to remove lines were countered with the question ‘Who will carry the socially vulnerable groups?’ This commitment repeatedly urged managers to repair the vehicles, to replace broken parts and spent batteries, to check the brakes and grease the doors. People ‘of age’ became the most common group of users of electric public transport. In ither words, the pensioners` agency, behavior, and responses to public transport policies had a crucial impact on the sustenance of infrastructure; the social status of this group required the continued existence of UET. Note that the concessionary fare was occasionally criticized for its anti-economic character, for financially ruining municipal transportation. Presumably, UET enterprises would do much better economically if there was no lgota. However, it was the existence of lgota that saved UET from a fast disappearance. Consequently, we can suggest that the pensioners` bodies and tramways` skeletons were each other’s life support.

During the ageing, the border between a ‘non-event’ (Graham, Marvin 2001) of normal operation of vehicles and bodies and an event of their breakdown shifts. Biologically or physically, rust[130] as well as some other processes of rot and decay are slow, long, and invisible – unlike dyeing, or surgical treatment. In such a way ageing of bodies and artifacts did not interrupted normalcy and does not provoke any organizational decisions, as it manifests itself via gradual qualitative decrease of speed, reliability. In the context of delayed maintenance in the whole country, the breakage of vehicles, as well as the malfunction of brakes, engines, or doors that led to combustion, accident, or withdrawal of the vehicle was seen as something natural and impossible to intervene into. Human ageing is somewhat similar in its dynamics. Through vessel constriction and atherosclerosis ageing is seen as a gradual process, or non-event. Hypertension, varicose veins or migraine can be painful, but

[130] Rust may cover parts of vehicle both seen and not seen by passengers – so that similar visual defects may indicate problem of different quality: deformation and wear of inner parts, from one side, or peeling of paint which makes vehicle look unattractive, from the other. Sometimes rust is painted on purpose, instead of repair. In the case of city of Avdiivka a debate arouse among enthusiasts – while some were criticizing shabby appearance of tramcars, other stressed that instead finances are used to maintain inner, invisible parts in a good condition.

they do not interrupt social practices including mobility. Ageing as a socially meaningful event is manifested through heart attacks, strokes, or hypertension emergencies. However, the border between non-event and event is culturally flexible – as many malfunctions become routine and cease to be seen as worrisome. A broken tram or trolleybus that had to interrupt its trip was not more than a kind of 'bad weather' message to my informants from Mirnyi and Guglino. In this symbiosis between UET and its elderly passengers many malfunctions of both were normalized as non-events. Disasters with immediate human victims, however, triggered local changes. In Dniprodzerzhinsk (since 2016 – Kamianske), a tramway accident in 1996 caused 34 deaths and over 100 injuries as a consequence of defects in a KTM-5 tramcar which led to an immediate withdrawal of all the KTM-5 tramcars – although in other Ukrainian cities such tramcars worked as of 2017.

Through the introduction of fare exemptions the state admitted and addressed the issue of social inequality – but it also stabilized it. The use of tramways and trolleybuses became a matter of principle for some groups and a humiliation for others; in popular imagination UET turned into an emblem of senility and helplessness. The dramatic deterioration of UET heightened the visibility of the elderly and their problems in urban space. The gap between the bureaucratic promise of social care and the actual segregation of passengers produced public forms of ageing in the city. Unlike Western Europe where trams and trolleybuses became a symbol of contemporary urbanity in the Ukraine they transformed into ghettos and shelters for the poor and old, a stigma and anachronism at the margins of Europe – though Europeanness at that time was hardly ever discussed in the region and still needed to be inserted into urbanistic discourse by enthusiasts (see chapter 4).

3.3 A right that is shameful to use: share taxi concessions and public morality

The co-existence of trams and trolleybuses on the same streets with shared taxis was a problematic phenomenon for the emerging moral economies of post-socialism – affected by the conflict between free market aspirations and calls for social assistance. For instance, in Russia the public agitation around the legislation on *lgota* mobilized people in street protests unprecedented in the post-Soviet period (Clement, Mirjasova, Demidov 2010, P. 239 – 241). Post-socialist passengers perceived private enterprises and state-owned bus service with a different degree of trust. At the beginning of the share taxi boom, while high fares on private lines were tolerated, the fare hikes in municipal bus services met with intense criticism and

had to be cancelled[131] (apparently, this was one of the measures to make municipal buses in Mariupol extinct by the second half of the 1990s). Ukrainian elderly commuters found themselves in the epicenter of a conflict when new laws tried to impose equal rules of use for stately run and privately owned public transit. Here I will carry out the micro-analysis of conflict in Mariupol, Horlivka, and Kostiantynivka – describing the motivations, argumentations, and emotions articulated by senior passengers. Such data are usually not that important for sociologists of social mobilization but they can tell us more about how everyday mobility practices of lgotniki was shaped by moral concerns and how these moral concerns influenced the fate of Ukrainian UET in the late 2000s.

In 2005 the Bill 'On social protection of children of war'[132] granted the right of free use of shared taxis to the so-called 'Children of the war' – that is, persons who were under 18 at the end of World War II (2nd of September 1945). This legislation prescribed monetary compensations for private carriers, and the amount was based on assumption that the Children of War would comprise 10% of the total number of passengers. This percentage itself was significantly lower than the actual share of these Children of War in the population; but even this amount was not paid to the private bus carriers as of 2011, according to marshrutka conductors and publications in local media.

The Bill on the Children of War and the scandal

Hardly surprising, in Mariupol many beneficiaries of this law tried to claim their newly acquired right – that is, they tried to commute with marshrutkas. Yet, marshrutka drivers and conductors resented this claiming that the state is not fulfilling its own commitments specified in the new bill – that is, it does not reimburse the costs. Almost every issue of 'Priazovskiy Rabochii', be it during 2006 or 2011, featured readers' complaints about rude behavior and even violence of conductors and marshrutka drivers. The 7th of July 2006 issue alone featured three bitter accounts, representative of a much larger number of similar stories: 'in marshrutkas we are not counted as people', 'conductors chin and verbally attack', 'how I, a handicapped person, was ping-ponged from door to door in a marshrutka'. These stories were echoed in conversations 5 years later, as I started doing interviews in Mariupol. Many of those practices reported in the media I could observe in the city.

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[131] На темы дня *PR,* 10.06.1994

[132]Про соціальний захист дітей війни 2005 [On social support of Children of War] Закон Украины от 18.11.2004 № 2195-IV. Available at http://zakon2.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/2195-15.

Quite often, especially at less crowded sites, marshrutka drivers would ignore signs and skip the station without stopping if they saw elderly people standing at the stop. To counter this practice, passengers went to other, more distant, but also busier stops where the risk of being alone or in the company of other older-looking people was lower. Sometimes senior persons asked youngsters who often consumed alcohol by a stall at the bus stop, to stand next to them, closer to the curb – as the bus stops was more likely to stop then. Alternatively, elderly people literally hid from the driver behind the bus stop shelter in order to quickly rush to the door after the vehicle stopped.[133] Yet even if a marshrutka had stopped and opened the door – this was no guarantee of getting inside. '*My sister says to me, well, there are two youngsters behind you, so try to get in first, otherwise the marshrutka will leave [without letting you get on it]. She already knows this as well.... how many times they drove past the stop and then let people get off 10 steps further, and you were standing at the bus stop*' (Inf. 7). Sometimes despaired passengers made visually signs demonstrating their readiness to pay:

> *'I stand, [buses of lines] 100 and 25 passed by and did not stop, and the second time […] a woman came up to me from behind […] and she said they would not stop because you are a pensioner standing. You'll get two rubles and show in front of him that way [waving] ... and he stops. Well, I took two rubles out of the bag, LAZ [bus] was arriving, line 25, I [waved] like this... he stopped, and I sat down.'* (Inf. 7).

Boarding could also be an ordeal because of the tempo expected from the passengers entering a marshrutka:

> Inf. 3: *When you get on [marshrutka], they shout from behind, why you, granny, cannot get in! Where the hell are you going to? They push you forward, and your legs just do not lift… [It lasts] while you lean on your knees, while you right yourself…*
>
> Int.: *You say they push you forward?*
>
> Inf. 3: *Yes, maybe because you bother them, especially in marshrutka. You are just not to take it, especially in the morning. Ten times they call you names, ten times they humiliate you.*

Inside the marshrutkas elderly people faced hostility of the drivers and conductors. This could be expressed in phrases such as 'go take a trolleybus' and 'you have your transport',

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[133] *В Мариуполе дети войны атакуют маршрутки из засады*, http://www.mariupol-express.com.ua/7801.

implying that pensioners are supposed travel around the city only on UET. Some conductors would openly complain that lgotniki had begun to travel beyond measure, '*should the exemption be cancelled, half of them would immediately sit down home*' (Inf. 9). This kind of hate speech would sometimes be complemented by extortion of money. Inside of the vehicle, drivers and conductors demanded a payment from the 'Children of war' insisting that otherwise they would have to get off. No inconveniences of the marshrutka ride were mentioned so frequently as the abominable behavior of conductors, people who collect cash and cause feelings of discomfort and even fear in senior riders. Not the driver himself, but the usually female conductor interacted with the passengers: she made sure that all passengers had paid the ticket and occasionally quarreled with those who wanted to use the lgota. The conductor, who in socialist public transport (de facto) controlled the orderliness in the vehicles, was now re-conceptualized from a control authority into a service assistant. She mediated between passengers and the driver, demotivating fare-dodgers – as the 'victim' of the fare-dodgers was not the 'state' anymore but the vehicle's crew of driver and his ticket assistant. The conductor was often the wife, or sister, or daughter of the driver that is why the elderly saw her as performing the family duty and offending her was so intimate, perplexing, and embarrassing. Moreover so since conductors often used moralizing rhetoric to make someone feel like fare-dodger: I was told how a conductor reproached the senior passenger refusing to pay two and a half hryvnia for the ticket, a price of a breakfast roll: ,*it is like you've taken my bun from me now' (это вы у меня сейчас булочку отобрали)* (Int.2). In such a way conductor stated that lgotniki took the bread of their mouth. Even when using the officially guaranteed benefit, elderly were often denied the key informal advantage of the maxi taxi – stops on demand between the fixed locations. If not addressed in a long and offending manner, pensioners still felt being scowled at. The entire experience of riding a marshrutka, attractive because of its speed and flexibility, turned out to be an experience of exclusion and humiliation.

The moral and production of ethics in the marshrutka

Many condemned this type of behavior of marshrutka workers. A local initiative was launched to put name and shame stickers onto marshrutkas where elderly had been insulted.[134]

[134] В Мариуполе тимуровцы клеймят маршрутчиков *Ильичёвец* 28 мая 2011 года, № 57. Available at http://ilich.in.ua/news.php?id=17556.

Pensioners were often objects of empathy and concern in public spaces: sometimes, having witnessed such heated arguments, other passengers would buy the ticket for the lgotniki – confusing the elderly to the maximum. Their predominant emotion about the strenuous passengering conditions was resentment. Senior persons felt that drivers behaved immorally, disrespecting the elderly but also denying the fact that they '*do not ride for free. It is paid for by the state'*. At least they could assume their ticket to have been paid by the state to the private marshrutka owner; it`s the commitment that the state assumed by passing the bill: *'Not we have decreed, it has been decreed to us' (Не мы постановили, а нам постановили,* Inf. 11). Passengers pointed out that the real physical effort was performed by the car and not by a human: ‚*She [conductor] says: it's my work. Your work, but, also, we are not sitting on your neck. You carry us on the machine, not on your shoulders'* (Inf. 7). Sometimes concession users quite decisively asserted their formal right, refusing to pay or to exit, writing complaints or, more often, letters to the local newspaper. In the city of Kherson qualitative surveys showed that around 75 % of lgotniki would like to retain the lgota; the survey, however, did not specify whether the concessions for marshrutka or tram and trolleybus were meant (Savinkina Lemanich 2007, P.29).

For many, however, the privilege in trip fare concessions in marshrutkas was subject to some sort of ethical reflection. Many lgotniki could not fail to hear from the media and from marshrutka conductors that the actual subsidies from the state budget did not exceed the 10% of the amount due according to the bill. Conductors called the remaining costs 'the swipe (*haliava*) that is not paid by anyone' (Inf. 9). Many elderly showed some understanding for the boycott rather than condemnation: *'they [the marshrutkas] also have to earn'* (Inf. 4),*'the state does not pay them'* (Inf. 8). Marshrutka was not perceived as part of the state, at least not in the same mode as trams and trolleybuses were. *They are right in a way, if marshrutka will be filled up with lgotniki, they won't have profit… It is a double category (двойная категория) here, they [act] for [the benefit of] themselves* (Inf. 6). With the words ‚double category', the speaker shows his awareness of the ambiguity of the situation where both market and social principles are applied so that different rationalities and morals – 'orders of worth' as Boltanski and Thevenot would call them (Boltanski & Thévenot 2006) – clash. Some informants even reproved other concessionary passengers:

> Inf. 6 *I enter [a marshrutka, and see that] all seats are occupied, but there are only two or three young persons. All the rest are pensioners!*
> Inf. 7*: Yes! It's usually like this when we go to the administration*

> Inf. 6*: And a young guy, ticket-seller, he sat, he raised his head… and did not come up, did not control [if they had pensioner ID cards], like… let you go. Well of course this is already the impudence of pensioners. It`s impossible. You [pensioners] yourselves have occupied all seats.*

Since lgotniks go most frequently to the market carrying bags or hand-barrows thus makies them feel even more awkward. Inf. 6, a pensioner who was living near Metalurgiv Avenue, shared his ethical considerations with me:

> *A lgotnik, a poor fellow (бедняга), can of course stay and wait for the next marshrutka, if he is from normal, conscious people. I, personally, when I get on marshrutka, I watch out who boards before me. If he is a lgotnik – and it`s seen [from the appearance if he is], then I won't get on, let's say, as a fourth one… I will wait for the next marshrutka or for a trolleybus. But out there [in the remote city districts] people are queuing. Well here [on Metalurgiv Avenue] we have vehicles and vehicles, but in their district is nothing to commute by. So they take [marshrutka], poor fellows* (Inf. 6).

'There' in this quotation referred to Mirnyi and Guglino, where only one infrequent marshrutka line operated. The spouse of Inf. 6 reflected on how the use of a marshrutka could be justified at special occasions – 'when you have to be on time': '*well, for instance, it's a birthday – and you are invited to come on [particular] time […] And when I don`t need that, I think to myself: I will better wait for trolleybus – these marshrutkas they so dislike us'* (Inf. 7). Another reason for taking a marshrutka may be accompanying grandchildren, who '*need everything quickly*', explained Y. (Inf. 1), whose teenage grandson '*cannot wait, just cannot*'. When travelling alone, pensioners often explained their refusal to take marshrutkas by their intention to save some money for their grandchildren. A bitter irony of this situation was that accusations of greed, addressed to pensioners in marshrutkas, took place in a context where assistance offered by pensioners to younger generations had become the statistical norm. Tensions also mirrored societal gender pressures and ageism: women retaining their mobile way of life were first to face the unresolvable policy trap in the city. This especially affected the 'sandwich generation' – early retired female pensioners torn 'between' duties in relation to both their parents and their children; moreover, people of this very generation more often than others reported that they donate to conductors in marshrutka. The modal (and ethical) choice between the trolleybus and the marshrutka thus deprived the elderly of possibility to control own`s time – in everyday life, senior persons were usually ready to tolerate

unpredictability, wait in vain, and even cancel their trip. Marshrutkas demanded from their elderly passengers forms of compassion and sometimes disregard of self-interest in favor of others – be it a child, the conductor, or agemates.

Informal solutions

In order to partially liberate marshrutkas from the financial burden of transporting CPs, some new forms of regulations were proposed: the maximum number of beneficiaries in one marshrutka was set at 15 % of the total vehicle capacity – which meant that one or at most two lgotniki could be at the bus simultaneously. For such passengers special places were allocated – usually on the side of the bus visible from the bus stop. Yet the rule of 'maximum two beneficiaries per marshrutka' proved unworkable – first of all, because of demography: elderly people were much more than 15 % in Ukrainian cities. Moreover, this rule practically privileged those who lived on the last stop and could get on an empty bus, and those who had to get on the bus in the middle were disadvantaged. Pensioners of age constituted a group that only up to a point could be called a minority. However, the existing rules of social assistance were formulated in such a way as if older age was something unusual for the city. Pensioners in public transit found themselves excluded from the free market economic order that was proclaimed as the dominant and normal one.

Since these policy attempts proved inefficient, the situation was being resolved informally, at the expense of senior 'beneficiaries' and private public transit companies. In Mariupol pensioners often voluntarily paid part of the trip fare on marshrutkas. Elderly put one hryvnia (when the full price was two hryvnia 50 kopecks) into Children of War ID document; while the conductor was to notice this and take the banknote. Alternatively, a senior couple, or a granny travelling with a small child under 7 years old (thus both eligible to exemption) would buy one whole ticket. Conductors accepted and even encouraged such practices. Concessionary passengers explained this informal donation not only and not so much their fear of extortion. They often talked it as a contract, or a voluntary decision, which they believed to be reasonable for its fairness: it did not strip them completely from their chance to save some money but also allowed not to feel embarrassed: *'When we get on a marshrutka, it feels as if we enter somewhere we shouldn't'* (Inf. 10). Also, some decided to pay in case a conductor was polite to them or when they occupied a seat.

From time to time, conductors expressed some goodwill – for example, they offered their seat to the elderly person or saw to it that a free seat was taken by a senior. It is difficult

to say how rare cases were when driver and conductor would refuse to take money from Children of War. In a newspaper I found a letter from a reader saying ‚*thanks to the [marshrutka] driver that he always takes pensioners*'[135], which may indicate the exceptionality of such a case. Since the ticketing system was not automatized, conflicts occurred not between policy-makers and beneficiaries but between two individuals affected by these policies. It was not the state whom they met in the marshrutka. You can only refuse to give money to a person in front of you; you can only require that the person pays the trip fare; but you cannot sue the state, you cannot reject its demands, you cannot extort money from it – at least so was the common believe.

Both a resentful conductor and an offended senior person in a marshrutka simultaneously faced the consequences of decisions that they had not made themselves. Policy-makers in the Ukraine did not seem to use public transportation often, therefore different public transit stake-holders had to suffer the consequences of a bill passed by car-drivers, even if different paragraphs of the bill were contradictory or hard to implement. Conductor and passenger, though being opponents, represented the same thing to each other: the state delegating responsibilities to its citizens.

Waiting quietly

Many elderly, against all odds, kept using UET and avoiding minibuses. The explanation of that choice was not only of an economical, but also of an emotional nature: pensioners sought to 'wait quietly' and 'commute quietly'. Although 'commuting quietly' might require a significant amount of time and readiness to accept uncertainty, tramways and trolleybus retained their predominantly elderly passengers long after the introduction of the Bill about the 'Children of War'. Such a choice was effectively underpinned by the widespread ageism existing in Ukrainian society and the reluctance to share the space with elderly people. While I frequently heard sardonic comments about 'these sluggish' pensioners in Mariupol, people in Lviv reacted in a similar manner when 'social' bus lines in Lviv were cancelled: '*At last I will now be able to get home normally, no one will be getting on the bus during an hour. Pensioners have trolleybuses and tramways'*.[136]

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[135] ‚Письма читателей', *PR*, 13.05.2011.
[136] http://vorobus.com/2011/06/u-lvovi-vidminyly-sotsialni-marshruty.html.

In a particular way the ethical controversy over fares in private buses also reflected social tensions in regard of the past. For some passengers the acceptance or denial of the new moral economies of marshrutkas emotionally echoed their attitudes towards the more general changes in the country. Fare exemption put pensioners of age in an ambiguous relation with time. Formally lgota intended to serve people today, but it was also a reward for their *previous* achievements; lgota was impossible without the *past*.

In the end, the boycott of the 2005 Bill on Children of War became what one could call a transition from the moral to ethical. Jarrett Zigon (2008, P. 162) uses the distinction between 'moral' and 'ethical' to describe how morality can remain unarticulated and unreflected under normal circumstances. It is an important human ability, Zigon writes, to act without permanent conscious reflection, supposedly remaining within the limits of the moral. The ethical emerges when the usual moral norms, for some reason, are inapplicable: it is defined during a breakdown and requires an effort of reflection. Despite their dependence on the state and their own past, elderly commuters did reflect on the ethics of exemption. In the Ukrainian context, where the elderly are frequently accused of being inertial, weak-willed, hindering transformations, and, most of all, greedy, the evidence of this chapter might be challenging these stereotypical visions.

3.4 Who will carry the elderly: from beneficiaries into keepers

In terms of the action required, the use of a zero fare ticket is an experience of passivity. Formally, the person only has to show the certificate (of a card size) to the conductor. In practice this is often even omitted: the elderly passenger may utter the word 'certificate', and the conductor responds by a slight node – if at all. Most of the time, no visible interaction occurs: conductors have a sharp eye for age and accurately identify those who are not going to buy the ticket. That is, conductors behave almost as if there were no elderly persons in the vehicle. This is an untypical way of organizing benefit usage. Obtaining the support, be it cash, food, or medicines, usually requires some interaction. In a tramway using the benefit was silent and invisible. Lack of interacting and ignoring each other were scripted onto the encounters between senior passengers and conductors. When the vehicles only carried lgotniki, conductors and drivers used to say that they 'carry air'. Pensioners showed understanding of this logic and referred to it when explaining cutbacks in the service: ‚*Why tramways do not operate [between the rush-hours] – it's because factories stopped to reimburse for the empty tours in these hours. In the morning people commute to work, and*

during the day the tram goes empty' (Inf. 10). 'Empty', however, did not describe the physical space of the tramway: the vehicles were used by elderly commuters at least to such an extent that some of them even did not have a place to sit down. Emptiness was an economical category, as tramway-trolleybus departments did not have any monetary interest in carrying its most numerous passenger group: the elderly. One could also hear the words 'a pensioner is nobody' during the surveys, interviews, and conversations I had at the stops and in vehicles, expressed both by the elderly and by other people when speaking about the elderly. The figures of speech about 'carrying air' and being 'nobody' communicated the controversial way in which exemption policies informed the CPs' subjectivity. It excluded seniors from relations of accountability exactly when accountability and quantification gained importance in the newly emerging economical order.

Irreplaceable and legitimate trams

Yet interestingly enough, the boycott of this legislation indirectly slowed down the further deterioration of trolleybus and tramway transport in the Ukraine. While a share taxi was the 'normal way' to get around the city, electric transport was redefined as a form of social help to the low-income groups – and in such a way it acquired considerable political potential. After the legislative failure of 2005 the tram and trolleybus infrastructure became hostage to the state's own, somewhat schizophrenic (or hypocritical) transportation policies; the eradication of UET would be at odds with the political promises made and with popular expectations. Being at the intersection of political interests and legislative declarations, and as subjects of urban mobility, 'lgotniki' acquired a special agency. Concession holders were invisible when municipal transport worked well, but gained increased attention as the infrastructure started to fail. Now trams and trolleybuses were not simply an urban problem: they were a way to pin-point the officials' responsibility for this 'many-thousand army of lgotniki' wishing to gain loyalty from this group. Seemingly passive recipients and conformists, the lgotniki mobilized their potential to reveal the malfunctions of urban public transit in the region and confront the authorities.

The story of how senior persons contributed to the preservation of UET infrastructures in the Ukraine is more complex than just balancing public demands. One can speak about at least two types of activity undertaken by lgotniki. First of all, the elderly voted**.** Moreover,

they were the most active age group of voters, being often blamed for the victories of conservative or retrograde political forces during the Ukrainian elections.[137] At the local level promises to retain/improve/restore electric transport became an important political leverage in working with elderly people – an important part of the ageing Ukrainian electorate. Thus, a number of tram and trolleybus lines and routes that were destined to disappear in the 1990s or 2000s in the Ukraine were retained or even re-introduced following the demands of elderly voters. In the years 2004-2005 Kostyantynivka and Druzhkivka tramways stopped operating completely, but – uniquely for the post-Soviet space – resumed activity after several months of inactivity. Some of my interlocutors in Druzhkivka believed that it happened because a functioning tramway had been an election promise of the newly elected mayor. True or not, in 2010 the then-mayor of the city of Druzhkivka promised a complete recovery of the tram network in his election program[138] which was realized by 2014. Similarly, the revitalization of the tram network was also one of the key points of the election agenda of the Kostiantynivka mayor, who was elected in 2005: tramways were reintroduced 18 months after their suspension. In Mariupol, 2011, in order to attract older voters, one of the city deputies initiated the opening of the 'social' tram lines 15 and 16 which served residential areas between the peak hours and in such way targeted the lgotniki. Line 16 was then canceled again soon after the election; however, my informant memorized the initiative of the city deputy for years to come.

The removal of these 'relics of socialism' was postponed, and the state claimed it was the senior population for whom tram and trolleybus lines were preserved and put into operation again. These preserved lines often functioned at minimal frequency, just to prevent the service from being completely terminated: as few as a dozen departures a day were typical of many trolleybus and tramway routes in Kryvyi Rih, Kostiantynivka, Horlivka and other cities. For most scholars in urban studies and economics, these services did not make sense, because the expensive tram infrastructures can only be economically efficient when used intensively. However, electric transport in the Ukraine obviously had important social and political functions. And, in material aspect, this secured the preservation of rails, wires, vehicles, and depot facilities in cities.

Social assistance, factory's trams, and oligarkhic urbanism

[137] http://news.bbc.co.uk/hi/russian/news/newsid_4026000/4026175.stm.
[138] http://druzhko.org/2013/09/12/predvybornaya-programma-valeriya-gnatenko/.

Urban electric transport in the Ukraine after socialism mediated people's expectations from the state, but in view of the state`s weaknesses, these expectations were sometimes satisfied by other urban actors, which in the Ukraine were not fully separated from the state (or at least were not perceived as such). As of the late 2000s, the three largest enterprises of Mariupol – Ilyich Iron and Steel Works (a part of Metinvest holding, abbreviated as MMKI), Azovstal, and Azovmash employed roughly 125 000 persons, which stood for one quarter of the city's population, or 40 % of employable residents.[139] Until recently, these factories participated actively in the management of public transit in Mariupol. Trade unions maintained a direct connection with the local public transit authorities on issues of line change and scheduling. Azovstal and Azovmash took part in the purchasing of a new rolling stock. MMKI assisted the tramway depots with the procurement of spare parts and the rehab of vehicles. My interlocutors connected the cutbacks in service on the tram lines in industrial zones with the activities of other elderly – those who collect scrap metal and small pieces of coal left on the railway tracks in an industrial zone of Aglofabrika. In order to reach the zone, they used tram, which did not go unnoticed by the steelworks: *'Our director [of steelworks Illicha] said: why should I carry for free a pensioner which comes to us and gathers coal on our rails? I won't carry these pensioners…'* (Inf. 10). Even after retirement people felt a connection to the steelworks calling its director 'ours' and showing understanding of its policies. The tram was one of the ingredients making this connection stronger.

In citations we often see how the steel works and not the state is referred to as the helping subject. The aid from the steel works made the former workers feel like they still benefited from their oligarchic ex-employer: they used the trams outside the rush hour, but these were the same trams, repaired with the help from the steel works. Their former place of employment impacted the trajectories of their trips in the city. For instance, retires from MMKI would attend the Steelworker`s Day and meetings of veterans of labor organized by the enterprise; they would also commute to receive some social assistance provided by MMKI – such as 'social sugar' and 'social plant oil' from sunflowers grown in an agri-complex owned by Ilyich Steel Works and sold in food stores owned by Ilyich Steel Works; finally, they also bought their 'social medicines' in the pharmacy chain 'Ilyich Farm'. Being 'by the

[139] See Wikipedia articles 'Население Мариуполя', 'Мариупольский металлургический комбинат имени Ильича', 'Азовсталь' and trust.ua *'"Азовмаш" уволит 4 тысячи сотрудников'* http://www.trust.ua/news/318.html. I heard similar figures in personal communication.

steel works' and riding the 'factory's trams' secured a precious connection to local structures of power; the state was fairly seldom discussed in local conversations.

The public transit system of Mariupol was not unique in receiving some forms of aid from oligarchic structures. For example, in 2012 Metinvest holding also purchased trams for the city of Yenakievo. While other tram systems in the Donetsk region did not see any acquisitions the gossip connected the trams' arrival to the fact that Yenakievo is a home city of Viktor Yanukovych, the President of the Ukraine in 2010-2014.

The elderly as donators

In several cases during the late 2000s, Ukrainian pensioners acted as the immediate donators in support of tramway and trolleybus infrastructures. The elderly were reported to be the most active group of donators in local initiatives organized in support of UET (see chapter 4 on pro-UET activism in the region). While crowdfunding initiated by UET enthusiasts was contentious in its relying on donations from already impoverished UET passengers, it made the elderly visible and important. Trams and trolleybuses with the words '*repaired with donations from people of Gorlovka*' (*отремонтировано на средства горловчан*) written on them appeared in the streets; and the lgotniki were acknowledged as a part of 'people of Gorlovka'. This contrasted with the slogan 'From Azovmash – to the people of Mariupol' (*Азовмаш – мариупольцам*) written on the new trolleybuses in Mariupol, which were conceived as a gift from the employer (that is, Azovmash) to its employees, not to the 'parasitic' concession holders. In Kostiantynivka, reportedly, 50 to 90 percent of pensioners voluntarily paid for trips on the municipal tramway; apparently, buying tickets despite having a pension certificate was the only way for them to directly support the tram. Maybe the informality of such a solution was a reason why it was usually not mentioned in journalistic publications, although it was documented in the social media and on Wikipedia. In Druzhkivka the elderly themselves participated in an initiative for the abolishment of zero fares, which was hindered by bureaucratic red-tape:

> *The residents of the communities Donskoi, Toretskii and Yakovlevka, among whom there are quite a lot of lgotniki, proposed an idea for saving the tram to the local authorities. It is simple: lgotniki also should pay for the trip, though 15 kopeks instead of the whole price of 40. Corresponding*

solicitations were sent to the Council of Ministers, but no answer has come so far, time is passing by, and the tram is staying still.[140]

Voluntary payments can be rationalized in different ways, which do not necessarily exclude each other. A local activist regarded the donations as a pragmatic tactic intended to avoid the shutdown of the tramway causing even bigger expenditures: '*because they (pensioners) understood that if they won't pay then the tramway will probably work for another month and then stop […] and it`s cheaper than marshrutka'* (Inf. 13). The comparatively low fare price[141] was an additional incentive for buying a ticket. A former UET manager from the region confirmed to me the practice of voluntary ticket purchase on tram but also noted: *'once the price raised then they all got their [pension] certificates from their pockets'* (Inf. 14). Giving donations in this 'sink or swim' situation, however, implied some trust between enterprises and users; a belief that the money will be used properly. The request for donations originated not from the decision-makers, but from the local Tramway and Trolleybus Department (TTU): and the positive response meant that the TTU itself was not anymore perceived as an integral part of the state infrastructural machine. Instead it was viewed as a forgotten and autonomous legacy of socialism, akin to the elderly. After the fall of the state provision system the provider of the public transit service became personalized, and seen as dependent on efforts of particular individuals.

Donating in a trolleybus might be also understood as a conspicuous (and perhaps not fully conscious) form of performing independence, and underlining one's own importance for the city. However, lgotniki demonstrated a readiness for informal and voluntary actions only and resisted the attempts to formalize these donations. Back in 2004, authorities of the city of Kramatorsk proposed to run some trolleybuses on a commercial basis (i.e. with no concessional trip fares) in order to improve the service quality, but the initiative caused intense protests – people just blocked the office of the city administration, and hence the

[140] Thread ‚Север Донецкой области – Дружковка, Краматорск, Константиновка и Славянск' http://forum.tr.ru/read.php?1,199934,200049. Access 24.12.2015.
[141] Not more than 1 hryvnia (0.10 €) as of 2010 in most of the cases. Minimal pension in 2010 was 695 UAH, or 87.42 $ http://prozak.info/Dilo/Ekonomika/YAk-zminyuvavsya-rozmir-pensij-iz-1996-do-2015-rokiv-yurist-iz-Zakarpattya.

proposal had to be rejected.[142] For lgotniki the purchase had to remain an act of free will being aware and conscious of a long series of previous infrastructural ruptures.

While the Ukrainian youth is often viewed as the most active and progressive segment of civil society, the elderly are usually dismissed as politically passive and opportunist. To counter that vision, Olena Leipnik demonstrates cases where the elderly are closely involved in social activism, though sometimes they do not classify their activity as activism (Leipnik 2016). A social change – the introduction of lgota for people with particular calendar age – triggered material changes of the urban infrastructure. Yet if the social category of lgotniki would not exist – there would be no pre-election promises of tram systems` preservation. Notably, after the state`s failed attempt in 2005 to delegate responsibility away to the marshrutkas, new vehicles were introduced in Ukrainian cities. The statistics on K1 – the model of tramcars manufactured in Dnipro, Ukraine, – show a notable increase of acquisitions by tram depots in the country between years 2006 and 2010.[143]

Refusing social assistance and the re-temporalization of self

Besides this mobilization and its economic outcomes, the partial refusal of senior persons to accept social assistance produced another, more delicate and elusive effect – something that I would call re-temporalization. If the usage of exemptions reinforced the meaning of the past, then their refusal served as a contestation of the pastness of elderly lives. In tune with different studies revealing the nostalgia attached to memories of the socialist years[144], the past in general and the previous socialist expectations towards the future in particular were important ingredients of the lifeworlds of East Ukrainian pensioners. Accepting the radical change that post-socialist visions of the future entailed was a challenge in itself. Unlike Romania, where Oana Popescu-Sandu (2010) observes little to no nostalgia for the socialist period, worker districts in Mariupol with their closed cinemas, abandoned houses, and broken roads often evoked such nostalgic sentiments. Yet senior persons in Mariupol often recalled the past precisely at the tram stop – commemorating the city that had been new and in which they themselves had been young. For many elderly, the UET

[142] Ibid, http://forum.tr.ru/read.php?1,199934,199939 (access 24.12.2015). Forum "Транспорт в России» [Transport in Russia], thread "Краматорск, Дружковка, Константиновка - справки о п/с и рассказ о майской поездке М.Денщика" available at http://forum.tr.ru/read.php?1,168825,168825#msg-168825. Access 24.12.2015.
[143] http://transphoto.ru/list.php?mid=162 List of tramcar vehicles of model K1.
[144] Consider research on Ostalgie, and Soviet nostalgia that often refers to nostalgia as industry but also approaches it as an emotional wish to transcend the present (Velikonja 2009).

infrastructure belonged to that layer of city that they built or had seen being in creation. Trams and trolleybuses had been part of that future once promised to them, and pensioners were reluctant to finally abandon their hopes. Such infrastructures represented hope for urban populations and were the visible and material legacy of a previous future.

The cautious anticipation of an end to the crisis was mixed with a lack of confidence that such a happy end will follow any time soon. From time to time, pessimism was fueled by yet another social unrest and shift of political power in the state. Senior commuters were articulating both an optimistic reading of such events ('we must endure problems for a while, it will be better'), and a pessimistic one ('if we don't do anything for the tram, it will disappear'). In conversations the trams and trolleybuses were not just 'working' or 'not working' but 'still working' or 'already not working', which overlapped with how senior persons talked about selves: 'I still walk', 'I still ride'. 'Already' and 'still' marked what Gergen & Gergen (1997) called regressive narrative; in other words – a story of how things gradually get worse. They also signaled a readiness for negative change. Psychologists Julie Norem interprets this preparedness for the worst in terms of defensive pessimism (Norem, Cantor 1986).[145] In narratology litany and lamentation are described as popular genres in Russian conversations (Ries 1997), being a culturally determined form of pessimism, driving both narrative and action. Clearly, through pessimist utterances elderly commuters also convey that the present could have been harder. After all, defending electric transport indicates that senior persons spend the remaining period of their lives doing something of importance. This reveals a shift away from the belief in the endlessness of the existing status quo – a belief that Alexei Yurchak (2007) defined as an important element of late Soviet culture. Elderly donators at the periphery of the Ukraine did not make sacrifices for the future; helping the tram now was helping themselves. Through minor improvements they could also maintain their everyday – which could break down at any moment but until then could be worked on.

These temporal perspectives – nostalgia, anticipation of the end of the crisis, investing temporary improvements with meaning, and late life fatalism – must not necessarily be separated from each other: instead, they were all intermittently present in the accounts of my

[145] As Sara Ahmed (2010) shows, having to constantly be happy also might take form of cultural pressure. See also (Bruckner 2000).

informants and formed a discursive cloud around the mobility. The senior persons' work of re-temporalization – and the little attention it got – revealed many of the contradictions existing in state and society, which brought about additional financial, moral, and physical burdens especially on poor elderly females who saw their precious time devalued. The new (West-European) paradigm in which electric transport is not a stigma but an important urban good was still absent in the region. Back in the late 2000s it was desperate and subdued pessimism that pushed elderly people to engage in forms of incremental action, extending the life of the slowly decaying infrastructures. Some tramway and trolleybus networks survived; others did not.

Urban electric transport and elderly people in the Ukraine of the 2000s formed a kind of special symbiosis, mutually prolonging one another's lives. Senior concessionary commuters – a social group constructed both by the promise of social assistance and the physical experience of living in mismanaged city – played a significant role for the sustenance of Ukrainian electric transport after the end of socialism. Elderly kept on using UET despite all the circumstances discouraging them from doing so. In fact, only such passengers were ready to spend a long time on transport, to remember the timetable, and to tolerate inconvenient vehicles – that is, to persistently use the tram and trolleybus in Ukrainian cities. UET made the city a little bit more accessible to the elderly, and at the same time it created visibility for the elderly in urban space. It also revealed specific connections between the elderly, the post-socialist city, and the state. Tramways and trolleybuses became the platforms to display the contradictions of the social assistance policy and the implementation of this policy was and how desperate the 'beneficiaries' felt. It also brought to the surface social inequalities in the distribution of time and money in public spaces, unlike apartments and houses where inequalities were hidden from the public eye.

The symbiosis of elderly and vehicles was continuously transforming. Lgotniki were with their specific status alternately the objects of care, the incidental victims, and the decisive reason for the retention of electric transport infrastructure. First, they became the group that burdened electric transport, but later they were crucial for reaching some positive decisions on public transportation in the region. We should refer here not only to the decisions taken but also to those not taken, postponed, opposed, and rejected in the cases where a shutdown was planned. Instead of active destruction, the UET infrastructures in the Ukraine merely faced abandonment; depot territories, pols, rails, and spare parts remained in place. The position of the elderly and of electric transport in Ukrainian cities was similar in that

neither of them was actually supported nor openly abandoned[146]; instead, they faced the continuous risk of becoming immobile, but in spite of that they continued their everyday mobility the longest possible. An intriguing question was whether UET infrastructures in the region can hold on until they enter again into 'technological fashion' (Schmucki 2010) – something that for Romanian and Ukrainian cities may at some point turn out to be an indicator of their belonging to Europe, as I will show in Chapter 5. As Europeanization discourses intensified, trams and trolleybuses changed from being outdated relics into the premises for sustainable mobility. In this reconfigured assemblage of mobility lgotniki were accustomed to such conditions of commuting usual for European cities – as schedules and change of lines – better than many others in the city.

Social tram line 24: A vignette from Colonia de la km 10, Romania

Although this chapter uses empirical data from the Ukraine, in Romania public transport is also seen as a form of state's performance, of a social aid, and of justice. And, similarly to the Ukraine, the roles of infrastructure's beneficiaries and keepers overlap. I will make a few notes about Romanian context and conclude with an ethnographic vignette from the suburb of Brăila in order to show the ambiguity of 'social aid' status of the public transport, particularly the tram.

In Romania elderly people, though highly dependent on social assistance, encountered a somewhat different development of ticket fare policies. The regulation of public transit pricing was mostly delegated to the city authorities, resulting in a variety of local solutions. Newspaper articles published during the 1990s in Galați showed the long trajectory of experiments in the domain of public transport: first pensioners received a 50% discount; then fare exemption was linked to the level of income; then zero fare was limited to one line that CP could choose. My Romanian informants deplored the free-of-charge 'abonament' (the monthly card for one line) as evidence of the worsened quality of life (*nivel de trai scăzut*), going to the market frequently being their principal reason to commute with this abonament. However, there was no state promise of total *graituitate* (free-ness) of commuting in Romania. Decisions on *gratuitate* were temporary and limited to certain modes, taken by local

[146] In such a forgoing both from closedown and from support of the transport infrastructures one can notice an example of the hegemonic ambiguity that some people can manage and navigate – Carna Brkovic (2017) writes about such ambiguity in her ethnography of clientelism, citizenship, and power in Bosnia and Herzegovina. In the Ukraine such ambiguity, apparently, allows presenting the ongoing work of the tram system as a result of an effort, or as a result of neglection – depending on the context and goals of the speaker.

council, and modified from time to time. In Galați, for example, there has never been a concessionary fare for maxi-taxi, although some of the city locations, for example the hypermarket Auchan was only accessible by maxi-taxi (which in Romania is often provided by the hypermarket itself). Maxi-taxis run more frequent, often offered more comfort, and youth also labeled tramways as transport for the poor. *Youngsters if they go to theatre would ask am I to got here by tram? No way, maxi-taxi or just taxi* (Inf. 16). However, one could see people of all age groups in trams, buses, and trolleybuses on the busiest city lines 39 and 102. On the other hand, senior persons described their 'occasional' trips on maxi taxi as something normal. As late as 2015-2016, when I worked in Galați and Constanța, maxi taxis were never mentioned as a critically important mode of transit; and no major political or ethical debate in its regard is known to me. It only became much more contested when the authorities tried to eliminate maxi-taxis from Galați in 2016 (see Chapter 5).

However, pricing policies in Romanian transport were not completely devoid of frictions. For example, in the city of Botoșani locals complained that maxi-taxi (MT) covered areas inaccessible by tramway, so that differences in price for tram and MT also created spatial inequalities. After several years of debates, maxi-taxis began to receive subsidies for taking those concessionary passengers who lived nearby their lines and at a distance from the tramway.[147] Subsidies came from the city council – and the passengers saw the principal well-doer in him and not in the industrial enterprises like they did in the Ukraine.

What was similar in Mariupol, Horlivka, Botoșani, and Galați is that exemption, when given by the authorities, took a form of a complete *gratuitate,* thus turning the elderly person into a kind of persona-non-grata within a relationship of market economy. No compromise was considered in these cases, setting the low-income CPs off from normal passengers, making their debt unpayable. I heard conductors on buses saying ‚would it be that pensioners paid at least several kopecks'. Some of my elderly interlocutors supported that idea which they expected to reduce tension and increase respect towards senior persons in public transport. When the X per cent discount was just a form of social subsidy, *gratuitate* was also a mercy, a gift that could be distilated in formulas like ‚X million bani/hryvnias for pensioners and pupils'. Also it was the state or its municipal representatives who defined the form of social assistance so that a pensioner could only take it or leave it. In both sites the intensity of

[147] http://www.botosaneanul.ro/stiri/coada-ca-pe-vremea-lui-ceausescu-la-abonamente-moca-pe-tram/

state`s presence was a robustly debated topic, and public transport was seen as its visible indicator.

The functioning of the tramline 24 in Brăila particularly vividly shows the complex relations between the state, the transport infrastructure, and the urban poor. The tramline runs through a high rise area of Radu Negru, then passes by the zoological garden, enters a picturesque wasteland near *Lacu Sarat* (Salt Lake), and ends up with a few kilometers through devastated ruins of industrial zone. During my visits to Brăila in 2015 and 2016, tram line 24 made nine departures on workdays and seven in the weekend. In summertime the line 25, shorter version of 24, connecting the city to the Lacu Sarat, added another 13 departures.

Being in Brăila for the first time, I went on foot to the end of the line, looking at the abandoned industrial site and not expecting to see anything else. However, across the highroad from abandoned industrial zone near the end loop of the line 24 suddenly saw a group of houses. One building was five floors high, and there were half dozen more, two and three floors high. Two young women sitting on the street, close to the tram line, asked me what I was looking for. I answered that I was waiting for the tram and asked them about the name of the place. At first, they told me that they did not know how their neighborhood is called, and then one of them answered: Colonia de la km. 10. It was mostly Roma people living in the Colonia, people of different ages, including a considerable amount of children. Mass media depicted Colonia km 10 as 'criminals' nest' (*cuibul infractorilor*)[148] inhabited by about 700 people. Colonia de la km. 10 was absent on maps in the Internet, either as a name of the stop or as a residential area – thus, it was virtually impossible for an outsider to know that there is a settlement. The area had no shops, schools, or clinics – the locals were, apparently, very much dependent on public transportation.

In the tram people definitely knew each other and chatted; they also said hello to the driver when getting on the tram. Industrial facilities at the south margin of Braila once have been very important, told me another woman in her 40s on my way back from Colonia. People here worked in five shifts, and the trams arrived much more frequent. Now the industrial terrains looks rather extinct than decaying – the empty buildings were slowly falling apart. During our trip along the southern segment of line, no one has got on or off the tram

[148] http://adevarul.ro/locale/braila/brailacuibul-infractorilor-colonia-km-10-cosmetizeaza-160000-euro-1_50bd3c247c42d5a663c8c8f0/index.html

except the passengers travelling to and from the Colonia. Similarly to the pensioners from Guglino and Mirnyi in Mariupol, the super poor from the Colonia were both beneficiaries and keepers of the infrastructure. The Colonia's population comprised of the social groups that were unlikely to complain about the low quality of the service. Hence, authorities did not have to deal with its improvement or replacement; instead, they could continuously deter the solution of the issue as long as the tramline built under socialism functioned. The trams, which in USA or Western Europe figure in the discourses on cities' livability, social inclusion, and sustainable urban development, here, in the 'periphery of the periphery', serviced an impoverished, socially and spatially secluded community, being an infrastructural legacy of the socialist past.

4. Crisis into knowledge: Enthusiasts and electric urban transport

One of the first texts I wrote as an anthropology student was about amateur photos of tramways (Vozyanov 2011, P.386). On 29 pages I analyzed how amateur visually construct city through the images of tramways and trolleybuses. In the conclusion I mentioned briefly that sometimes the photos made by amateurs present an alternative source of information, and thus can bring the tramway infrastructure into a political debate. The text however did not tell about the photographers – whom I will denote as *enthusiasts of urban electric transport*, or UET-enthusiasts. Also I omitted the fact that the photo-resources created by UET-enthusiasts were of crucial importance for me and other scholars to make their inroads into mobility studies. The contribution of UET-enthusiasts to the maintenance of particular infrastructural complexes in the early 21st century is itself a story worth telling – as an impressive case of aggregating, mobilizing, and channeling collective effort. However, the case shows more than a grassroots mobilization movement. No less important is that UET-enthusiasts transformed the sociology and character of knowledge about the city. This chapter traces how, in the context of the deep crisis and proliferation of new media, transport enthusiasts create the new ways to produce and exchange knowledge about tram and trolleybus as ideas and actually existing infrastructures.

Infrastructures, enthusiasm, and the dispossession of a city

Recently infrastructures have come into sharp focus. Cities are seen as made of and constituted by infrastructures; not only the buildings, roads, schools, and supermarkets, but social relations around them shape urban sociality and produce hierarchies. The growing literature on infrastructure, however, still neglects its affective and emotional dimensions, even though they are long present in the literature about city. As a rule, infrastructures do not figure in accounts of how people fall in love with the city. In the traditional approaches to city space, infrastructure is devoid of strong emotional attachments, since ‚infrastructures are not intended to be displayed and aestheticized' (Gupta 2015). Even the visible exceptions, 'such as bridges, railway tracks, subway and railway stations, buses, and trains <...> despite their visibility, are often not subject to aesthetic refinement' (ibid). In other words, some constellations of urban affect are ignored while others are highlighted. The preferences of visiting seem to be more investigated than the emotions of residents; beautification of public squares, parks, and buildings in the city center receives more attention than invisible or

unspectacular ‚critical infrastructures', such as electric grid, sewage, central heating, transportation etc. Using the example of tramways and trolleybuses, I will illustrate how affects and attachments apply also to the infrastructures that usually are not counted as spectacular and beautiful. Emotions and passions around the ‚mundane', ‚boring' infrastructural aspects of urban space produce effects both for visitors and residents. Investigating the ‚love for infrastructure' means asking how infrastructural urban artefacts, those not designed to trigger passionate responses, do cause passion and *enthusiasm*. Here I do not mean infrastructure as an object of erotic attraction or romantic pleasure. Instead I focus on passionate responses that intend to preserve infrastructure in crisis and in situations of a threat to its existence.

Another connection between emotions and infrastructural management can be found in expert hierarchies. First, within the modernist project urban infrastructures are imagined as the domain of unemotional, 'objective', pragmatic actions and, recently, algorithms. When users are considered in infrastructural management, they are usually seen as driven by rational and pragmatic motives. Also, infrastructures are in someone`s competence and responsibility. The more complicated the infrastructure is, the less room there is for emotion, and the less people usually know about the way it works. Correspondingly, the status of a judgment on infrastructure is highly dependent on the speaker's status as expert. It also depends on established forms of rationalization; an emotional utterance will be considered as an ‚irrational' and incompetent one. Here the expertise is understood as 'a network linking together agents, devices, concepts, and institutional and spatial arrangements' (Eyal 2013) that should be considered when we analyze the power (ibid). Within the domain of public transportation, the complexity of tramway and trolleybus systems led to their exclusion from research on participative, bottom-up, horizontal mobilities. Such features have only been considered in research about share taxi, exemplifying in them the return of public transit 'back to the users'.

As I will demonstrate, however, at the troubled outskirts of Europe, the most sophisticated and 'most urban' infrastructures can become an arena for participation, contribution, and learning – through affective and enthusiastic relationships. I could tell this story adopting the word *activism*. It would fit then into a regional transitologist framework, considering the transformation of 'lay people' into 'activists' through politization and mobilization; investigating the characteristics of protest movements, statement-making, and

achievement of goals. Yet I would like to tell this story the other way round – conceptualizing it as an interest- and attachment-driven form of engagement between different areas of expertise and social groups. Why call these people enthusiasts and not activists? The key reason is that the passion comes to the *lifeworld* of UET-enthusiasts first. Here, I could refer to enthusiasts' activity as to an unpaid *work of love* as 'relieving suffering through good works' (Muehlebach 2013). Muehlebach notes that such understanding of love merges neoliberalism and Catholicism, gaining popularity due to 'the state's withdrawal from the provisioning of social services'. In her study, the volunteers demonstrate 'care toward the elderly, immigrants, the poor, and the disabled' because they are taught 'see with their hearts, not only with their eyes'. And yet, the object of their love is people, and not the activity (such as social service provisioning) itself. Although neoliberalism may be an important factor for UET crisis, the tramways fans deal with trams because they love trams and, as I will show, not because they love the environment or people riding the trams. Enthusiasts emotionally engage with tramway/trolleybus networks' and describe their development in anthropomorphic terms such as birth, aging, death, coma, and re-birth. The second reason not to classify activities of enthusiasts as activism is that they are not limited geographically – international connections and travel play a big role for them. Enthusiasts often engaged for the infrastructures then they cannot even use on a regular basis but which they, however, feel attached to, want to ocasionally visit, and regularly observe. Thirdly, UET-enthusiasts lack the institutionalization, acknowledgement, self-awareness, and vocabulary for inserting themselves (even if only rhetorically) into the activist sector and civil society at large.

Below I want to focus on four topics, which alltogether capture the role of enthusiasts in management of transportation infrastructures in Romania an Ukraine. First topic is the knowledge infrastructure created by a heterogeneous community of people in love with UET infrastructure. Although the term *infrastructure* traditionally referred to physical objects, Susan Leigh Star (1999) in her seminal article on ethnography of infrastructure uses namely the database as example. This knowledge infrastructure is unique for the region and seems important not only as a direct action against the deterioration of UET, but as case for understanding of how the urban infrastructures get *known.* Drawing my attention to enthusiast epistemologies, I am following again Graham and McFarlane who prioritize knowledge about the city among the issues to be studied about urban life (Graham McFarlane 2014, P.2). The second topic is the role of enthusiasts' activities in the mere survival of UET infrastructures in

the Ukraine and Romania after 1990. The transformation of sympathy and passion into different kinds of action was facilitated by a deep crisis; at the same time, extensive use of voluntary help led to the increasing dependency of the systems on the enthusiasts. Third topic concerns the marginal and precare position of the enthusiast knowledge and practice and consequent risks to its sustainability. If ones wants to enhance such knowledge and practice, 'tramway fans' should be treated on a more equal footage with experts, while their intellectual rights and economic contributions are to be discussed openly. The fourth topic is the role of the educational, activist, managerial activities of UET-enthusiasts in maintaining the temporal status of the tram and trolleybus technology in the region. Enthusiasts' practice affected the urban imaginary of the current time and of possible futures of tramways and trolleybuses at European peripheries. In the conclusion of the chapter I will consider the enthusiasts' activity as a form of claiming the ‚infrastructural citizenship'.

4.1 Passion into epistemology: co-evolvement of transport ethnography and new media

Even if we agree that infrastructures are emotion-less, public transportation proves to be an exception, being a longstanding hobby for a large number of people. In combination with other materialities or as a standalone, urban electric transport is a key interest for quite a broad audience – collectives of friends, or appreciators, or fans of tramway/streetcar/trolleybus can be found in virtually every country of Europe or British Commonwealth as well as in Japan (i.e. the area where these technologies have seen the widest proliferation), often related to transport museums and historical associations. Nonetheless, I would not claim that public transit is unique in this regard, since the interest seems to shift from town halls, palaces, arcs, and towers to the parts constituting the very mundane space of local life. This increasing attention to sites of construction, manufacturing, service of infrastructures is dispersed across Internet blogs, forums[149], tourist routes, UNESCO list of industrial heritage, and other sources.

As an analytical category, 'enthusiasm' has been used in variety of contexts. Psychological dictionaries and literature describe it as a feeling of excitement for an activity. Enthusiasm appears as a moving force in history of religion (Knox 1950) and technology

[149] See for example *Infrastructure Fans* https://twitter.com/infrafanclub; https://www.reddit.com/r/InfrastructureFans/; *SkyscraperCity* http://www.skyscrapercity.com.

(Hughes 2004). Often, enthusiasm combines emotional attachment to particular phenomenon with belief in its objective goodness and usefulness. Acceptance of enthusiasm varied depending on historical and social settings. At some points enthusiasm was even imposed and solicited – consider Stakhanovite movement in Soviet Union, which propagated passionate labor in order to increase productivity. Other discourses, e.g. the one of the positivist science, would keep away from enthusiasm as from something that can decrease quality of their work through biased thinking. The same interest might be framed within or result into expertise, hobby, or oddity. I am referring to the term 'enthusiasm' in order to question linkages between the notions of devotion, competence, management and passion at to show that such borders are particularly illusive at the times of crises.

Transport enthusiasm is identifiable in and performed via a multitude of attitudes, positions and practices. Akin to many other attachments, personal fascination for trams or trolleybuses is not seen as weird during one's childhood, but in teenage years it can be considered odd, including by the amateur themselves: '*until I found out in the Internet that there are many people, who are interested in that, I had thought that something is wrong with me*' (Inf. 15). Since tramway and trolleybus are not usually for sightseeing, being passionate about them may entail experiences of alienation, solitude, or social condemnation. My informants were familiar with experiences of being on vacation with others where the majority would prefer visiting monuments and hanging out in the down town area instead of exploring the city's transportation infrastructure. The possibility of networking that arose with the Internet facilitated the formation of UET community.

Enthusiasts form a heterogeneous network and include sympathizers, activists, amateurs and professional transport experts, as well as volunteers, passengers, and employees. The sociological characteristics of this group are linked to the demographics of Internet use and employment in public transport: UET fans are predominantly (though not exclusively) male; varying from teenagers to people in their 40s; if educated, more often than not with a major in technical sciences. Networking between transport enthusiasts during the socialist time apparently was very limited until the emergence of Internet; in the era of new media it intensified. People from the older generations, evidently, had less possibilities for such socialization.

Being employed in UET can also imply affective attachment to UET – so that employees show a more intense emotional involvement than would be expected usually: in 2013 in Mariupol a ticket-seller, in her 40s, told me how she and colleagues 'really wept when that K-1 [newer tramcar] crashed with the KTM [older car], we were so sorry about that', although no one suffered in that accident except the vehicle. There is no fixed border between such kind of sentiment and active engagement with the community.

Although UET-enthusiasm in the post-socialist space is a part of a global phenomenon, enthusiast activity here is especially intensive and has some regionally specific features. These specifics originate from instability and transition processes occurring in post-socialist countries and hence from the particular role of transport enthusiasts here. In post-socialist countries, UET-enthusiasts have developed an especially large number of websites. Similarly to other resources on UET, even if they claim the worldwide scope (e.g. as http://www.urbanrail.net), these websites never expose all regions in equal proportions, concentrating on one or several parts of the world. In my work the focus is on social network formed in Romanian, Russian, and Ukrainian speaking domains of the Internet as well as in offline spaces in several cities of the Ukraine and Romania. According to the amount of invested time and other resources, UET enthusiasm here is a meaningful part of many lives. The local community of enthusiasts reacts on economic, political, and social shifts in the region and creates knowledge infrastructures which is seen and used by official expert institutions in the transportation domain. Given this, I am going to problematize the relationships between the community of UET-enthusiasts and the institutionally recognized public transit stake-holders in post-socialist cities.

UET-enthusiasm as ethnography

Post-socialist fans engage in practices of data collection, systematization, and representation that share some similarities with ethnographic research. Travelling and being on the site is one of the basic and most widespread practices of public transit fans. Planned collective visits (sometimes called *pokatushki* (*покатушки*) in Russian) can include meeting of fans; visits to tram and trolleybus depots; the renting of a tram for a promenade (sometimes accompanied by donations). But much more often, amateurs do not in any way intervene into functioning of the infrastructures – they just watch and ride trams and trolleybuses. For several reasons, I would not classify these activities as ‚tourism'. Firstly, trolleybuses and

tramways in the Eastern and South-East Europe have hardly ever been approached as worthy of attraction; they always remained marginal even for those who found socialist heritage generally attractive. UET-enthusiasts look at the 'boring infrastructure', not adapted for a tourist gaze. While tourists passively consume the sight, the enthusiasts, as I will show below, engage with the local communities that use and maintain the infrastructure. The interest of tramway travelers is often enhanced by the sense of threat from the car culture emerging in the region: due to this trend, the mere sense of trams and trolleybuses' existence is often contested in public discourse.

UET-enthusiasts do not limit their attention to trams and rails: they are interested in how the infrastructure is managed by employees, positioned in media, used and discussed by passengers, and maintained by authorities. That is, they observe and describe practices and discourses of different social groups. Field exploration, sketching the ambience, timing the operations of public transit, counting different vehicles that pass through a stop, and looking at behavior of passengers in vehicles share certain characteristics with participant observation. Hanging out with locals and following conversations at the stop and in the vehicles resembles the close listening of anthropologist. Talking to passengers, depot employees, drivers, and others about the functioning of public transit (sometimes involving the entering the territory of tramway/trolleybus depot) reminds the focused and expert interviews. Looking for information in old newspapers in the local library converges with archival historical research. Of course, the epistemology and methodology of the UET-enthusiasm has developed outside of academia (at least, to a great extent). Enthusiast visitors and enthusiast passengers do not have reference letters from their university, reimbursed trip expenditures, or visit cards. Neither do they have interview guides, questionnaires, or professional dictaphones to capture data in a way established in ethnography. However, over time they improved their techniques according to their goal – that is, the exchange of information about the life of UET-infrastructures in the region.

The ways to gather data about UET have been developed in alternative non-academic venues and implemented on new platforms. The enthusiasts present their experience in blogs, guides, and historical restrospectives, photographic and textual trip reports (that even have an established structure now); videos, maps, schemes, schedules, models, and other sources. One can assume that the emergence of ethnographic practice was encouraged by development of the Internet – by new ways of storing the information, a wider audience to share information

with etc. The ethnographic methodology and representation techniques were simultaneously co-evolving during trips and the time spent by enthusiasts in reading of trip reports written by others. All this together was boosted by internet-surfing for something on ‚cities to which I am related, cities that I visited, cities where everything is good [with UET] and why' (Inf. 15). This knowledge production motivated by passionate interest is what I denote below as enthusiast epistemology.

New media and transformations of enthusiast epistemology

As of 2017, there is a large and ever growing amount of translocal datasets on public transport in post-socialist bloc, differing in their degree of orderliness, completeness, and media toolkit (one of incomplete lists can be found here http://www.kubtransport.info/links.html). I will describe several amateur web-resources dedicated to UET and outline main transitions in their interfaces that have also affected the ways of knowledge production in the community. Particularly, I will show how the individually authored monologue-like products cede to the collectively created, polycentric, ever more complex ones.

The aggregation and dissemination of the information about UET before Internet would make a topic for a separate historical study. Partially the traces of the late socialist practices can be found on websites of Aare Olander and Yuri Maller.[150] On their websites we find photos from the 1980s, including those made people with Western European names, most likely visitors in the USSR (see for instance photos of trams in Liepaja made by Wilfried Wolf in 1989 http://photo.tramvaj.ru/Liepaja2.htm). This shows that some form of international networking in the ‚transport community' *(транспортное сообщество)* existed long before the digital era. Also, in German-speaking countries *Straßenbahnatlasse* – the atlases accumulating information on UET in a particular country or region – existed as early as the 1990s.[151]

Personal projects to forums. In the first half of the 2000s, as the Internet proliferated in Eastern Europe, several web-pages dedicated to transportation appeared. Such resources, as

[150] http://photo.tramvaj.ru, http://ymtram.mashke.org/
[151] This can be deduced, for instance, from the catalogue of the publishing house Blickpunkt Straßenbahn http://blickpunktstrab.net.

‚World tram & trolleybus systems'[152], ‚Trolleybus cities of Russia'[153] , ‚Electric transport of Ukraine'[154], ‚Tramways and trolleybuses in the former USSR countries'[155] were pioneers of post-Soviet Internet in this topic and served for many the key source of geographical knowledge and imagination about transport. They usually were individual projects or the projects of a few.

The ‚first generation' of web-resources on electric transportation did not allow comments or separated the discussion from the visual sources presented. The forums, such as 'Transport in Russia'[156], compensated this absence of interactivity; here amateurs discussed different topics related to transport, including materials from the personal sites. Some topics were reserved for one city and presented a kind of diary, or a note book, where the evidences of the UET network`s life were accumulated during the long time, thus composing a considerable set of historical data. The Romanian ‚Forum on public transport in Romania and abroad'[157] and Tram Club Romania[158] afforded incorporation of photos into the message or attaching the pdf-file to it. 'Transport in Russia' lacked this function – probably this is reason it has lost popularity soon after photo-websites about UET appeared.

Transphoto.ru as the hub of UET-enthusiasts

At the verge of the 2000s and 2010s, Russian and Ukrainian-speaking UET enthusiasts started to gather around the website *stts.mosfont.ru* that was gradually enhanced by versions in other languages (altogether twelve languages as of March 2018). The website was later renamed and relocated to Transphoto.ru, so that clicking on the old link redirects visitors to the new address. As of 16 April 2018 some 17668 accounts were registered there; the number of visual documents (most of them are photos, but some are maps, scanned texts, and other visualizations, all having common numeration) had reached one million by the March 2017. Between 200 and 300 photos are usually uploaded daily.[159] When in 2014 due to the server's breakdown a large amount of photos was lost, more than 85 % of it was restored by the users.

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[152] http://ymtram.mashke.org/
[153] http://trollcity.narod.ru/
[154] http://ukrelectro.z16.ru/ (access 09.06.2013), see also http://www.kievtroll.h14.ru/.
[155] http://photo.tramvaj.ru/
[156] http://forum.tr.ru/
[157] *Despre transportul public din Romania si din lume* http://www.transira.ro/bb3/
[158] http://tramclub.org
[159] Data on every single day is available here http://transphoto.ru/update.php

From a storage to the smart database. The interface of Transphoto has made a longer way in its evolution than any other web-resource on UET I know. One of the principal innovations was that the data units from a particular city are now grouped on an individual 'city page' – so that the histories of UET-networks have recognizable structures and comparison between is easier. Photos were grouped into galleries according to period of time, location, or particular event, so that a gallery could be dedicated to construction, opening, demolition, or reconstruction of a particular line. The ethnography of construction became a collectively followed event and educational practice for the readers. For instance, the gallery of tram line construction in the Sykhiv area of Lviv, Ukraine included comments on the rail laying, wire stringing, negotiations with other city actors, unexpected occurrences and so on.[160] Also, the Transphoto's shift from pure aestheticism to a more ethnographic approach can be seen in the introduction of 'conditional publications' (this term is used in English version of the website) – that is, 'photos valuable in spite of quality issues'. For such photos, informativeness is prioritized over the beauty of the picture. So the collections are growing with the photos made in difficult conditions or presenting rare evidence from a distant location. Next to the posed photos we see road accidents and malfunctions, deviations of practice from norms; deteriorated rails, wires, and vehicles; and often – locations that passengers cannot usually see (like depots and repairing workshops).

Over the years photos ceased to be the only dominant form of content on Transphoto. The website presents increasingly diverse and complex data – which is provoked by emerging possibilities of new media and is provoking the further diversification of the output. Particularly, it features vehicle lists; photographic documentation of visual and technical state of the rolling stock; transfers of vehicles between the enterprises and cities; videos showing the tramway lines from the vehicle or from the street; scans of historical photos of old postcards, articles from newspapers, journals, and books; screenshots from films and TV-programms featuring the information about transport. This is added by historical schemes that allow tracing the development (or degradation) of particular networks; visualizations of aggregated data (infographics) – for examples, the evolution of all tramway networks in Belarus, Russia, and Ukraine since 1990 on a single scale.[161]

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[160] http://transphoto.ru/articles/447/
[161] http://transphoto.ru/photo/426915/

The other way, the formation of Transphoto through several stages and through learning on mistakes could be told as a transition from narrative to database, which Lev Manovich conceptualized as a key shift in contemporary history of information (Manovich 1999). Such transition means that knowledge is reorganized from a story into collection, in multi-reference to location, type of vehicle, depot, line etc., so that the users can navigate the resource upon any of these parameters. Where a trip report had an author, a beginning, and an end, a city page at Transphoto.ru has numerous contributors, updated descriptions, and an ever more branched tree of data.

Transphoto and infrastructural imagination. For the transport community in post-Soviet space, Transphoto has ultimately transformed the mental geographies of tram and trolleybus. The main page of the website contains a long list of countries, each with a dropdown sub-list of cities that had, have, or plan to have tramway or trolleybus. The tables at the page of each country show the former or present existence of tramway, trolleybus, subway, and other types of UET. These are sources of personal discoveries for many users from CIS (Commonwealth of Independent States) countries, though recently the small share of other countries is gradually growing, apparently, due to the ongoing translation of the interface into more languages. Lists, galleries, and standardized descriptions on Transphoto are reminiscent of civic apps such as 'Krasivyi Peterburg'[162] ('Beautiful St. Petersburg') – a mobile application that offers users to report about the city's problems as they walk through it. The specifics of Transphoto is in relation between people and the place – UET-Internet resources are essentially multi-local, and their users often report about places they do not live in.

One more tool connecting UET-enthusiasts across the borders is the newsfeed on the website's main page. The newsfeed covers openings of new systems and closures of existing ones, tenders on purchase and sale of rolling stock, crowdfunding initiatives, problems of UET, as well as protests, and petitions (often written by the members of the site). The newsfeed aggregates pieces of news from different countries next to each other, on one timeline. By locating a particular city on this timeline, one can see, side by side, different temporal orders that affect public transit development worldwide: historical and regional

[162] http://красивыйпетербург.рф/apps

differences in choice of technology for mobility; the relative progressivity, or backwardness, or stagnation of particular locations. Translocal imagination also re-scales occurrences of a single place – so that one closure can be viewed as less or more important, an exception or part of a trend, as an inevitable step or unexpected incident that contrasts to hundreds of other cities and countries.

Transphoto and acquired reflectivity Tram fans are bridging the hard, quantitative engineer competence with toolkits and interfaces of soft, less formalized and structured knowledge. While housing and residential issues tracked by civic apps are supposedly relevant for most of the city inhabitants, tram and trolleybus infrastructure is interesting only for commuters and enthusiasts. We can see that the 'boring' knowledge grew around a photo-collection – that is, a medium usually used for entertainment and leisure. However, its new functions went beyond the entertainment and allowed to accumulate professional information. The photo-hosting (perhaps beyond the intentions of its creators and curators) was both a product and an engine of enthusiasm. Initially, the photo was seen by enthusiasts just as an output of their hobby, but through watching photos new people were involved in transport community, and the sphere of community's interest expanded. In comments under photos fans began to discuss aspects that had not been discussed at the forum (e.g. the quality of wires and rails used, the way vehicles are painted, the passengers' behavior and so on).

Accumulating the erudition on extensive range of cases, terms, legal norms, and technologies, the enthusiasts became more reflective and even critical about UET. The users mastered forms of argumentation and special terminology and moved away from a purely irrational passion to the detailed discussions about sustainable mobility, new urbanism, and civic participation – even if they usually use other labels for these phenomena. If earlier the enthusiasts voiced half-serious dreams about 'tram on every street', now they deliberate on smarter decisions, compromises, priorities, and long-term tactics for mobility infrastructures in the region. Correspondingly, UET-enthusiasts with the longest experience in the community are, as a rule, not the most radical pro-tramway apologists: through the initial passion and affect, and subsequent search for information they inevitably come across the data that they did not expect and that sometimes transform their point of view. This transformation of the object-focused affect into contextualized, situated knowledge seems noteworthy to me. In the region where the existence of electric transport is often questioned (or directly hindered) the knowledge of UET-enthusiast cannot be reduced to the knowledge

about tram and trolleybus. It is shaped through a desperate search for cases, solutions, data, arguments against the cars, marshrutkas, or buses and, sometimes, facing arguments not in favor of UET. Tracing over the years the comments to photos from Volchansk, the smallest Russian city with tramway, one can notice a gradual shift from a univocal pleasure of the 'sweet tram' in picturesque environment to the more rationalist proposals to 'be a bit colder and calculating economists'[163], suggesting that the tram system can be redundant in a town of about 9000 inhabitants. In these conditions the UET-enthusiasts became experts of necessity – they have (and are eager) to respond to the criticisms, to consult the stake-holders, to propose the solutions, based on the competence they could not help obtaining.

UET-enthusiasm and other urban studies

The network of UET-enthusiasts is marginal in relation to other groups that produce knowledge about the city, such as new urbanism movements, on the one side, and planning institutions, on the other. Though sharing the interest in urban infrastructure, they all use different terminologies and platforms of communication. The Eastern European 'new urbanism' is heavily influenced by Western European and American texts that promote environmentally friendly habits and a greener city less dependent on cars. Russian- and Ukrainian-speaking tram fans oftener refer to the urban planning literature of the late USSR. Unlike many urbanists who pay more attention to infographics and visualizations of figures, the UET-enthusiasts combine statistical data and engineering science with the ethnography of infrastructure. This often makes their data more comprehensive in comparison to the officially acknowledged sources. Let me propose an example. In July 2017 a Belarusian website published infographics about the changes in public transport infrastructure of Minsk.[164] Here, a reputable author residing in Minsk took on faith the data from Belarusian Statistical Agency and showed that Minsk trolleybus network, the second largest worldwide, decreased by about 25 % (ca 75 km of wires) during year 2012. The fallacy of this statement emerged only in the comments to the publication: as the readers noticed, none of the lines in Minsk were dismantled in 2012; the Statistical Yearbook contained a mistake. The mistake of the author, hence, emerged from prioritization of the statistical data over the on-site evidence. Firstly, the removal of ca 75 km of trolleybus lines definitely would be noticed in the city of 2 million

[163] http://transphoto.ru/photo/914152/#2008114
[164] *Прыгожая інфаграфіка пра сумны стан грамадскага транспарту* https://ideaby.org/public-transport-stat/

inhabitants. Furthermore, a regular reader of Transphoto.ru would find the huge figure, 75 km, suspicious, because virtually every case of a line's removal and construction appears in the newsfeed of the website. On transphoto.ru, the data for maps are double-checked by authors who go along the streets with UET infrastructure, with notebook, sketch the wiring and rail junctions, register ruptures, rust, slacks, and other visible defects – the details that are not clear from satellite images. One can trace this approach back to the basic practice of ethnography that means physical presence at the place, with secondary sources (like statistical books) having fairly secondary meaning.

Another vignette about enthusiast knowledge tells how UET-enthusiasts aggregate the knowledge about multiple cases across the region and so become able to draw comparisons and identify multi-local trends. In a discussion around the construction of a new tram line in Samarkand, Uzbekistan, enthusiasts exchange information on technologies used in other current tram line constructions. The comments feature links to photos from other cities and recommendations on how the described problems can be fixed.[165] It is doubtful that the average manager in a post-Soviet tram depot could boast this level of erudition and competence. In the case of Transphoto.ru we are dealing with infrastructure of distributed expertise that spreads freely accumulated and shared knowledge, and makes the sources of information transparent and publicly available.

Regional UET-networks and language divide

Transphoto.ru is not the only platform focused on urban electric transport, and in some regions other websites are more important. UET-enthusiasts' resources do exist in post-socialist Europe (including the Polish-, Lithuanian-, Ukrainian-, Romanian-speaking public groups on Facebook) and beyond. While Ukraine has a large share of content on Transphoto, Romania presents a relatively marginal segment at this web-platform. Although many photos from the country are uploaded by visitors from Western Europe (and somewhat less often by people from ex-USSR or Eastern Europe), hardly any photos are signed or commented in Romanian. This situation indicates that for a long time, media content on trams and trolleybuses in Romanian cities was mostly issued outside of Romania. One of the early UET-enthusiasts' accounts of Romanian transport systems belongs to Richard Lomas, a well-

[165] http://transphoto.ru/photo/968908/#2092290

known transport fan and blogger from Great Britain, who had visited several cities in the country together with Dave Spencer in 1982.[166] Nowadays search inquiries 'tramways Romania' and 'trolleybus Romania' give out dozens of videos on Youtube, dated by the 1990s and the 2000s and attributed to the above-mentioned enthusiasts. Five to ten minutes long, the videos present an interesting micro-historical material. Apparently, soon after opening of the country in 1990, considerable amount of public transit fans have visited it: for example, UET of Romania was pretty well documented in *Straßenbahnatlas Rumänien* (Günther, Tarkhov, Blank 2004); some other accounts, for instance, Dutch ones, exist.[167]

The Internet domain of Romanian UET-enthusiasts is outstanding among other similar domains focused on one country or one language. The web address tramclub.org of *Tram Club Romania* does not specify the region or country, only the object – and this indirectly points us onto the pioneering role of Tram Club's creators in the domain. This website has become a Romanian platform for the exchange of news about UET as well as accumulation of related mass-media materials, documents, maps, and schemes. Limiting the access for unregistered users, Tram Club seems to have never occupied such a central position in the Romanian UET-Internet as Transphoto does in Russian-speaking space. It co-exists with other, individual websites about transport, such as a blog *Despre transportul local din Galati* (about public transport of Galați)[168] that combines historical material, news from the local transit authority of Galați, and photos of the vehicles arriving to the city.

Language divides can affect enthusiasts' networks no less than common transportation issues. They are especially tangible in post-Soviet space, where native languages may be strongly preferred against Russian, while English only recently becomes a common skill among younger generations. Transphoto brings together areas where Russian language is dominating or widespread; Romanian-speaking Tramclub has more limited capacities. Moreover, UET infrastructures in European peripheral 'grey zones', as Harboe and Frederiksen (2015) call them are more often visited by strangers from 'centers' than by people from other grey zones. However, recently the amount of bilingual and English comments on

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[166] http://tramways-romania1982.blogspot.de/2006/12/galati.html
[167] For example, here is a report about a group visit of tram amateurs from the Netherlands to Romanian cities with UET https://www.nvbs.com/toon.php?pag=Verslag_20110917. See also the blog by Peter Velthoen http://petervelthoen.nl/category/tramways/rumania-tram/.
[168] http://transportlocalgalati.blogspot.de/

Transphoto is growing; in the future this multi-local enthusiast network, apparently, will be increasingly advantageous in comparison to centralized attempts to gather the knowledge about UET.

4.2. Enthusiasm-dependency of UET at European peripheries: between hobby, crisis, and expertise

Tramway and trolleybus enthusiasts in provincial cities of Ukraine and Romania actively engage with the decision-making and maintenance of the existing networks. The specific regional practices, forms, and scales of enthusiastic intervention are rooted in the deep economic recession, inefficiency of governmental structures, and unrealized local plans in which UET was important. Also, enthusiastic interventions in the region owe to the aesthetic attractivity of tram and trolleybus networks in the region for the enthusiasts from around the world. Study of tramway and trolleybus in Romania and Ukraine after socialism tells us about the cultural construction of crisis as well as about the paradoxical potential of crisis for mobilization and participation across places and sectors of society.

Examples of lobbying by tramway and trolleybus fans can be found worldwide, although they are not so numerous. After decades of non-existence, Stockholm`s tramline 7 was re-opened in 1991 by the efforts of the local tram fans society as a historical tram service, and in 2007 it was re-constructed into a modern tramway, manifesting the comeback of this transit mode to the city centre. In Lisboa, Portugal, the tram was branded into a tourist attraction and probably only this way survived until the moment when low-floor fleet was introduced at line 1 in 2008 and so promised some future to the system. Some significant success could be observed in St.Petersburg, where locals protested against the demolition of tram rails and wires on Liteiny Avenue – although no regular tramway service had remained there, the infrastructure was preserved (as of 2017). In Naumburg, Germany, the line extension is built with the help of a crowdfunding campaign.[169] Unsuccessfull stories of enthusiasm are also present, both in a more remote past – e.g. the campaign to save London trams (Watkins 2010) – and in the last decade – e.g. the attempts to preserve the tram transport in Voronezh and Dzerzhinsk, Russia. These stories function as the social memory of

[169] "Wilde Zicke" bekommt Gleise zurück *Mitteldeutscher Rundfunk,* www.mdr.de, 15.02.2014. Available at http://archive.is/rXVyQ.

the transport community; they are referred to; the cases of unfinished, demolished, and extinct UET infrastructures make an important part to the enthusiasts' knowledge.

The Donetsk oblast as the focal point of enthusiast activity

The Donetsk region in Ukraine met all of the main criteria to become a special object of enthusiasts' interest. On the one hand, it was full of picturesque landscapes of exotic urbanity – tram cars in post-industrial or rural environments like gob piles, slagheaps, chimneys, blast furnaces, next to gardens, old one-store cottages, and cattle. The aesthetics of 'tramway in a village' is quite popular in transport photography and highly present in the photo competitions on Transphoto. For UET-enthusiasts, a tramway, trolleybus, and their infrastructure in province actually produce a city. So UET-enthusiasts called Donbas a 'tramway paradise'. On the other hand, here the scales of the infrastructures, geographic distances, and structural conditions allowed realizing grassroots initiatives with tangible results. As of 2013, in the Donetsk region tram was maintained in seven cities, while trolleybus worked in nine. It was possible to commute both ways within a day between almost any two cities with UET in the Donetsk region and, particularly, in Yenakiieve – Horlivka and Kostiantynivka – Druzhkivka urban agglomerations. Thus, many enthusiasts commuted between cities to watch UET, to take photos, and to report the news on the platforms. From the other side, the 'tramway paradise' was in the center of wider transport community`s attention – with the biggest amounts of views and reads, with the questions and ideas on how to support the infrastructure in its struggle against the decay.[170]

Mobilising the crisis: the transport community for tramway and trolleybus in Eastern Ukraine

In the late 2000s enthusiasts in Donbas extended their usual activity with several new initiatives. These included crowd funding, fundraising, voluntary work, innovative advertising and data reporting schemes, and development of the Internet-platform. Most of the initiatives took place between years 2008 and 2013 – a period when the enthusiasts' Internet was already well-developed, and the military conflict in Donetsk and Luhansk had not begun yet. During

[170] The Donetsk oblast in Ukraine and Eastern part of Romania are bright and condensed focal points of enthusiasts' activity, but similar phenomena can be observed in other post- and after-socialist spaces, for instance, in Russia, Slovakia, and Bulgaria.

that time, rusty, moldy, rotting, rattling UET infrastructures were on the verge of closure, and the transport community intended to save them. Enthusiasts however, were not the only group interested in trams and trolleybus. Municipal UET was also important for the elderly passengers with concessionary fares, for people employed at the tram-trolleybus departments, and for candidates at local elections who used the topic of transport in their pre-election promises. Given this, the initiatives of enthusiasts often attracted other stake-holders.

At the end of 2008, a kind of crowdfunding project was organized in the city of Gorlovka (Horlivka): the local tramway-trolleybus company (TTU) offered 'charity tickets' at the price of 25 kopecks in addition to usual ones (for 75), under condition that additional payments would be directly addressed to rehab the vehicles. The charity tickets were promoted, for example, through sticking of the leaflets containing verses about the trolleybus awaiting repair and its photo.[171] The volunteers occassionally promoted these tickets to the passengers on trolleybus: *'so that they did not had to go and buy a ticket by the driver and just would not bother themselves, we were approaching them in the way more comfortable for them – where they sat – so they bought tickets*' (Inf. 15). The figures on charity tickets' sales in Horlivka were regularly presented on the TTU's website[172] (see Pic 6), providing a detailed account for transactions upon the gathered donations.

[171] http://transphoto.ru/photo/303050/
[172] http://eltrans-gorlovka.com/ (accessed 31.07.2015).

Pic. 6 Screenshot of report on results of charity campaign for the period 21.1-19.2.2009. The website is not available since 2016, the screenshots from the website are stored in the materials of the project.

Many people in Horlivka perceived the price of 25 kopiyok (less than 0,03 EUR then) as unburdensome and bought several charity tickets at once. Over 50,000 charity tickets were sold in Horlivka during the first month of the action only. The wide support of the initiative by the population allowed the repairs of several trolleybuses and tramways. The donations were spent on spare parts, painting, and technical repair of vehicles, but first of all – on repair of the tramways' interior. For example, wooden seats in the trams were covered with a softer upholstery: the idea was to make the results of donations as *visible* as possible.

The sale of the charity tickets was not only a daring experiment, but also an example of transfers of ideas mediated by enthusiasts` community in the Internet: *The initiative appeared on the forum of the TTU and later the head of the TTU implemented it! We just told about Konotop!*[173] The tram and trolleybus departments of Donbas cities were among the first to open the web pages where passengers and transport workers shared and discussed news and ideas. Unusual ideas were developed, proposed, and implemented by the enthusiasts; the hopeless state of affairs in local transportation added weight to their voice that was not heard in other cases.

The deep crisis was an important factor for unblackboxing the infrastructure in Donbas – via making the public transit`s materiality more transparent to the 'wider audience' involved in supporting urban transit. In Horlivka a range of initiatives took place: a day of free travel sponsored by a local bread manufacturer[174]; a campaign on selling charity tickets jointly with a local radio station[175]; a contest of children's drawings[176]; open days at and excursions to the depot for all interested people; an invitation of local student painters to decorate the tramcars; outreaches to the city administration with the sells of charity tickets there; dissemination of the information about the functioning of the transport network, particularly, putting timetables on the stops and handing them out to the passengers. While during Soviet years a signature inside of the tram would read 'Pay for the ticket well-timed. Don't violate the rules of use of the public transport', now they appealed to environmental consciousness: 'To pay for a ticket

[173] http://transphoto.ru/photo/154527/#452034
[174] http://eltrans-gorlovka.com/news/91-9------- (accessed 31.07.2015).
[175] http://eltrans-gorlovka.com/news/192------- (accessed 31.07.2015).
[176] http://eltrans-gorlovka.com/news/269------- (accessed 31.07.2015).

today means a possibility to use the non-polluting transport tomorrow'.[177] The UET-enthusiasts, hence, practiced a *bricolage* of small activities, in which different groups interested in UET cooperated. This bricolage itself became a visible sign of life's normalization in the city while involving different groups that do not otherwise contact with each other.

The crisis and the expertise: diffusion of functions, positions, and competences

The state of deep infrastructural crisis contributed to the weakening of epistemological borders between transport experts and non-institutional actors: *'you could tell the most crazy idea, and he [executive director] would react and explain why, if it`s crazy'* (Inf. 15), told me a former volunteer of Horlivka tram and trolleybus department. In several cases the role of enthusiasts was simply crucial for the local infrastructure's preservation. At the verge of the 2000s and the 2010s a few people from the 'transport community' were employed as drivers and managers in tramway and trolleybus enterprises. Some of them were already known in the transport community, some began to receive attention after the news from cities 'under their management' spread. In Vuhlehirsk in 2013-2014 the trolleybus depot was maintained by a team of activists some of whom later became officially employed. By the time they started their activity, the city had remained with only one functioning trolleybus car. The collective led negotiations to get some second-hand rolling stock; two vehicles from Kyiv and two from Donetsk were transferred to Vuglehirsk in order to support the small town's transport. They also optimized the schedules of trolleybus operation and achieved an increase in passenger trips.

Quite often enthusiasm was entailing overtime work, or what I call 'part volunteering': people got the jobs with specified duties but, in addition to them, systematically and voluntarily fulfilled other tasks at the company. Sometimes, these included tasks that were not envisioned by any job description at all. The employees in Horlivka held night and day shifts in tramcars blocked by the snowfall in order to prevent theft of the tramway equipment[178] and in Kostiantynivka they did so in order to prevent theft of the overhead wiring. They also worked in adverse conditions (with arrears in salary; inconvenient work schedules; traffic

[177] Another example, also from Horlivka, can be seen here http://transphoto.ru/photo/225292/ .
[178] http://eltrans-gorlovka.com/news/161--- (accessed 31.07.2015).

offences provoked by car drivers left unpunished, etc.). In 2012, volunteers in Kostiantynivka took part in cleaning the tram tracks after heavy snowfall – according to reports, this involved employees, local residents, and tram fans from neighboring Donetsk. The latter were eager to assist the professionals, and they were allowed to do so. Besides, the UET-enthusiasts acted without any official reward, being hostages to their own passion. It tells us that, as a rule, most possibilities of overcoming the crisis and preservation of the UET infrastructure are not even considered. The key reason for this situation is the gap between what can be done (and what enthusiasts would often want to do) on one side, and what job instructions require from employees, on the other. ‚What can be done', hence, get chance to be done only thanks to the fusions between positions of experts and amateurs, hobby and duty.

The movement for Donbas UET was to some extent 'internationalized'. The fundraising for the Kostyantynivka tram was done through Transphoto and supported by users from different cities and countries. Many money transactions are reported to have come from outside the country – from Russia, or even from Argentine. While signatures mentioning 'people of Horlivka' discursively included the purchasers of charity tickets, the donations made through the Internet presented an anonymous and invisible help, inspired by mere sympathy to UET.

Enthusiasts and absent state. In the Ukraine, the collaborations between passengers, volunteers, and enterprises that otherwise may be seen as something positive, at the same time, illustrated the weak presence of the state. Via purchase of the charity tickets, the townspeople actually compensated the urban transport companies for what the state had taken away. The Ukrainian state had introduced the free use of transportation for a range of social groups (first of all, the elderly), but systemically failed to reimburse it to the transport companies (this failure was reported throughout – on a tram, in marshrutkas, in the depots, and in mass media). Paradoxically, it is due to the absence of hope for the better future or for state`s help the elderly paid for the tickets themselves: *'because they knew how it was without a tram during the last winter, and that the tram would be just closed leaving them to a more expensive marshrutkas, if they did not pay for the tram now'* (Inf. 13). Symptomatic for the state's detachment was the fact that additional income of local tram and trolleybus departments somehow remained unnoticed by the supralocal controlling bodies (I have seen on-site how lgotniki purchased tickets, and people recalled this practice in interviews).

Although the movement for the UET showcased social mobilization, participation, and inclusion, it was only possible in the ambiguous situation of a virtually absent state.

'Friends of tramway' and Romanian transportation

Romania has a different but equally rich history of enthusiast pro-UET action. Tramway and trolleybus fans in the country also focused on the smallest places with UET (Reșița, Botoșani, Ploiești), on suburban lines (Brăila, Sibiu – Raşinari, Arad – Gyorok), and on UET in the mixed rural-industrial landscapes (Brăila, Galați). The picturesque Galați, a city of semi-abandoned industrial clusters, empty lots, and horse-drawn carts next to harbor docks has attracted Western European tram fans ever since the 1980s and benefited from enthusiasts' support as early as the late 1990s. *Viața Liberă* mentions a delegation of ‚friends of tramway' (*prieteni tramvailor*) setting up the contact with local transport authorities.[179] ‚Prieteni tramvailor' looks pretty like a linguistic calque from the German *Straßenbahnfreunde*, given that most of the visiting ethusiasts came from Germany. Similarly to the initiatives in Donbas, the assistance from the German ‚friends of tramway' was especially welcomed by authorities as Romania found itself in an economic crisis. Remarkably, the currently active UET-enthusiasts in Galați did not know much about these, earlier initiatives; neither did the current employees of the transport company. As the county joined the EU, the coordination of aid to transportation systems in Romania moved into a regulated, formalized sphere.

As of 2016, secondhand trams imported from Germany, Austria, Switzerland, the Netherlands, Czech Republic comprised 100 percent of the local fleet in most of Romanian cities, including Galați; used buses, trains, and airplanes were also often acquired from abroad. Swiss bodies like Tramverein Bern (Tram union) and Secretariate for Economy SECO coordinated transfers of the rolling stock to Serbia, Romania, and Ukraine back then in the early 2000s. While Galați did not receive transfers from Switzerland, it benefited from second-hand trams and buses from the Netherlands. On the forum transira.ro one can find the discussions where Dutch transporticians announce the availability of rolling stock from

[179] RATU Galați a avut oaspeți de la "Prietenii Tramvaielor" din Germania. *VL* 31.08.- 01.09.1996. Prietenii Tramvaielor au poposit din nou la Galați *VL* 10.10.1997. "Prietenii tramvaielor" s-au plimbat, duminica, prin Galați *VL* 16.08.1998

Rotterdam to Galați.[180] Online-materials only allow tracing the practices of UET-enthusiasts starting from the 2000s, but how Romania became a country of second-hand tramcars would make up an interesting topic of research. For instance, Yuri Maller is sure that the 'friends of tramway' from Munich have saved the tram network in the city of Arad. Maller states that the network entered the 1990s with the largest deficiency of tramcars among Romanian cities that was compensated later by the arrival of second-hand trams from Germany.[181]

Tram-club.org became a platform where Romanian 'friends of tramway' mobilized efforts against the proliferation of maxi-taxi in Romania. The website's forum hosted the exchange of ideas, relevant documents, and current information about possible threats to UET from the side of shared taxis. With the use of the EU legislation on environmental protection, the participants have collectively developed an argumentation against maxi taxi as polluting transport.[182]

Romanian transport fans acted in many ways similarly to their Slavophone peers eastwards, and sometimes even read Transphoto.ru. They documented the dismantling of the tram in Reșița in spite of the promises of its re-introduction in 2011[183]; they successfully lobbied for the re-introduction of tramway line to the terminus Technopololis in Iași in 2015; they also protested against suspension of the tramway line 101 in Ploiești, where 7000 signatures were collected within a week. [184] These examples, akin to Ukrainian ones, demonstrate how malfunctioning, neglected infrastructural assets trigger a kind of ‚democratization of expertise' (Maasen, Weingart 2006). Along with that, the enthusiasts in Romania are better, than in Eastern Ukraine, connected to the global network of media platforms and to the other domains of civic participation. Romanian UET-enthusiasts use established methods and vocabularies of right defenders, environmental activists, and labour unions. At the same time, they demonstrate a stronger hope that the institutions in the end may work, and that they would do so even better at a supra-local level. In their activity, Romanian transport amateurs were following news from the European Union much more than

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[180] Thread *Tramvaiele ZGT-4/6 ex RET-Rotterdam/Olanda*
http://tramclub.org/viewtopic.php?t=6861&start=0&postdays=0&postorder=asc&highlight=
[181] http://transphoto.ru/photo/799654/?vid=181673#1818893
[182] See, for example, a discussion in a forum thread *Cancerul numit "Maxi -Taxi"* here
http://www.transira.ro/bb3/viewtopic.php?t=2414
[183] *Distrugere tramvai Resita CS* https://youtu.be/RFsgZbaiq-s
[184] Thread *Se desfiinteaza linia de tramvai nr. 101?* http://www.transira.ro/bb3/viewtopic.php?f=34&t=3439&start=60 .
Entry by user Silviu: Thu 07 May 2009 09:02

from their Eastern neighbors. My interlocutors in Galați did not hear of any actions of their mates in Ukraine; on the contrary, the Eastern Ukrainian transport community had at least some general knowledge on recent UET trends in Romania.

4.3. Precarious labor for urban mobility: recognition and exploitation

The labor of UET-enthusiasts is precarious in many aspects. Late 2015 I took part in a workshop about participatory projects in Kyiv, Ukraine. A friend of mine kindly shared the preliminary list of participants with me: as I could see, most of them were going to present the experience of some project they were involved in, NGOs, municipal bodies, or public initiatives. Their descriptions were to be found on Facebook public pages, linked to their personal pages, Instagram accounts, Twitters and so on. Thanks to the organizers, who accepted my application after deadline, I could introduce a dispersed virtual community of UET-enthusiasts and describe many challenges they face to the wider circle of urban activists and researchers. The enthusiasts shared many concerns and methods with the speakers of the roundtable but were absolutely invisible from the NGO scene. Initiatives for UET in the region, lacking any institutionalization, remain marginal in relation to local power structures, activist networks, academic communities etc.; furthermore, they are cut off from resources available to these bodies.

The UET-enthusiasts have to deal with unfriendly environments. Taking photos alone can be risky – they report verbal aggression and obscene hand gestures from passers-by and public transit employees, and even the cases of police custody. In 2017, there was a publicly discussed case of being taken to police office in Donetsk, but similar situations in Belarus and Ukraine occurred long before (e.g., Yuri Maller reported being followed by a person from security service in Minsk and told not to take photos of trams in Mazyr[185]). Despite that, several people continue taking photographs even during wartime and so providing unique information. This often meets encouragement from the side of the interested community. For me, this raised the question of how ethical it is to articulate such an interest. I have been particularly concerned about cases when people appraised the photos from Donbas and thus indirectly motivated the users to take photos ever closer to the frontline.

[185] Enrty by Юрий, MTA-LRTA Нью-Йорк 29.02.2008 01:42 http://forum.tr.ru/read.php?1,153398,652268 Accessed 03.04.2017.

When gathering information about public transit, UET-enthusiasts bear considerable costs. Apart from the travelling expenditures, these include costs of the equipment for photo and video shooting. The website's requirements to the photos are quite high, so that only well-done photos are accepted. However, despite its semi-professional quality, the content of Transphoto is not presented at any photography awards and not exhibited in galleries, as far as I could know.

The content from Transphoto is used by various institutions and media without any reward to the community. Rarely, enthusiast UET-websites are mentioned in Internet dictionaries[186] or covered in other media[187]; more often the media use their fine photos without permission – since the latter are readily available in the Internet. Presumably, the mass media have nothing to worry about – since the young, often precarious and working class youth at the outskirts of Europe are not likely characters to sue them in defense of their own intellectual rights. In a similar fashion, maps of the network created by enthusiasts and published on Transphoto are displayed in vehicles[188] (apropos, often these maps are absent on the official websites of transport companies – when these sites exist at all). The site has become a meeting place where professional employees communicate on a more equal terms with the amateurs. Especially often this happens in the cases of derelict and endangered systems (such as the Novocherskassk tram in Russia recently). After all, Transphoto is a successful template for other sites about infrastructures that were created on the same database engine.[189] Thereby, the practices of UET-enthusiasm might have influenced the practices of data management in other professional domains (bus and ship transport, housing construction, and others).

At the margins of urbanism

Noteworthy, management of the city is a domain where activists and NGOs succeed, more than in many other cases, at contesting the strict expert hierarchies of academic expertise and power. Public transit is part to that trend: urban decision-makers (mostly in administrative sphere) during the last half-decade have realized the importance of the topic, if

[186] http://dic.academic.ru/dic.nsf/ruwiki/1712870
[187] http://echo.msk.ru/programs/echonet/829729-echo/
[188] For example, this map of tram routes in St. Petersburg http://transphoto.ru/photo/576728/ was used without permission by the tram depot.
[189] http://transphoto.ru/links.php, section *Дружественные сайты* [Friend sites].

only in word. During the first decade after millennium the knowledge about urban transport grew around at least two visible nods. The first node consists of academic theories of mobility, wherein the passenger`s experiences of navigation, planning, and waiting are studied in a wider context of social life. The second one is represented by the elegant and catchy 'new', or 'hipster' urbanism with its 'slow cities', workshops, apps, and artistic interventions. Eastern Europe has an established infrastructure of urban activism. Activists in this sector produce brochures, round-tables, presentations, Facebook and Instagram public pages, and press-releases in English. They develop contacts with the grant-givers and donators using an international vocabulary for the problematization of urban life (first of all – in its environmental, gender, and income inequalities). The enthusiasts' knowledge about the city forms one more node that remains virtually invisible. My informants (especially those from Ukraine) are rarely on Facebook, mostly demonstrate poor skills in English, and almost never have degrees in social sciences or humanities. They did not use such words as 'urbanism', 'activism', 'participation' (or its derivatives with the use of Latin root – in Russian and Ukrainian), NIMBYism etc. for their 'naïve', 'provincial', and often 'boring' work on the peripheries. They hardly even know the word 'CV', using 'resume' (*резюме*) instead, which is perceived as an older and unfashionable word in Russian and Ukrainian usage. All this contributes somehow to their marginality.

Transphoto.ru and other Russian and Ukrainian-language websites about UET – with their grids, scales, rubrics, and methods of data management – were maintained through the work of volunteers, at loose hours, in the absence of prescribed schemes, without grants, scholarships and PhD projects. Despite the enthusiasts hardly ever discuss the value of own activity, UET-Internet is an important source for many other groups. Particularly, websites like Transphoto were well known to many urban activists I knew. The techniques used by UET enthusiasts were employed by urban researchers and integrated into a new economy of grants, summer schools, workshops and fundraising. This development may sound familiar to the historians of science: as Grinko noted, the discipline of ‚*Russian and foreign ethnology <...> like many others, owes its institutionalization to the voluntary scientific communities* (in Alekseev et al, P. 32). So far, UET-enthusiasts are precarious in relations to the acknowledged experts, vulnerable economically, and sometimes find themselves in danger on-site.

The vulnerability of unacknowledged expertise

The unacknowledged expertise of UET-enthusiasts becomes even more vulnerable, when their data are interpreted in order to support this or that political statement. The absence of public recognition for their ‚pure' enthusiast activity (or, literally 'naked enthusiasm' – *голый энтузиазм*) became especially important during the military conflict in Donbas that was followed by a political and ideological split among the enthusiasts. At first, I viewed the suspension of enthusiast activities in the region as a consequence of increased unsafety. However, in online and phone communication, some tram fans offered an alternative explanation: the website Transphoto was accused of censorship against materials from the conflict zone. The enthusiasts who suggested this were both from the zone and the territories controlled by central government, as well as from outside of the Ukraine. Should they say the truth, such censorship can be an additional reason for the amateurs to stop contributions to the website.

When realizing the low status of the knowledge they produce, enthusiasts lose the motivation to pursue neutrality (also called 'objectivity' in their conversations), high quality of information, and consistency in its collection. An academician earns her symbolic capital, among other things, through claims of being apolitical or neutral; but in situation of a voluntary registration and sharing of information the suppression of political sentiments is not counterweighted by any benefits. The question is whether and how can the members of the transport community learn to separate their political beliefs from their interest in the infrastructure. In some cases, requiring neutrality, the community risks to lose a key informant who sheds light on developments in a remote and hard-to-reach area of military conflict. In other cases, the data can be sampled by the photograph in a particular way to promote their favored version of reality. The acknowledgement of high value of the photos may motivate UET enthusiasts to keep presenting data in its entirety, even if the data are controversial and even if such acknowledgement comes from a political opponent. Discussions where people obviously coming from the conflicting political camps talk and come to agreements about UET, indeed, might be found on the website. Such discussions, I believe, present an example of how the interest towards UET infrastructure becomes stronger than political discord.

Dilemmas of possible institutionalization

The network of tramway and trolleybus enthusiasts in Ukraine and Romania definitely found itself 'beyond the NGO-ization': that is, the enthusiasts avoided depoliticizing and transfer of their agenda into the sphere of responsibility of organizations (Saxonberg 2016). This is relatively common for urban movements,

> 'in contrast to the general pattern of other social movements in the region, such as environmental, animal rights, or women's movements. Urban activism is based on voluntary work and not paid employees, and to the extent they have funding, it is from domestic sources. Moreover, most of these activities are based on grassroots initiatives and bottom-up processes rather than organised from the top' (Jakobsson 2014, P.36; see also Zgiep 2013).

Despite the marginal position of the current UET-enthusiasts' activity, its institutionalization, I believe, must be considered with cautiousness. The institutional mega-structures of global aid, humanitarianism, volunteership, charity and other philanthropical initiatives has been widely criticized (e.g. Dunn 2012). Fisher was one of the first to spell out the dangers of idealization of NGOs and excessive expectations from them: as their role is wider recognized, it is still unclear how can they do ‚good' without doing wrong; empower without victimizing; enable more than constrain (Fisher 1997). These concerns cause doubt in me every time the conversation drifts to the empowerment of the UET-enthusiasts. Discussing how the data, knowledge, and information produced by enthusiasts can be used more fairly, we cannot ignore the controversies that may emerge if it would be institutionalized, copyrighted, and paid for. In 2015 an investment project manager from Ukraine informally contacted me for a consultation on a transportation issue. One of advises I thought of giving him was to hire 'someone from the fans' – which would at the same time aid to some member(s) of the generally low-income Transphoto public. A Russian transport specialist working in Hamburg, with whom I shared my concerns, objected that in Germany the bodies like Transphoto had functioned for a long time on a completely voluntary basis – which he saw as a precondition for the success of their activity. Although a comparison between civic activism in Germany and UET-enthusiasm in Ukraine would seem problematic – due to income differentials, due to the structural challenges for UET infrastructures, at last, due to unequal societal appreciation of volunteering in two societies, – I retained from giving that advice.

Akin to many other urban movements, UET-enthusiasm is mainly driven by non-monetary interests. The difference is that political concerns, humanistic ideologies, and civic consciousness can be just as absent in the logics of UET-enthusiasm, as monetary interests are. Instead, the enthusiasts are guided by their passion; so that political ideologies and social capital here matter less (or at least in a different way) than in civic sector. The knowledge of transport community is directed at self-education, self-help, and self-entertainment; the contributors of Transphoto often perceive the web-site as something made just for themselves. Without the passion for tram and trolleybus, the output of UET enthusiasts would not be as it is, regardless of acknowledgement and institutionalization of their work. Probably, this tells us why UET-enthusiasm in the region does not have any institutional superstructure. The passion for infrastructure does not leave place for the 'boring' institutionalization, which is considered necessary in many other bodies of civic action.

Anthropologist as an infrastructure enthusiast

A regular anthropological concern of giving voice to the unheard is not the only one that made me think about forms of recognition of UET-enthusiasts' expertise in the region. Late 2014 my colleagues from the European Humanitarian University (Vilnius, Lithuania) asked me to organize a small research exhibition on public transportation during the war, featuring photos from the conflict zone in Donbas. The photos were to be borrowed from several websites, mostly from Transphoto. So I composed a letter and started to contact the authors. Almost everybody replied; more than that, they generously commented on the topic of exhibition. Several conversations continued over time and even evolved into interviews; people were open and demonstrated vivid interest towards the project. By that moment I had already started to reflect on how underestimated the contribution of volunteers was and how marginal they were in relation to the expert community and civic sector of the region. But it was only then, during my preparations for the exhibition (which never materialized due to external factors) that I as an affiliated academician realized: my own knowledge about electric urban transport was to a large extent facilitated by the data *they* collected, processed, systematized, and uploaded to the net. And I was not the only academician benefiting from their labor: some colleagues of mine were looking for the data, informants, and inspiration through the UET sites; or referred to them in their publications (e.g. Agamirova Lapockina 2014, P.89; Kovalenko Kostiuk 2012 P. 234; Połom, Turżański 2015, P. 30).

A closer look at UET-enthusiasts may make us think about our own scientific activity as a way to lower the inequalities in recognition of the expertise. The relations between the researcher and researched are increasingly discussed in such contexts as collaborative ethnography, remote ethnography, sociology of expertise, PAR (participant research-in-action), militant research, and, last but not least, the ethics of ethnographic fieldwork. The position of UET-enthusiast knowledge is indicative of how the empirical evidence and contextualized knowledge can be appreciated less than a good-looking theory. Another undervalued aspect of UET-enthusiasts' platforms is their multimedia interface, developed in order to accumulate and systematize knowledge. Today, as many anthropologists are facing the limitations of traditional text format for presenting their output, mobility scholars already have platforms that enhance their research and provide additional feedback from other users. UET-platforms also can be thought of as a bridge between disciplines – showing the significance of qualitative issues to transport technicians and, vice versa, introducing social scientists to the engineering aspects of mobility phenomena. There are some evidences of how scholars try to engage with the UET-enthusiasts on a more horizontal basis. For instance, Wladimir Sgibnev, researching mobilities in Tajikistan, publishes photos from the capital city, Dushanbe – a place that for many users is hard-to-reach, but pretty interesting. The project co-coordinated by Sgibnev, involves an experienced Transphoto user from Georgia as an associated participant. Such collaborations, which in many areas of social sciences still remain an idea, in the domain of transport are already facilitated by the existing on-line platforms.

Finally, after my own engagement with enthusiasts' practices, I propose to speak about 'activism as a research method'. This engagement is not limited to collaborative ethnography, or to 'activist research' that subordinates a research procedure to activists' goals using scientific methodologies. Neither it is equal to the ethnography of NGOs and civil participation, where the activism itself is an object of research. Finally, it is not a militant research that tries to produce knowledge without the privileges of academia. 'Activism as a research method' is partly about all these things, but, in a first line, it discovers the methodological potential of what enthusiasts do: writing open letters and petitions, volunteering, contacting funds, authorities, and other enthusiasts etc. When I distributed tram timetables to the participants of my poll in 2011 in Mariupol, right at the stops; when I consulted the enthusiasts and assisted them in editing of the leaflet; when, on demand of a

local community in Kostiantynivka, I wrote a petition and spell-checked another one; when I spoke out on Ukrainian TV; when I was preparing the photo exhibition about transport in Donbas, and translated the Transphoto's interface into Romanian – I came across many sources and ideas useful for my project. Collaborating with enthusiasts, as long as their goals did not conflict with my personal or professional concerns, was a rich source of insights into the life of the region, especially in the aspects of bureaucracy, local governance, and Europeanization.

4.4 Maintenance of hope and re-temporalization of tram and trolleybus

Apart from the knowledge production and civic activism, UET enthusiasts were engaged in another type of work: they maintained a collective hope for survival of the tram and trolleybus infrastructures and contested the idea of obsolescence of these technologies. While the enthusiasts associated UET with the anticipation and hope for a better future, the elderly connected trams and trolleybus to their own past; simultaneously, these modes of transportation helped them to maintain their present. Given this overlap of temporal perspectives around tram and trolleybus, I propose to speak about (re-)temporalization of urban electric transport by the enthusiasts – that is, efforts to present the relevancy of UET in the present and future lives of different urban groups.

Hope and dynamics of decay

After the socialist epoch, trams and trolleybuses were mostly the signs of the past than those of the future. Hope for their survival were often ignored as unserious. Pessimism in their regard was reinforced by the depressive landscapes of abandonment and destruction, overlapping with somber personal perspective of the elderly (see chapters 2 and 3). However, several mixtures of hope and pessimism emerged in the city, envisioning different future scenarios for the degrading infrastructures. Here I focus on these social visions of degradation. The infrastructures expecting closure usually receive less attention than projected or constructed ones; they often cause feelings of discomfort and retention.[190] However, decay of an infrastructure may last longer than a period of its planning, construction, and 'normal

[190] Once colleagues of mine told me how hard it was to find employees to work at the closure of the nuclear power plant in Ignalina, Lithuania. Although these were reliable workplaces for about 20 years, people didn't want to 'work at closure'.

functioning'; and then, preparations for and expectation of demolition of an infrastructure often actualize its regular meanings and ideas of the 'normalcy'.

Not infrequently, the closure of infrastructure is planned; it is publicly announced, rhetorically rationalized, and stepwise normalized through the punctual implementation of change. Such 'planned closure' is scheduled in accord with the useful lifetime of the vehicles, or rails, or wires. The decommissioned infrastructure is systematically replaced with a new one (for example, with bus) that is promoted as a better option. For example, in the German city of Halberstadt the gradual closure of tram network was scheduled for year 2025 as early as 2011. 'Planned closure' is typical for 'developed countries' and assumes the defined, uncontested future. It is not concealed from the public and can entail an official farewell event. For example in Gliwice, Poland, in the last days of tram line's operation the tramcar borne a black shroud.[191]

In other cases, decay of an infrastructure is not admitted by responsible bodies or, alternatively, it is seen as reversible. Then the decay is included into the ongoing contestation of and debate about the future that is 'suspended'. The 'suspended' future is perceived as undefined; activities of the city actors – organizations, enterprises, concession users, or other passengers are guided by a version of the future they believe in, and the conflict in visions is performed through conflicting actions. The suspense of the future is a powerful political tool, channeling the hope, attention, and effort with the help of promises, examples from other cities, and questionable comparisons. An example from Mariupol in years 2016-2017 is media reports about the arrival of new trams without a mention that the overall amount of tramcars in the city decreases, because the older tramcars are actively withdrawn.

Another mode of closing down an infrastructure is what I will call 'erasure'. Within erasure of an infrastructure, once the decision on its liquidation was taken, openly or not, the system or its parts disappear quickly. Stefan Mashkevich provides us with an example of erasure of a tram line in late Soviet Kyiv: *In the 80s, there was still some time left in the reserve – 'pull-pushers' [trams with two cabins – AV], though not new ones, were more than sufficient, and from time to time they were sent even to non-U-turn routes, for example the 10th, but it was decided not to postpone the inevitable ... The 30th route was withdrawn on*

[191] http://transphoto.ru/photo/220065/

May 26, 1985. [192] After the fall of socialism erasure became more common. Large systems with a reserve of infrastructure's useful life, with functional rolling stock, and with a branched network of lines were collapsing in a brief timeline. Decision-makers often explained such collapses by obsolescence of electric transport; also it was told that dysfunctional infrastructure should be replaced with the new and better one. Unofficial explanations of UET degradation on post-Soviet space mostly refer to corruption, mismanagement, and coalitions between authorities and share taxi enterprises. Now it is telling to see how many tramcars remained in some cities at the moment of their closedown: Ryazan – 27, Voronezh – 18, Arkhangelsk – more than 10, Ivanovo – more than 30, Tbilisi – not less than 7, Baku – 30. These figures would be even larger if we account the vehicles decommissioned during the last months of operation.[193] Tashkent is one of the loud examples from the early 2010s, with the tramway lines closed full of sudden, despite extensive construction works had been conducted just a few years earlier. We see here how 'the inevitability of closure' is retrospectively constructed through a high speed of network destruction: a rapid erasure does not leave time to reflect on change and analyze it. An abrupt, unexpected infrastructural erasure leaves users with the feeling of own helplessness, non-agency, and uncontrollability of the goings-on; just as the time of demolition is speeded up by the efforts of 'more powerful' actors, the 'less powerful' ones are devoid of time to realize own potentials for the preservation.

Different regimes of infrastructural decay and expectations towards the future affect the passengers' behavior in present. For instance, they may be reluctant to use the transport system if they know for sure about its forthcoming closure. In other cases, on the contrary, they use the tram to the bitter end and even defiantly reject the alternatives. This was the case in Ryazan, Russia, where the tramway network closed in 2010. Three month before closure enthusiasts wrote: '*many deliberately ignore bus number 16a, realizing that this is a primitive frame-up [подстава] organized by the authorities. They stand and wait for the tram, even if the bus comes around*'.[194]

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[192] "Memory of the Kiev trams", http://www.mashke.org/kievtram/texts/kievtram.html.
[193] Data are taken from the sections 'Vehicles list' on the city pages at transphoto.ru and indicate the number of tram cars in inventory at the time of closure, which may exceed the number of de-facto 'running' vehicles. Nevertheless, the number of vehicles in Baku, Arkhangelsk, and Voronezh decreased much faster than in provincial Ukrainian cities. In Voronezh, for example, 21 tram routes operated as of year 2000; in 2009, before the closure of two remaining lines, nine wagons worked. Nine trams, however, is more than Druzhkivka had ever since 2000; and still the latter city retains the tram services as of 2018.
[194] Thread '*(Рязань) Три месяца до закрытия*.' http://forum.tr.ru/read.php?1,916989 (accessed 24.12.2015).

Almost no future

Unlike the cases of 'planned closures' and forced 'erasures', the post-socialist history of trolleybus and tram in most of the Donbas cities presented a 'retardation of the inevitable'. The notable exception in Ukraine is Makiyivka, where, according to the recollections, 50 of 60 tramcars were decommissioned under the pressure from the local pro-marshrutka mayor within one year. In other cities of the region electric transport, apparently, was not covered by any kind of an intended strategy. Also, there were no actors that would enforce the soonest possible removal of the UET systems. As a consequence, vehicles and lines stopped running one by one, sinking to the extreme minimum: the routes were closed; the remaining routes operated with only one tramcar (extending headways up to 60 or 90 minutes); some lines stayed without service for years, in the hope of renewal. In Kramatorsk, as of 2004, only four tramcars operated. The visitors wrote: '*tram is on the verge of extinction here. And it is unclear whether it will survive till the New Year'*.[195] At the same time, in the city of Druzhkivka, next to Kramatorsk *'on the balance [of the Tramway Department] 21 tramcars are still registered, of which only one is working <...> and another one is maintained in a semi-working condition for serving the only remaining line 1 on holidays, and also for towing its frequently defect colleague to the depot'*.[196] UET-enthusiasts reported about pessimistic prognosis in Kramatorsk: *,the service will run only for three years more'*[197]. They also reported about Druzhkivka:

> *'We found out, that the employees do not get their salary for a half of the year, and the current crisis, apparently, will be the last one in the history of Druzhkivka Tramway Department <...>. On the way, we chatted with a conductor who told us, pained, about the soon and inevitable breakdown of tram in Druzhkivka. When leaving, we made a photo, maybe the last one in the history, of an operating tram in the city of Druzhkivka.'*[198]

The Konstiantynivka tram has completely stopped the passenger service in 2004, which, however, did not mean a full closure of the system. *In order to somehow preserve the*

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[195] http://forum.tr.ru/read.php?1,199934,199939 (accessed 24.12.2015).
[196] http://forum.tr.ru/read.php?1,168825,168825#msg-168825 (accessed 24.12.2015).
[197] ibid
[198] *(ibid)*

assets, to prevent thefts, we put on the line one-two maintenance cars daily[199], told the then-director of the Konstiantynivka tram department in an interview to a local newspaper. At that time, most of the trolleybus systems in the region were in a similar state of decline. Here, looking ahead, I must mention that the three mentioned tram networks and most of the trolleybus networks in Donetsk region were functioning as of 2016.

From the viewpoint of rationalistic urban planning, there is no sense in exploiting a tram infrastructure far below its capacities. With large number of trams, operation costs (counted in money, labor man-hours, etc.) per tramcar are reduced. One single tram requires excessive costs; it is also insignificant for the decrease of pollution. However, for the social life of the city, there is a substantial difference between 'almost not working' and 'not working at all'. The significance of a last one tram or trolleybus on the line tells us how hope is anchored in the materiality of infrastructure and reinforced by it. Retaining an 'almost not working' tram system in Eastern European outskirt was an issue of the future and not of the present. It facilitated talks about planning and expected developments; about the growth of the UET's 'target group' – the elderly, who need transportation; about employees of the tram depot that would lose their jobs in case of the closedown. Although a repeating mending of old vehicles could look as 'being stuck into the past' for outer observers, such mending sustained a move from nostalgic desperation to the current time of the city's life; it served to prolong the present. The present without the future was also painful for many, including employees who stated that 'it would be better to close such tram than to agonize and torture us'.[200] But the opposite opinion was heard as well: every following year, or month that the tramway network succeeded to 'hang in there' ('*продержаться*') was conceived of as an achievement valuable in itself. Thus the small-scaled efforts acquired importance, even when at the macro scale the enthusiasts were acknowlegdedly helpless against the cascade of infrastructural ageing.

In order to continue their work, the UET enterprises sometimes had to refuse from particular hopes and expectations. In Kostiantynivka, the rails on unused lines were dug up and handed over to scrap metal collectors in order to pay salaries to the remaining employees.

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[199] http://forum.tr.ru/read.php?1,204318,204608#msg-204608
[200] *Константиновский трамвай: выходи, приехали...* http://donbass.ua/news/region/2010/08/11/konstantinovskii-tramvai-vyhodi-priehali.html (Accessed 20.05.2018).

Some double-track lines turned into single-track ones; others were disappearing completely and, evidently, for good. Such 'amputations' meant sacrificing the more daring long-term hopes to the harsh realities of the moment. In this vein, the outrage in Kostiantynivka was not as strong during the complete stop of service with the infrastructure left untouched, as it was later, when 'amputations' occurred on the non-working lines to the benefit of the working ones. 'Enthusiasts' started to explain then: if the entire network would suddenly be stopped and/or dismantled, chances for the re-birth of the lost lines would be even fewer. That is why the choice between servicing all lines with one tram at each and servicing one particular line competitively (but closing other lines) was also a choice of a preferred temporal perspective. One can say that these choices showed the extent of enthusiasts' optimism: the most optimistic among them wanted to preserve everything; the others kept to a moderate pessimism and struggled to secure at least one line.

The story of local actors fighting against dark futures shows some parallels with the Shelton's study (2017b) of infrastructural activism against highway construction in Houston. In Shelton's case, the highway was to be built at the cost of the destruction of a predominantly Afro-American neighborhood, justified by the long-term benefits for the general city development. The main tension emerged between the will of suburbanites to have fast highways and the will of the old city residents to preserve their neighborhoods. The outcomes of anti-highway campaigns reflected the regional patterns of racial and economic stratification: only white rich neighborhood succeeded against the demolition of houses. The demolition of tram and trolleybus in contemporary Ukraine also discriminates the most vulnerable groups of population, while bringing profit to shared taxi entrepreneurs. Both in Houston and in Ukrainian cities people sought to preserve what they had against what would come. However, UET-enthusiasts and their supporters in Kostiantynivka, Horlivka, and Vuhlehirsk combated not the new construction but the disrepair and demolition of the existing infrastructure. Under the state socialism, people were expected to near the anticipated future, now they tried to postpone it – hoping that the future itself would possibly change.

Tactical pessimism

In 2009-2011 a few minor positive changes occurred in Ukrainian UET. These were induced by the interests of local politicians who used tram and trolleybus to showcase the improvement; the failure of the new legislation that tried to delegate social responsibilty on

private buses (see chapter 3); and the incremental enthusiasts' undertakings. East Ukrainian cities experienced the cases of re-introduction of suspended tram and trolleybus lines after some time of inaction[201] (Gorlovka, Druzhkovka, Kostiantynivka, Kramatorsk, Stakhanov, Antratsyt) – apparently, a quite unique situation for the post-Soviet territory (I failed to find similar cases in the region). The Kostiantynivka tram had not been working for 14 months (from June 2004 to August 2005), but most of the routes and at least eight tramcars were restored by 2008. The Druzhkivka network stopped for two months in 2004 due to the breakdown of the last tram; by the end of 2013 about a dozen of tramcars routes were serving three routes (in 2014 the network restoration was completed). The years when service suspended in Druzhkivka and Kostiantynivka (2004-2005) and tram systems' in Makyiyvka and Stakhanov closed (2007) were conceived as the worst ones but gone. It was now proved in Ukraine that complete suspensions of tram or trolleybus service can be temporary. There were, however, the opposite cases where the hope remained there for a long time after the complete stop of tram service, but no revival occurred until now. In Stakhanov, where the tram service stopped in 2007, the fans anticipated for quite some time that the tramcars staying in the depot would be repaired. The rails and wires remained on the streets. More than that, the trolleybus service, suspended in 2008, was re-introduced for some period in 2010-2011; but the tram has not returned and the track was dismantled in 2013.

The positive precedents produced a calmative effect, identifiable in the talks of those years: the second suspension of the network was never met with the same degree of outrage as the first one; but the second re-introduction of the service never occurred. Learning from such cases, entusiasts maintained ‚tactical pessimism' to mobilize the stake-holders for further activity in cases of minor improvements. They opposed the positive statistics presented by authorities in regard of new trams and trolleybuses delivered in certain numbers to Eastern Ukrainian cities; kilometres of track repaired. Negative statistics presented by enthusiasts was on decrease of overall amount of vehicles over the last years; the overall percentage of defect tracks in the city. The official ‚calmative' comparisons featured the present day and the 1990s or early 2000s; enthusiasts compared to the late socialist period, showing the decline. Also, the tactical pessimism was implemented through pro-active alarm. In late 2016 the demolition of a tramway track section to Aglofabrika (sinter plant) was announced in Mariupol, justified

[201] The planned closures for re-construction are not counted here.

by deterioration of the track. Local entusiasts did not only fear for the direct effects of line`s demolition, but perceived it as a precedent that would trigger other demolitions of worn-out rails instead of repair. In the Internet, the network map as of 2016 was juxtaposed with the would-be map after all demolitions that the enthusiasts prognozed for 2017. The visualization represented the still undeclared but verisimilar scenario, so after distribution of the leaflets the local tram-trolleybus company was inundated with the phone calls and complaints. The demands included not only the preservation of the line to Aglofabrika but the repair of remaining lines in other to secure them from demolition. Paradoxically, pessimism was an important engine for collective action: in a given context, optimism could mean inaction, vain trust, and waiting for an external intervention.

In their tactical pessimism, the enthusiasts revealed that a crisis is framed by electoral terms and political events. Also it is constructed through comparisons within a selected time-window, so that a choice of a time point to compare with can be politically charged. For example, criticisms would sometimes mention that ‘even during the WWII time the tram here did not stop its operation’. The enthusiasts learned to treat such temporalizations reflectively and to communicate this reflection in their environment.

The enthusiasts as mediators between social groups

The UET-enthusiasts stood out as mediators between audiences that otherwise do not contact with each other. Unlike fashionable ‚hipster urbanists’ from capital cities, tramway fans often were closer in their lifestyle and appearance to Donbas passengers from working class and thus could easier communicate with them. Also, enthusiasts developed an intuition as of which information finds credence in local audience. For instance, images of ultra-modern low-floor Western European trams and trolleybuses could more irritate than inspire people in a depressive Ukrainian region: they simply would not believe that such pictures can come true in their city; these pictures for them were too far away from the old, rusty, and noisy KTM-5 trams that they used and called ‘coffins on the wheels’. With this in mind, enthusiasts` were talking about the solutions in the neighboring cities, which were implemented recently and in similar conditions, so that they looked realistic here. Such solutions did not offer a radical change, but were perceived as realizable precisely because of their small scale. Talking about the small scale, enthusiasts could motivate passengers, managers, and entrepreneurs for direct and immediate action in support of UET. Most of the

cases of enthusiast crisis management demonstrate joint contributions by several stake-holders: employees, tram fans, and low-income users, such as the elderly.

Direct improvements achieved by local contributors might have been of a minor significance at the state level or in a long-term perspective. The UET-enthusiasts in Ukraine have not changed the economic structure within which the crisis of UET emerged; neither had they achieved a legislative or budgetary change in the state. Nevertheless, together with the elderly *lgotniki*, enthusiasts made a key contribution to the social reconstruction of tram and trolleybus technology from a ruin of the past into a discussed option of urban development. UET-enthusiasm affected the social imaginary of tram and trolleybus in post-Soviet space, shaking the ideas of its obsolescence and retrogradeness. The enthusiasts' vision of tramway was often unilinear, with the Western Europe seen as being ahead, and the Eastern Europe as having to follow the same long way. However, it also invoked avoiding the mistakes of Western Europe, where hundreds of UET systems were destroyed in the middle of the 20th century and rebuilding of the tramway became one of the largest expenditure items in the last two decades. Enthusiasts connected a local temporality to the cross-regional one where tram and trolleybus transport was acknowledged as an advantage. In Romanian and Ukrainian contexts, preserving the UET infrastructures allows to economize considerable amount of resources: a tramway`s 'rebirth' from the scratch costs much more than incremental improvements, whereas to retain passengers is easier than to attract new ones.

Enthusiast knowledge and infrastructural citizenship

The political meaning of enthusiasts' knowledge is manifold. We may think about the place of enthusiast epistemology within a totalitarian, or undemocratic, political order. In politically repressive environments UET-enthusiasts face additional difficulties: for instance, there were cases of prohibition on photo and video shooting of transport in Belarus, Turkey, Northern Korea, and self-proclaimed republics in the East of Ukraine. These can only confirm that their knowledge is challenging those decision-makers who would want to keep urban infrastructures non-transparent and obscure for the citizens. Inspired by passion for UET, enthusiasts disclose corruption schemes, political technologies, and engineering failures. They also disclose rhetoric strategies that mass-media and politicians use to manage public anticipation and imagination; to calm down the public discontent and to persuade people to believe in particular future scenarios. Knowing about infrastructure more than the bored authorities and indifferent functionaries did, enthusiasts, passengers, and transport workers

can realize their own significance for the infrastructure`s operation. In doing so, they also can tackle the communist temporal order, where inconveniences of ‘now’ were effectively justified by the anticipated good. Amidst the crisis, abandonment, und uncertainty, people at the outskirts of Europe wanted their cities to function for them now. In their action for the infrastructure, they claimed what Shelton, in his Houston study, called an ‘infrastructural citizenship’. Although people in Houston and Horlivka used different repertoires ‘of rhetorical and political actions’, in both places they transformed ‘built environment’ into arenas of asserting political power (Shelton 2017a, P. 5), and did so ‘not by nationality or legal standing but instead by the quotidian acts’ (ibid). The war conflict in Donbass from early 2014 onwards has broken the fragile assemblage of waiting, hope, pessimism, and direct action that until then resulted into local activism and civic initiatives in Donbass. Still, the enthusiast infrastructure of knowledge about the city keeps emerging and is ready to help in claiming infrastructural citizenships in many places.

5. After the meantime

In May 2016 maxi-taxis were fully abolished In Galați. This change was discussed on Internet-forums, in comments to online publications, and at bus stops. The end of the maxi-taxi was not a spontaneous and unexpected step – instead, it was a part of urban policies in the region. It intended to mark not the beginning but rather the completion of transition in this particular domain of urban life. The measure caused heated discussion, apparently, as it not only modified transport conditions but also signaled a wider change. Maxi-taxis had come to Galați with transition. They were part and parcel of the emergence of a market economy after the fall of the socialist planning system, leading to deregulation and reforms. They also became an icon of city of the 1990s. In both Romania and the Ukraine shared taxis denote the painful transition from state socialism to market economy as they are a response to the crisis of public service provision. But *governments — at least democratic ones — cannot afford to stay in crisis mode forever. A sense of normalcy will have to return sooner or later'* (Boin, Hart 2007 P. 51). Keeping to this logic, the expulsion of ST is seen as signaling the accession to the desired, European order of things, a (successful) termination of the meantime.

While the 'meantime' is a complex and long-lasting phenomenon in itself, we do not know much about what comes after it. Phenomena such as share-taxis, pensioners' participation, and enthusiast activities were all reproducing the waiting rather than resolving it; they only made the meantime look slightly more positive. This chapter deals with recent changes in the patterns of reproduced waiting and temporariness. It will show how tramways and trolleybuses in the European peripheries are re-branded from 'relics of socialism' to a valuable basis for sustainable mobility, connected to the imaginary space of Europe proper. In parallel, shared taxis are now marginalized as legacy of a transition, incompatible with the sustainability paradigm, so that the eradication of share taxis from the urban space indicates the success of transitional processes. After that I will show how public transit infrastructure indicates a re-scale in the city management and lessens the possibilities for small-scale action by communities. Also, new hierarchies emerge between those who proclaimed the end of a crisis and those who still lives in it. These ethnographic vignettes will support the idea that life after the crisis might be equally troublesome as life during it. The continuous trouble of post-socialist transition has changed many cities radically. If the previous chapters focused on the potential for mobilization, participation, and knowledge production under the crisis, now I

want to take a perspective from which the end of crisis is a challenge per se and can entail loss in know-how and self-organization capacities.

5.1 Tramways and trolleybuses as vehicles of Europe

Around the start of the new millennium, the tramway as an idea and artifact found itself at the convergence of two temporalities. The first was linked to Western urbanism where the end of the 20th century marked a major revival of tramway technology among professionals dealing with the city. Rail transport was re-discovered as a tool to reduce car-dependence, avoid traffic jams, and preserve pedestrian zones in city centers. Dozens of cities in Western Europe which had destroyed their tramway networks by the 1970s began again to construct new lines (France alone has opened 21 networks since 1991). Another temporality was that of transition or rather of its pending completion in the former socialist countries. Here, as Europe's borders are negotiated, surviving tramway and trolleybus systems enabled the envisioning of new futures on an already existing material base. During the relocation of Europe 'as a place and as an idea' (Green 2013, P.345), tramcars and trolleybuses in the post-socialist states represented a past reminder and an anticipation of a new future, both rooted in the past and able to mark a departure from that past. If in France or Italy there was no physical coherence between the tram as a remnant and the tram as a manifestation of contemporaneity, in the countries of the post-socialist block the same physical objects became inscribed into new interpretative schemes.

The entire socialist block was notable for the centralized manufacturing of standardized vehicles; thousands of them are still in use as of 2018. Czechoslovak trams were exported as far eastwards as Northern Korea. In the USSR after WWII only three manufactures (in Ust-Katav, Riga, and St.Petersburg) produced trams – probably this circumstance led to an extensive export of Czechoslovak tramways and trolleybuses as well as Hungarian buses to the Soviet republics. In return, Soviet trolleybuses were exported to places across the socialist block (Bulgaria, Poland, Hungary) and even outside of it (e.g. Greece, Finland, Afghanistan, and Argentina). Tatra and KTM-5 trams, Škoda and ZiU trolleybuses, and Ikarus and LAZ buses became visual signs of socialist urbanity. The subway wagons in Budapest reminded until 2017 of the former friendships with the USSR, as well did the ZiU trolleybuses in Bulgaria until very recently. These vehicles were recognizable in urban sceneries – for example, they can be found on numerous postcards from the socialist period.

Decades since the end of socialism, old public transit vehicles point not only to the local history but also to the international connections and political regimes of the past.

Communist Romania was excluded from the circulation of vehicles because of its economic isolation. The rolling stock of Romanian cities was produced domestically, as part of Ceaşescu`s isolationist course. The two main tramway producers of the 1980s – ‚Electrometal Timişoara' (with its main model Timiş2) and ‚Atelierele Centrale' (URAC, main models ITB, V2A and V3A) – hardly ever have exported any trams abroad. Also the trolleybuses DAC and ROCAR were manufactured predominantly for domestic use, although there were several exceptions.[202] Already during the 1980s the Romanian transit authorities faced strong deficiencies of the rolling stock. The opening of Romania after the Revolution of 1989 meant, among other things, a massive import of second-hand tramcars from abroad.

Mercy and disgrace of second hand trams

The idea of rolling stock transfer is not new, and has a long history within and outside Europe. However, recent years have seen an acceleration of transfers caused by intensified cooperation between public transit enthusiasts, new legislative frameworks, and progress in tramway technology. The usage of second-hand vehicles – airplanes, trains, cars, trolleybuses, and trams – in Bulgaria, Romania, Serbia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, and, most recently, Ukraine has become especially widespread within the two last decades. A tramcar is special compared to other modes in that it may remain in service for decades — much longer than buses, for example — while significant technological improvements may occur during its lifetime. As a result, tramways of different generations (whether physical or perceived) co-exist across Europe, or even within single cities (Vozyanov 2017).

Inherited vehicles, among other goods, have become so mundane in Romania[203] that in colloquial speech, English the ‘secondhand' is spelled ‘SH' (and pronounced ‘sah-ush'). The cross-border transfer of such artifacts has been an important help that has allowed several systems to avoid closure. As of 2016, in most Romanian cities the secondhand trams comprise 100 percent of the local fleet. Galați has not seen a single new tramcar coming directly from

[202] At different periods of time since 1980s, trolleybuses ROCAR were used in in Bulgaria (Varna, Burgas, Sofia) and Ukraine (Kiev, Harkov, Dnepropetrovsk).
[203] About second hand cars in Romania see (Coșciug 2017).

the manufacturer since the early 1990s, instead maintaining service with second-hand trams from Dresden, Berlin, Frankfurt-am-Main, Magdeburg, and Rotterdam.

New old trams and old old trams

In street interviews I did and in comments online locals in both countries expressed a wide range of opinions about the new old trams. Many seemed glad that depressive networks received another chance to survive the crisis. The perception of SH-trams in Galati depended on whether trams of this model and outlook had been used here before or not. New, for example, were the Duewag ZGT6 trams, constructed in Germany between 1985 and 1987, and brought to Galați from Rotterdam in 2008 and 2012. Commuters referred to these trams as to 'the new ones' (*cele noi*), although old Dutch signage inside — such as indicating the old fares, payable with chipcard even then — reminded that the tram had been built for another time, place, and people. Many locals of different age liked these trams, and my host commented that they were fitting for the line refurbished 'on European money' (*pe banii europeni*). Door-opening buttons, glowing-green electronic displays, and streamlined designs provided a smooth ride that was nothing like the eternally humming and frequently trembling trams of yesteryear. Other Romanian cities saw the arrival of German and trams – vehicles which were unfamiliar and new to Romanians even though they were much older, from the 1960s and 1970s. Thanks to their distinctive design, smooth ride, and soft sounds, such trams may have been perceived as vintage and retro but certainly not obsolete objects, even though their age was evident.

The arrival of yet another batch of second-hand Tatras in Galați was not very noticeable for passengers – since the newly arriving trams were identical to those previously used, both in their outlook and user interface. From a maintenance perspective, the acquisition of 'old old' trams was well reasoned. It is far easier for mechanics when tram systems are identical, and one can disassemble some written-off cars into spare parts that can be harvested or swapped as needed in order to maintain the fleet. Additionally, mechanics familiar with certain types of older trams may actually deter system updates. Learning to maintain new models can be time-consuming; and managers may thus prefer transfers of older second-hand stock to newer cast-offs. Hence, passengers experienced two kinds of secondhand – 'new old trams' and 'old old trams' – as part of larger temporalities of inequality that generate meaning in post-socialist Romanian life. Discussions on second-hand show the tensions between two ways to compare: one is to compare what was and what has become in their place; another is

to compare their city to elsewhere at a given moment of time. On the one hand, inviting Galați locals to use the 'same trams as residents of the Dutch city of Rotterdam' as published in the press[204] implies that the Romanian city was privileged to follow in the steps of proper Westerners. On the other hand, the beneficiaries believed that Westerners remained far ahead of them: 'these trams ran in Germany in the 1970s and we ride them now', as two female passengers in their 40s complained on a hot August day in 2016.

In 2015, as the line to the Central Market was still in rehab, the disparity between the two generations of tramcars strangely reflected the contrast between urban landscapes along the two then-principal tramlines 6 and 39. The difference between the north-south and west-east axis was noticeable through the tram window and the outlook of the tram interior and exterior, as well as through the kinetic experience of the trip and the surrounding soundscapes. Line 39, served by 'Dutch' trams, passed by a merchandise market, high-rise *micro-uri*, a stadium, several big supermarkets, a McDonalds, a regional hospital, and other major objects. All kinds of passengers used the route during the day. The 'new old' trams on line 39 were much quieter in operation but filled with sounds of human communication – passengers' and phone conversations, teenagers sodcasting (that is, playing music aloud from their smartphones), interrupted by the occasional tickets inspectors (*controlori*), who were hardly ever appearing on line 6. Line 6 runs through a different landscape: steel works gates, a viaduct, a couple of inner city quarters and one more viaduct, heading the line into another industrial area. The old Tatras on line 6 hummed and rattled on rusty rails in deserted industrial zones. An island of activity at the eastern tail of the line existed in the form of a food market, a shopping destination for many pensioners, who at the stop talked about the prices and about when the tram will arrive. Two generations of trams were crossing spaces belonging to two different temporal layers of the city. These two rides on trams 6 and 39 in Galati were rides through co-existing historical layers of modern Europe, where past epochs were still present in the forms of spaces, practices, and vehicles – all next to new ones.

After some minor acquisitions of second-hand trams from EU countries in the 1990s and 2000s, Ukrainian cities saw another wave of UET vehicles arriving in 2013-2017.[205]

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[204] http://adevarul.ro/locale/galati/galatenii-vor-circula-aceleasi-tramvaie-locuitorii-orasului-olandez-rotterdam-1_50ad4c887c42d5a6639286de/index.html#

[205] One of the very few exceptions is the city of Vinnytsia which took part in Aid Program *Zurich trams for Vinnytsia* starting from 2006.

Bodnia even has written about the Renaissance of UET in the Ukraine (Bodnia 2017). The trope of the 'tram Renaissance' was also used in regard of Denmark, where three new tramway systems were under construction as of 2017.[206] However, the temporality of the changes in the Ukrainian UET was not the same. The cities of Kharkiv, Odessa, Dnipro, and Mykolaiv started to receive used trams from Germany, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, and Latvia. Mariupol received 30 Tatra T3 trams from Prague and Košice – cities that are in the process of replacing Tatras with contemporary low-floor tramcars. The Tatra tram model once had been in operation in Mariupol long ago, in the 1980s. At that time, it was decided to transfer all Tatras to Donetsk, Odessa, and Zaporizhzhia in order to harmonize the rolling stock in each city. The 'new trams' as were called in the media were introduced ceremoniously. What the newspaper headings omitted and only briefly mentioned in the report was that the Tatra tramcars brought to Mariupol had been manufactured in the 1980s in Czechoslovakia. The acquisition of second-hand was criticized on various grounds. Some critics invoked the dignity of 'their city of metallurgists, the gates of Donbas'[207] that deserving new trams. Here 'new' meant 'better' and echoed the inherited deficiencies of communist times and consequent transition, in which using outworn, old things ('a sweater from an older brother') had become an inevitable necessity. Others criticized the theatrics around the acquisitions – the ceremonial presentations of the SH-trams that featured the singing of the Ukrainian hymn and the snipping of a ribbon: 'Isn't it shame to make such an event out of this, they could have launched it without fanfare but we are showing off'.[208] 'Well, this second-hand looks better than wonder KTM-5M3 with sides made of plywood, but why do such a show of this second[-hand]'.[209] One more point of criticism was the unequal distribution of the newly arrived trams between lines in the center and in the peripheries – the latter receiving less. It is not that people condemned the very idea of using second-hand trams from Western and Central Europe, outrage was caused by the way the trams were introduced to the city.

Many articulated mixed feelings – both thankfulness and reproach. 'Thanks for what You [the city mayor] and Your young team are doing […] results are visible. But please never

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[206] http://www.nahverkehrhamburg.de/strassenbahn-feiert-renaissance-in-drei-staedten-in-daenemark-9493/
[207] *Дождались! Пражские трамваи вышли на маршруты в Мариуполе (ФОТО+ВИДЕО)* https://www.0629.com.ua/news/1600643. Comment from user маеш13 on 28.4.2017., 12:58:01.
[208] ibid
[209] ibid

buy second hand transport for the city from now on'. A 'thank you but' from the peripheries of Europe is rhetorically addressed to the local authorities, the national government, and the EU. The casting-off of Dutch and German trams in cities to the East signals the country's post-communist predicament of humiliating dependence on help from abroad. What is promoted as an improvement may look too similar to the past and undermine the claims that the crisis has been overcome. In such off-key situation, for some Tatra trams in Mariupol embodied 'nothing', as described by Dunn (2014, P. 292) – objects that 'filled up space but didn't seem to have positive ontological value'. Europeanization raises the expectations, and 'nothingness' can emerge out of disappointment about insufficient progress and unpersuasive difference.

Transfer of vehicles and new hierarchies in Europe

The flow of artifacts eastwards and southwards from the more to the less advanced economies symbolically reinforces the inequality between those who give and those who accept. Romania and the Ukraine are provided with rolling stock not solely because their need it, but also because this stock has been labeled obsolete in Germany, Austria, the Netherlands, Czech Republic, and so on. Regardless of the transport issues to be solved, 'second-hand' becomes a politically charged metaphor that underwrites the discrimination against Romanians in the EU – the entire country receives the epithet of 'second-hand country'.[210] Europe as an icon of good life becomes is both confirmed and undermined, since it is represented by material objects that are second-hand. Depending on the wording and the modes of realization, 'second-hand' expresses both relations of assistance and begging, dignity and humiliation, inclusion and othering through infrastructure.

These 'give and take' hierarchies emerge even between former Soviet cities which were in hierarchical relations with Moscow but not with each other: for instance, in 2016 trolleybuses from Vilnius were handed over to the Ukrainian city of Zhytomyr. Similarly, the Ukrainian city of Kharkiv received trams and trolleybuses from Latvian Riga. The flow of written-off artifacts from wealthier European countries to poorer ones is predicated upon regional disparities in standards of acceptable comfort, quality, and what is perceived as modern or innovative.

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[210] *Romania, tara Second-Hand* http://www.9am.ro/top/Politica/216246/Romania-tara-Second-Hand/1/Este-discriminare.html

Being positioned inside these hierarchical structures of cooperation in Europe causes these countries to be thankful of the gifts and critical of them at the same time.[211] Yet, Romania and Ukraine have different rhetorical repertoires of criticism towards SH. Some Romanians, belonging to the EU, have formal reasons to be critical of receiving what other countries within the EU have discarded. Belonging to the EU but being at the other end of a lifecycle of European artifacts has been a rhetorical trope in Romania: during my fieldwork locals characterized their country as a waste deposit. Ukrainians felt they were only entitled to being thankful for those vehicles that were donated to Ukrainian cities from the EU – including from Romania: as of 2017, there was an ongoing negotiation about the transfer of trolleybuses from Bucharest to the city of Chernivtsi in the Ukraine. One has to keep in mind that manufacturing of trams is now even more oligopolistic than it was in the 1980s when Bulgaria, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Romania produced their own trams. Now most of the UET vehicles in that part of Eastern Europe that is in the EU originate from the Polish factories Solaris and Pesa, manufacturing trolleybuses and trams, respectively.[212]

Europe and the spatiotemporal relocation of UET

In many Romanian and Ukrainian provinces, Europe, European-ness, and the EU are key reference points in the spatiotemporal relocation of UET. Europe as an idea, a place, and a temporal notion is referred to in several ways. Firstly, when discussing tramway and trolleybus transport, stake-holders also discuss what Europeanization of a city should include. Particularly, the authorities, transport experts, and commuters speculate on cultural superstructure and material basis in this process: efforts spent on material transformation vs. 'what is in the heads'. In Galati, one of my interlocutors referred to, several times during the interview 'the Romanian mentality', 'Romanian defect (*meteahna*)', and 'a typically Romanian approach' when describing the difficulties of managing tramcars and the inappropriate treatment vehicles get from passengers, factors which thus impeded the arrival of Europe to the city.

Secondly, the EU acts as a political entity to achieve justice against the local authorities, or as a source of funding the authorities should be applying to. Ploiești, a city of ca. 150 000 people north of Bucharest, presents a vivid case of how Romania's access to

[211] This idea emerged and was developed in a discussion with Carna Brkvioch and Eva-Maria Walther.
[212] Belarus seems to be an exception in Eastern Europe, buying exclusively domestic trolleybuses and trams and exporting them to Russia, Ukraine, Moldova, Serbia, and other countries.

European funding was a possibility mobilized by local activities against the plans of the local authorities. Ploiesti once had a tram network of seven lines, but only two remained in operation by 2003. In 2009, the mayor proposed to dismantle one of them – which was met with protests.[213] Fifteen thousands of signatures were collected against the demolition[214], and finally the protests were successful: the authorities decided to completely rehabilitate the network, 'using European funds'.[215] In many other Romanian cities, local critics accuse the authorities of *not* using the possibilities given by the EU and of disregarding European norms.

Thirdly, European or EU belonging (planned or actual) flags up UET as an important aspect or prospect for the future. Over recent years, several Romanian cities have developed ideas on the re-introduction of UET, even in cities that did not have UET before, e.g. Pitești.[216] This is, for instance, discussed in Reșița, less than a decade after the demolition of the tram infrastructure[217], while in Constanta the feasibility of a new *metro usor* (light rail) is debated.[218] Some of these infrastructural renovation projects are stuck between the stages of planning and full-fledged realization. An example is the modest re-introduction of trolleybuses in Vaslui. This city had a trolleybus service running between 1994 and 2009, and then for years the re-launch of an extended and renovated line was discussed in the media, planned for 2013-2014. In 2015 three second-hand trolleybuses arrived from Austria. In 2016 the service was finally re-introduced, but it remained sporadic: transport forums' users reported that only one of three trolleybuses was running and only for a limited part of the day.[219] During my visit to Vaslui, all trolleybuses stood idle near the depot – ironically near a large billboard telling the details of the rehab project: what had been re-installed, when the project took place, and how much it had cost. Even though these trolleybuses were 'almost

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[213] *Ploieşti: Desfiinţarea tramvaiului 101 provoacă scandal* http://adevarul.ro/news/societate/ploiesti-desfiintarea-tramvaiului-101-provoaca-scandal-1_50accd5c7c42d5a6638a21ff/index.html

[214] Thread *Se desfiinteaza linia de tramvai nr. 101?* http://www.transira.ro/bb3/viewtopic.php?f=34&t=3439&start=60 comment by bogdan2009, on Tue 23 Jun 2009 20:02

[215] *Reabilitare de 25 de milioane de euro pentru tramvaiul 101 din Ploieşti* http://adevarul.ro/locale/ploiesti/reabilitare-25-milioane-euro-tramvaiul-101-ploiesti-1_50ace91f7c42d5a6638bb1f2/index.html

[216] *Tramvaie electrice în Piteşti?* https://epitesti.ro/stiri/administrativ/tramvaie-electrice-pentru-transportul-local-pitestean

[217] *Tramvai la Reşiţa, în doi ani şi jumătate! Acum, cu autobuzele, dar nu cu rable! [VIDEO]* http://expressdebanat.ro/tramvai-la-resita-in-doi-ani-si-jumatate-acum-cu-autobuzele-dar-nu-cu-rable-video/

[218] *Are sau nu Constanta nevoie de metrou?* https://www.uct-media.com/2015/04/are-sau-nu-constanta-nevoie-de-metrou.html

[219] *Cum a fost „modernizat" transportul public din Vaslui cu 5,5 milioane de euro. Afacerea troleibuzelor care s-au stricat după doar 2 luni* http://adevarul.ro/locale/vaslui/cum-fost-modernizat-transportul-public-vaslui-55-milioane-euro-afacerea-troleibuzelor-s-au-stricat-doar-2-luni-1_581737cd5ab6550cb813e12d/index.html Thread *Troleibuze TRANSURB Vaslui* http://tramclub.org/viewtopic.php?t=126&postdays=0&postorder=asc&start=125&sid=4ac514914a6fac6be58ff55c1eaf542d

not working', like UET in Donbas at the end of the 2000s, they did so within another temporal framework of Europeanization: shortly after the failed construction and official re-launch, other Romanian cities – within short reach from Vaslui – proceeded with considerable successes. The presence of new wiring around the city, of renovated and imported trolleybuses near the railway station, and of an EU billboard near the depot placed that reality of 'almost not working trolleybuses' squarely within Europe, far away from the abandoned, decaying, agonizing trams in Kostiantynivka and Horlivka. However, elsewhere in Romania, for example in the city of Suceava, trolleybuses had been closed down just before EU accession as they were seen as a remnant and was recalled in the 2010s as a big project (*o mare realizare*) of comrade Ceasescu.[220] This shows that the dividing line between sacrifice of transition and sign of modernization is very thin. UET technology has been absorbed into a new ideological machine – having been previously an attribute of the socialist world, it is now becoming a marker of those trying to take distance from socialist past. As such, the unrealized projects of socialist times may be recycled in a new context of Europeanization: trolleybuses in Buzau, for example, which apparently were planned in the 1980s[221], were discussed again in the late 2000s just to fade into obscurity[222], after which they popped up again in 2016 as an alternative to maxi-taxis.[223] Similarly, the idea of the introduction of UET in Pitesti, as forum users discuss[224], first emerged in 1994 and then again in 2010. Trolleybuses are flashbacks of socialism, then becoming an affordable solution to the 1990s' transition crisis, and finally are coined features of an EU city wanting to get rid of 'non-european' shared-taxis. What is built with rails and wires nowadays stands not for communist modernity, but for European sustainability. However, instead of being a clear and simple opposition, urban transit expresses both ideas, in which socialist and European projects seemingly overlap: such as the egalitarianism and the subsidizing of infrastructures. Equally thin and uneven is the line of division between Europeanization and bringing about the end of Communism, when it comes to infrastructures. In the Ukraine, as artworks from Soviet times were removed from publicly visible surfaces, commentators sardonically proposed to also dismantle the factories and remove the tram lines built under the Soviets which 'would be a real end to Communism'.

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[220] *Suceava a avut cândva şi troleibuze* https://youtu.be/BVLITusezjM The quoted phrase is said at time mark 2:30-2:40.
[221] Thread *Discutii/idei privind introducerea troleibuzului in Buzau* http://tramclub.org/viewtopic.php?t=10865 User Pepo on 27 Oct 2008 16:33:12.
[222] *Troleibuz în Buzău, o utopie?* http://www.sansabuzoiana.ro/la_zi.html?aid=33328.
[223] *Primăria nu mai vrea maxi-taxi în municipiu şi ia în calcul înfiinţarea unei linii de troleibuz* http://reporterbuzoian.ro/primaria-nu-mai-vrea-maxi-taxi-in-municipiu-si-ia-in-calcul-infiintarea-unui-linii-de-trolei/.
[224] *Troleibuze la Pitesti?* http://tramclub.org/viewtopic.php?t=10727.

These very socialist infrastructures are now objects of investment for local budgets and international aid. They demonstrate the contradictory temporalizations which occur in Europeanizing cities: some technologies can be communicating both the past and the future.

The end of transition is in some cases signaled by changed appearance: the disjunction between old and new trams and trolleybuses the former being identifiable throughout the decades by the source of energy they used, specifics of their material assets, and the socialist institutional structures. The new generation articulated and low-floor trams successfully catch up with these times, while trolleybuses have changed less visually; more importantly, unlike trams, they are quite uncommon in West European cities so that from the perspective of the East there are few normative examples. Although the dismantlement of trolleybus networks in the Old Europe ex post facto was acknowledged as a mistake and plans are discussed[225], in Eastern Europe trolleybuses are sometimes considered to be too much reminiscent of socialist times. There is also a growing 'rivalry' between trolleybuses and electric buses, which present a newer and up-to-date technology. Electric buses are now replacing trolleybuses as a promise for the future. This has been the case in Kostiantynivka where the city authorities have responded to the closure of tramlines by plans to introduce electric buses as a mode of transportation (after the closure of the trams passengers still have to use marshrutkas). In many other cases, electric buses have appeared in small numbers, while most of the former trolleybus capacity is now covered by diesel buses. While electric buses do not need an extensive static infrastructure visible in the urban landscape, they are also not that different from the cheaper, if less environmentally friendly, diesel buses. Finally, the promoters of electric buses claim that trolleybus wires are ugly and unaesthetic, and so they are re-imagining a visual element which under socialism used to be a tool of the city's identity calibration.

5.2 Expelling the share taxi – driving out of the meantime?

The elimination or eradication of ST is part of many projects of beautification, of going green and of sustainabilization[226] (whether understood critically or not) at the periphery of Europe. Several countries where shared taxi boomed in the 1990s faced the reverse trend

[225] *Back to the future? Trolleybuses could make a return to London's streets* https://www.standard.co.uk/news/transport/back-to-the-future-trolleybuses-could-make-a-return-to-londons-streets-8423181.html.
[226] Sustainabilization is a concept currently used in academic publications to criticize developments that happen under the cover of ‚sustainability' but tend to reproduce the historically unfair distribution of resources (e.g. Luke 2015).

after the start of the new millennium. Even more numerous are the places where the elimination of ST was discussed but not implemented. These geographies of ST contestation are intertwined with geographies of Europeanization. While 'civilization' was a motto under which the maxi taxi acquired popularity in the early 1990s, after the 1990s the civilizing discourse completely tilted to criticize this mode of mobility. Whatever the merits of shared taxis in Romania and their Ukraine in alleviating the collapse of public buses after socialism, they are, at the same time, an easy target for criticism related to environmental (un)sustainability, the refusal to be part of a social assistance system (supporting the elderly), and tax evasion. ST are also associated with physical violence, strikes, and neglecting the legislation. Share taxis are called 'barbarian' or are pathologized as 'cancer' – 'the cancer called maxi-taxi'.[227] Shared taxis which proliferated because of the crisis became its symbol beyond direct causal relation; it was the face of crisis; its synecdoche. Given this symbolic potential, the erasure of ST, unlike its emergence, is often a top-down decision and is often performed most rigorously in central locations: in Russia the first cities to combat marshrutkas were Moscow, St. Petersburg, and Kazan, the capital of the Tatarstan Republic, often referred to as the third capital of the Russian Federation (as of early 2018, the largest Russian city to have no marshrutkas). In Donetsk marshrutkas were banned from the central Artioma street as early as 2008.[228] In Romania Bucharest was one of the first cities to eliminate share taxis: the capital city had dozens of maxi-taxi lines as of 2009[229], which had practically disappeared from the city by 2015; since then, mini-buses have only been used by shopping malls and hypermarkets like Carrefour to carry their customers for free; they also remained on interlocal connections and as a regional transport in the larger metropolitan areas.

In Galați, the local authorities launched a campaign against maxi-taxis under the leitmotifs of reducing pollution and 'entering civilized Europe'. Actually, here the number of maxi-taxi started falling early on, immediately after the early measures to regulate maxi-taxi businesses took effect in 1998. In a conversation, specialists from the local department of public transport estimated that the number of MT in the city was circa 600 vehicles in 2000, and then dropped to 350 in 2006, and 160 in 2015. The complete abolition of maxi-taxi

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[227] Thread *Cancerul numit "Maxi -Taxi"* http://www.transira.ro/bb3/viewtopic.php?t=2414.
[228] *С центральных улиц Донецка уберут маршрутки*
Entry on 04.07.2008, 05:51. http://news.liga.net/news/society/410964-s-tsentralnykh-ulits-donetska-uberut-marshrutkas.htm.
[229] *Trasee Maxi-Taxi in Bucuresti* http://www.infoghidromania.com/trasee-maxi-taxi-bucuresti.html.

activity in the city was discussed after Romania had joined the EU. As the personal experience of West European urban landscapes among Romanians grew, the continued use of maxi-taxi in Romania was narrated in a self-othering manner. '*I've been to Germania [Austria, Netherlands, UK etc.], there were no maxi-taxis*', supporters of the ban on ST told me, indicating their clear geopolitical orientation in wanting to abolish such practices: '*It's only here in Romania* (or even '*in Galați*') *that you have so many of them*'. It is also visible in the word *Romanistan* which was sometimes used by the critics of maxi taxis stressing the MT's extraneity to Europe by adding this typical Oriental suffix.

The disappearance of maxi-taxi in Galați was not immediate. First time that the reform was announced, the drivers went on strike causing the collapse of public transport in the city. Many passengers were afraid that important maxi-taxi connections would not be replaced by municipal lines. The city council had to give in to these anxieties. Compromise solutions were discussed: for instance, it was suggested that maxi-taxi could serve the peripheries, with a total number of 30 vehicles on five routes serving secondary streets, which would be a dramatic cut in comparison to the 170 vehicles in operation. The authorities, however, hoped to ban maxi taxis completely, as it was politically difficult to manage the shared taxis within a multimodal system of public transport. Many believed that shared taxis permanently tended to take larger share of passengers than had been envisioned and to ‚infect' other transit modes with their frivolity in the management. Then the protection of other modes of transport took the form of a ban on shared taxis seen as vehicles of ‚unfair competition'.

In May 2015 the licensing for maxi-taxis in Galați was extended for the very last time. Many expected it another extension, but in March 2016 new bus, trolleybus, and tram schedules appeared at the stops. The newspaper *Viața Liberă* published information on the new route network and the additional vehicles on employed municipal lines.[230] The number of buses grew by one third (reaching 96 units); 35 trams now served 10 lines (against respectively 20 and 6 before the reform) including the restored line to the Piața Centrală (Central Market). On the 9th of May 2016 maxi-taxis disappeared from Galați. The epoch of MT was over, and no body I spoked to expected a comeback. Former maxi-taxi drivers had to look for alternative employment, apropos, not always being absorbed into *Transurb,* the municipal transit authority: one of the company's officials explained the reluctance to employ

[230] Pe ce trasee circulăm din 9 mai, fără maxi-taxi *Viața Liberă* 7.04.2016.

them by imitating their blunt style of speech and commenting on their improper manners. The disappearance of minivans, however, was not total: entrepreneurs re-oriented their businesses to corporative service and freight traffic, thus preserving the view of these familiar mini-vans in the city. Also they remained in local memory, actually entering history yet. Although the maxi-taxis were to become past, the other signs of a long-awaited European future – like bus-only lanes, time-based fares with tickets allowing free change of line, and cyclical schedules – did not appear. People had to write down the schedules, to pay anew for every line change, and occasionally wait in traffic jams – although the jams, they say, were reduced.

Opinions on the disappearance of maxi-taxis from Galati were polarized. Some people were supporting the ban, reporting that traffic congestion became rarer and the buses more regular and frequent. They also mentioned tax evasion, and the violating of security requirements which was widespread among share taxis as important arguments. Sceptics – even if presenting a minority – were very vocal in accusing the city administration of excess profits and the municipal transit company of monopolism unwilling to employ former maxi-taxi drivers. The most sardonic of critics associated the lack of maxi-taxi with the times of Ceaușescu, asking: Where is the diversity? Where is the alternative? My interlocutors also recalled the random ticket control, which now became more frequent: 'They control you – just like *then*'. Such statements sounded rather provocative: reform under the motto of Europeanization invoked the worst comparison possible in Romanian public opinion.

Also in the Ukraine marshrutkas became subject to reforms, sidelined in several cities. In 2012, in Vinnytsia, under the initiative of then-mayor Volodymyr Groysman, the route network was changed so that marshrutkas would only assist passengers to get to the trolleybus or tramway line. First, the novelty met with outrage amongst passengers who argued that the decisions on ST removal were imposed by people with little to no passenger experience in the cities they governed. But the transport system underwent several refinements and the central city of the neighboring oblast Zhytomyr was soon about to pick up the idea too. In Mariupol several marshrutka lines (128, 160, and 100 amongst others) were closed, while the remaining ones adopted a more responsible approach: particularly, by giving more precise information on their schedule on the internet and hanging out the late evening schedule inside the bus. At the end of 2013, in Mariupol, I did not witness any conflicts anymore between conductors and

the Children of War, even when the latter did not pay for the ticket. 'This is not that line 25 anymore', told me a lady who had been working as a marshrutka conductor for 15 years.[231] When the differences in trip fares in ST and UET had risen again because of growing oil prices, many passengers turned again to the trolleybus – moreover, since some new vehicles had finally arrived in the city. The number of marshrutkas sank from 461 in 2006 to 235 in 2017.[232] The reactions on the decrease of marshrutka were mixed on local websites, like in Galati: while some wanted the closed lines back, others supported their full replacement with trams, trolleybuses, and buses.[233]

Here and there, shared taxis appeared in a less positive light. In January 2017 local officials in Konotop, Sumy oblast, refused local ST companies the right to raise the ticket price from 3 to 6 UAH, as 3 UAH was close to the average in other cities of the oblast. When the marshrutkas operators reacted with a strike, the city population went on protests in support of the officials' decision and responded to the strike by car-sharing; tramway operation was extended with two hours (until 11 PM); and the city council improved the bus scheme of routes.[234] In Mariupol, in 2016, when the concessions for the Children of War were cancelled, ex-beneficiaries articulated resentment towards the marshrutkas: since the introduction of concessionary fares in 2005, they used to voluntarily pay half the ticket price but now the conductors demanded the full fare without second thoughts.[235] That is, the marshrutkas, which grew on the basis of trust, informality, and non-interference and absence of the state, now discredited themselves against municipal actors representing the state.

Recently in the shared taxis of Rivne oblast, Ukraine, 'Russian chanson' (*русский шансон*) songs have been prohibited. Songs of this music genre popular among marshrutka drivers contain numerous allusions to a prison subculture, representing the importance of prisons for Russian culture in general. The ban obviously echoed the military conflict between the two countries. The Ukraine's fuel dependence on Russian oil and gas adds another

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[231] The referred conversation took place in Mariupol, January 2012. Informant was ca 45 years old and talked to me at her workplace.
[232] *В Мариуполе поднимут стоимость за проезд на всем транспорте* https://mariupol.tv/news/transport/mariupol/15986/v_mariupole_podnimut_stoimost_za_proezd_na_vsem_transporte.html.
[233] *В Мариуполе маршрутки выходят из строя* https://www.0629.com.ua/news/285516.
[234] *Трамвай | LIVE,* entry on 25.1.2017, https://vk.com/wall-31522604_109736;
Чи є життя без маршруток: Як у Конотопі намагаються "поламати" перевізників http://romny.misto.online/news/6705162-chi-ye-zhittya-bez-marshrutok-yak-u-konotopi-namagayutsya-qu
Автобусы вместо маршруток: в украинском городе проводят "транспортную революцию" http://mayak.org.ua/news/buses-instead-of-minibuses-in-the-ukrainian-city-held-a-transport-revolution/.
[235] *Смогут ли пенсионеры ездить в маршруткам бесплатно?* http://sigmatv.com.ua/news/view/10763.

dimension to the issue of modal choice: using electricity, allegedly, decreases the Ukraine's dependency on Russian petrol. These developments remind us that maxi-taxis can be 'ethicized', 'othered', and/or be instrumental in overcoming the past – which in the region proves to be an essential premise for moving into a new future.

It is noteworthy that the similar discourses of curtailment and streamlining of marshrutkas are heard from the fiercely anti-European Donetsk, as well as from Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, and Khujand, Tajikistan. Sgibnev (2014) shows how the trolleybuses literally have turned into displays for patriotic slogans in Dushanbe, Tajikistan, while marshrutkas have been eliminated from central streets. Shared taxis can thus play a role in symbolic power struggles within a wide range of existing oligarchic orders, being a manifestation of sovereignty and prosperity, or infrastructural nationalisms (Vozyanov 2018). The state performs exiting transition not only through innovation and the adoption of new practices but also through the removal of differences – of kiosks at the bus stations, petty trade, and shared taxis. Europe's peripheries, yet not strong enough for intensive infrastructural construction, construct 'Europe' through eradication and absence of alternatives. Thus absence, which Dunn and Frederiksen (2014) view as the aftermath of transformative efforts, might be not just a side-effect but a central task integral to getting out of transition. Though working on different examples, Greece and Thailand, Herzfeld (2006) shows a similar logic of what he calls 'spatial cleansing': removal from the city of the elements such as markets, parks, and small houses that can put into doubt the Western character of the place and present it as oriental. In the case if shared taxis of Romania and the Ukraine the vehicles, not only buildings visible on the city streets, play a role of a dirty Other, 'a matter out of place'(Douglas 1966).

5.3 Infrastructure and sovereignty

Major events like EU accession, association with the EU, or similar high level political agreements on integration powerfully re-shape not only temporalities but also scales on which urban infrastructures operate and are imagined. During the 25 years of infrastructural trouble at the peripheries of Europe, small-scale grassroots initiatives played an outstanding role. Experiments and initiatives have shown that local passengers might be still appreciating even minor improvements in public transit infrastructure. Recently, however, the new possibilities for obtaining financial assistance from the EU – like funding programs and loans – by far

exceed the capabilities of enthusiastic formats. The experience of bottom-up informal and incremental maintenance has generally remained unrecognized and underestimated in the region. Large scale interventions 'from above' and 'at the larger scale' are still valued more.

Infrastructural nationalism vs. infrastructural enthusiasm

As a result of the Maidan revolution and the unrests in the Donbas enthusiasts are faced with new and incommensurable obstacles. Military conflict has, for example, deeply disrupted social networks around UET in the region. Networks of enthusiasts supporting UET in the Eastern Ukraine not only hibernate due to the uncertainties of fundraising and crowdsourcing in a zone of military conflict; they are also effectively split according to political views. Enthusiasts are not only changing their views on pre-war phenomena; they also occupy different positions regarding de-regulation in the region. Earlier they recognized the non-intervention of the state into the grassroots action as loyalty, now they regard it as negligence. Within different interpretative frames, Donbas can be perceived as both the least supported and the most supported region. It is the only region where tramways re-started functioning after a break, but it is also the only region where certain tramway networks were closed (in Makeyevka and Stakhanov). Remarkably, between 2000 and 2013 Donetsk received more new tramway cars (35) than any other Ukrainian city within this period[236], also obtaining about 100 new trolleybuses before UEFA Euro 2012. However, there are versions on what was the share of the city and of Kyiv in that acquisition. As usually, de-contextualized figures provoke contradictory theories. Now enthusiasts suggest that the state should change its position in regard of UET from non-intervention to decisive management. In the Donbas conflict the situation is even more complicated since the supporters of DNR (the unrecognized Republic of the People of Donetsk) and the supporters of the Ukraine among enthusiasts may have different ideas on whom these UET systems belong to. Correspondingly, they refuse to invest efforts into something controlled by a power structure they do not acknowledge. Comments and photos on Transphoto have increasingly become subject to the website's moderation, as political debates between users have flared up. Discussions on politics and languages were explicitly forbidden by the website's terms and conditions. Subversively, some users uploaded photos with national symbols of the territories

[236] *Головне управління статистики у Донецькій області*. *Прес-бюлетень* № 04, 2009 http://www.donetskstat.gov.ua/pres/presreliz.php?dn=0409&number=0.

(e.g. flags) in the frame. Additional controversy was caused by the fact that the interface of the site indicates the name of the city and the flag of the state to which the city belongs. Some users from zones affected by conflict just stopped indicating where they come from. Others accused the website's administration of inconsistency, since Crimean cities were indicated as part of Russia, while territories under control of the self-proclaimed DNR and LNR (the unrecognized Republic of the People of Luhansk) were shown as Ukrainian.

While some members of the transport fan community have severed ties with each other due to political conflict, new social connections emerge. Some active participants of the movement for UET in Donbas now continue their activities in other regions of the Ukraine. Partly they were relocated to the city of Bila Tserkva, in Kyiv Oblast, where they have adapted their practices to a new context – integration with Europe. Particularly, they look for rolling stock outside of the Ukraine, like German and Romanian enthusiasts did for Romanian cities. The share of photos posted by Transphoto users from outside the post-Soviet region has grown, apparently due to language regulations: it was permitted to sign and comment photos in any language of the location where the photo was taken. The initial 'Russian and English only' rule was 'liberalized', apparently to minimize conflicts between users signing and commenting photos from the Ukraine in Russian and in Ukrainian.[237] The Ukrainian language became more present in conversations under photos from Ukrainian cities. Soon after the new language regulations took force, the website's content diversified geographically and linguistically; administrators started providing also English versions of local news. As of 2017, users from politically opposed regions communicate with each other on the website, demonstrating both mutual interest and linguistic politeness: there are comments written in Ukrainian by users from Russian cities; comments in Russian written by Ukrainian users (otherwise commenting in Ukrainian) to answer questions by Russian users; and comments written in both languages by users from both sides. In such micro-interactions, the shared interest in UET, which created the virtual community in the first place, is a strong unifier, more than politics can separate.

The re-scaling of action

When, after years of weakened state presence, political *decisions* now start to be made and micro-scale grassroots action cedes to institutionalized investment, the voices of the

[237] Paragraph 4.13 http://transphoto.ru/rules/

enthusiasts are rarely listened to. Promoting UET, decision-makers do not say a lot about the environmental benefits from its use; rather, they see UET as a proof of the state's ability to control its cities – inter alia, via massive reforms. Many developments that are part of this re-scaling trend can be identified as *infrastructural nationalism* – as a complex of managerial and discursive tactics that engage the nation's and state's sovereignty, in the narratives and logics of infrastructural management. The notion of *infrastructural nationalism* is increasingly used by journalists to describe projects aiming at displaying national power and pride.[238] Infrastructural nationalism is not only expressed through the painting of vehicles in yellow and blue (the colors of Ukrainian flag), singing the hymn at official events, banning Russian songs in marshrutkas, attaching propagandistic messages on vehicles (see in Sgibnev 2014), or appeals to 'buy domestic'.[239] It can also involve the employment of discourses, texts, and policies bringing the dynamics of infrastructural development to the forefront of public attention in order to signal the state`s power and ability to govern. In the case of shared taxis, the state performs its state-ness by imposing a ban on private bus entrepreneurship or, alternatively, through the construction of tram lines, so that in some cases UET can even serve to establish a dictatorship.[240]

Peripheries or contested territories can become showcases or spheres of influence for a competing center. The numerous post-Soviet frozen conflicts present good examples of how states use public transport in their geopolitics of infrastructural influence. One example is the trolleybus in Sukhumi, the main city of the self-proclaimed and unrecognized Republic of Abkhazia, the only trolleybus system on the territory of Georgia that survived the 1990s and 2000s. Sukhumi, however, is de facto not controlled by the Georgian state and its trolleybus systems largely relied on SH-vehicles coming from Russia which communicates sovereignty and independence from Georgia on the streets of Abkhazian capital city. In a slightly different manner, trolleybuses in Tiraspol, the largest city of the unrecognized Republic of Transnistria, drive around with the slogan 'into a common future with Russia'[241] – printed on their sides. The situation is even more ambiguous given that the trolleybuses and buses carrying these

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[238] See the usage of the term for example here http://theweek.com/articles/651456/donald-trumps-autocratic-infrastructure-nationalism.
[239] Yarotsky shows how Ukrainian legislation and tender procedures act in favor of foreign tram manufacturers in spite of public agitation around „buying Ukrainian" http://cfts.org.ua/blogs/okhmurili_ili_vse_zhe_budet_v_kieve_ukrainskiy_tramvay__240
[240] Verbytskyi, Ivan *Самарканд: трамвай як спосіб встановлення диктатури [Tramway as a way of establishing the dictatorship]* https://mistosite.org.ua/uk/articles/samarkand-tramvaj-yak-spos%D1%96b-vstanovlennya-dyktatury
[241] *"В будущее вместе с Россией"* http://gordonua.com/specprojects/pridnestorvje.html, http://transphoto.ru/photo/1071867/

pro-Russian slogans were manufactured and presented to Transnistria by the fully recognized state of Belarus, not by Russia.[242] The Donetsk People's Republic located at fringes of Ukrainian territory receives humanitarian aid from Russia including spare parts for trams and trolleybuses.[243] The dependency on such assistance is often acknowledged as evidence of lacking sovereignty. At the same time, transport companies in cities controlled by the Ukrainian Army also receive aid from other countries – in particular, second-hand vehicles. Numerous projects and programs to invest in sustainable infrastructures in the Ukraine are managed by international and EU states' institutions, e.g. *Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit* (German Corporation for International Cooperation) whose main commissioner is German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ, or GIZ in German).[244] International participation in the flow of vehicles going to the Eastern Ukraine marks a departure from the more gradual, informal, and local enthusiast activities on which UET was so much dependent before. Urban infrastructures that used to support the ideology of the planned socialist command economy, state property, centralized distribution, and strong social provision, in post-socialism became instrumental in national branding. They do so through the upscaling of managerial decisions from the local to the national level, through the prioritization of places where to invest, through forms of public presentation of improvement by authorities.

Duality of destructions and constructions in Eastern Ukraine

Apart from being discursively shaped, the resurrection, or 'comeback' of the state and its stateness is performed through massive infrastructural interventions. Such changes include demolitions and removals as well as renovations and new constructions. More than that, in a situation of military conflict destruction and construction find themselves in a kind of political and dialectical interconnection.

Let me start with saying that military conflict in the South-East of the Ukraine brought about direct destructions of another scale than the fretting and rust had done before. In July 2014 in Horlivka, a bridge was blown-up, severing a trolleybus line to the Nikitovka

[242] *Минск подарил Тирасполю троллейбусы и автобусы* https://ava.md/2012/08/13/minsk-podaril-tiraspolyu-trolleybusy/, *Минск подарил Тирасполю по пять троллейбусов и автобусов* entry on 31.10.2012 https://point.md/ru/novosti/obschestvo/minsk-podaril-tiraspolyu-po-pyatj-trollejbusov-i-avtobusov.
[243] *Российский завод «Электромаш» передал 40 тонн запчастей для донецких троллейбусов и трамваев,* entry on 26.11.2015. https://dan-news.info/russia/rossijskij-zavod-elektromash-peredal-40-tonn-zapchastej-dlya-doneckix-trollejbusov-i-tramvaev.html.
[244] *Ukraine* https://www.giz.de/en/worldwide/302.html.

neighborhood from the rest of the network. In Vuhlehirsk the road under the trolleybus wires was densely mined, and armed skirmishes took place close to or right at the trolleybus depot, causing the service to stop. In Kramatorsk trolleybuses were used as barricades – since they don't have diesel engines and therefore do not explode. In Lugansk the tram stopped operating for good after rail were damaged by military action.[245] These are only a few examples of physical disruptions due to military conflict in Donbas. In some tramway and trolleybus facilities, accumulated competencies often allowed the consequences of military conflict to be minimized or quickly overcome.[246] For instance, in Horlivka and Alchevsk, controlled by the 'DNR' and 'LNR', respectively, enthusiasts have kept on maintaining the rolling stock, conducting repairs on their own initiative.[247] On the side controlled by Kyiv, on 30th September 2016, Avdiivka became the third city in post-Soviet Ukraine where tram service was reintroduced after months of interruption. The overhead wiring and tramcars were reconstructed after the bombardments through the efforts of the depot collective. The tramway service has now been re-introduced along part of the former line after 18 months of standstill. However, a few weeks later new shellings stopped the tram service again. Here and there the informal enthusiasts' practices have outlived the state and parastate structures, but they cannot resist the intensity of war destruction.

At the same time, not only mass disruption but also massive construction takes place along the frontline. This happens again on a different scale than grassroots initiatives could have ever achieved. Avdiivka is rather an exception in that the city authorities did not assist the enthusiasts and did not even show up at the opening ceremony of the restored tram line. In other cities, construction is usually done with the support from governing bodies. On both sides of the frontline in Donbas (in the cities controlled by the Ukrainian Army and by the separatists), investments into UET are at their highest since Soviet time. In Kramatorsk, the de facto center of the Donetsk oblast a trolleybus line to the Old City was built over several months in 2015. The line construction had been announced in 2003, when the tramline at the same street was dismantled, and awaited ever since. In Mariupol investments were even more significant after the city came under the control of separatists during three months and was then retaken by the Ukrainian Army in June 2014. By the beginning of 2017 all Skoda

[245] There was an attempt to re-introduce tram service in Luhansk in June 2015.
[246] See more in my report http://t2m.org/newsletter/view-from-the-street/the-operation-of-donbas-tramway-and-trolleybus-networks-under-warfare/.
[247] http://transphoto.ru/photo/967595/?vid=18454#2089690

trolleybuses (that had been introduced to the city in the 1970s and 1980s) were replaced by newer rolling stock. The city received ca 26 second-hand trams from Prague, as well as new and second-hand trolleybuses – about two dozen altogether; even the large low-floor buses are back on several routes, pushing out the marshrutkas. The Mariupol transit authority has now set up a re-branding scheme painting for all its vehicles and introducing a handy web-site[248] with maps, timetables for every single stop, and an online GPS tracking system although in terms of service frequency only one trolleybus (line 15), crossing the whole city from the western to the eastern end, has significantly improved its service comparing to 2011.

Although during times of war investments are extraordinarily risky, efforts to improve public transport itself may bolster the feeling that the critical period is over. Stef Jansen gives an example of this in his book on Sarajevo: there people greeted the re-introduction of tram service after the war with huge applause, standing in a long row along the line (Jansen 2015, P.79). In Donetsk controlled by separatists several trolleybus and tram lines were repaired (some of them for several times) shortly after their destruction by the military. In April 2016 a section of the tramline to the railway station in the north of the city was rehabilitated after having been ruined, and re-started its operation. This is quite extraordinary given the fact that the last time a new tram line in Donetsk was opened in the 1970s. Some trolleybus lines were also re-built after they had been damaged by military. Since the beginning of the war in Donbas, the volume of construction work has actually been exceeding that what had been done in peacetime. Such a construction, however, is carried only because of the destruction in the area, and it communicates a political message related to the current war. Infrastructural welfare is a key element in constructing a quantifiable, tangible, and visible success for the newly established regime.

Peripheral infrastructures as messages across the frontlines

The infrastructural improvements are especially important near the borders between two sides of the conflict. The recovery of tramlines in Donetsk and Avdiivka is geographically symbolical and communicates messages across the frontline. The endpoints of the two tramlines are only few kilometers away from each other but belong to different worlds – the post-Maidan Ukraine on the side of Avdiivka and the Donetsk Republic on the other

[248] *Маршрути і розклади руху* https://martrans.gov.ua/

side. In Donetsk, the recovered tram line is situated close to the blown-up Putilovsky bridge and it marks the frontier of inhabited territories close to a terrain severely destroyed by military actions. Similarly, the tram in Avdiivka – the city closest to the frontline – serves the slightly safer town quarters not reaching the heavily shelled outskirts. The re-launch of the Avdiivka tram can be understood as an example of a local initiative driven by functional pragmatics – carrying workers to the factory. Also, it was a return to normalcy: ‚Many people thought: the tramway works – peace will come'.[249] However, the media also showed it as a salient development 'in a city under Ukrainian control at the outskirts of Donetsk captured by separatists'.[250]

It's not only during armed conflicts that the peripheries – intended or not – turn out to be a magnet for national investments. Iași, a Romanian city next to the border with the Republic of Moldova, has acted as a 'gate to Europe' for Moldovans coming to the city as tourists, students, working migrants or simply passengers travelling further westwards. These visitors from Moldova, not having any tramways at all, encountered in Iași one of the best managed tram systems of Romania.

In the interior of the country renewal may be less intense than along the borders. Although in the border city Mariupol all 14Tr Škoda trolleybuses were withdrawn and replaced by newer vehicles, a dozen of other Ukrainian cities continued to use the 14Tr, while the city of Rivne in Western Ukraine used even older 9Tr Škoda trolleybuses as late as 2018. In such 'landlocked' locations lack of interest from the national authorities reinforces the negligence by the local authorities. In Kostiantynivka the operation of the tram was long an important negotiation point between the electorate and the authorities: to attract votes, local politicians supported the operation of tramways in the city. In December 2015, the city council decided to temporarily suspend tramway operation, officially justifying this with the construction works on the railroad viaduct that both remaining lines used. Locals however feared a complete closure of the tram system. On 19th of January 2016 employees of the tram depot organized a protest and took trams in front of the town hall. My interlocutors in the city asked me to help them find support – and I sent out an e-mail requesting a consultation with the *German Corporation for International Cooperation* (GIZ), which remained unanswered

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[249] "Багато людей думали: трамвай піде — настане мир". *Новое Время* 48, 23.12.2016. Available at https://nv.ua/ukr/ukraine/events/garjacha-promzona-jak-zhive-20-tisjachna-avdijivka-odna-z-najgarjachishih-tochok-na-karti-ukrajinskoji-vijni-563756.html.

[250] *В прифронтовой Авдеевке испытывают трамвай на дизель-генераторе (ФОТО, ВИДЕО)*. Entry on 19.05.2016 http://traffic.od.ua/news/eltransua/1182730.

as of January 2018. I also listed the arguments for preserving the as part of online petition.[251] The signatures of the petition expressed a range views familiar for a city in decline: 'Our city is so abandoned that every, if small, change for the better causes surprise, be that a tram, a bit of repaired road, or a clever new doctor in the hospital'; 'In case there will be no tram, we'll lose more. We'll lose trust'; '[I want them tram to remain in order] to have environmentally friendly transport in my city'; 'the tram is needed by old people'. One of the commentators interpreted the removal of the tramway as 'help to DNR', because it would 'raise the number of people supporting DNR'. The closure was postponed and even the viaduct was rehabilitated with the tram rails on it left untouched[252], implying that the tram would return here after reconstruction. After all undertakings – petition, letters to authorities, TV news stories about dramatic situation – on December 26th, 2016, tram operation stopped for good after another, seemingly minor incident: the theft of overhead wiring on the line, something that had happened many times before. The damage was left unrepaired. One reason mentioned by the locals was that since 2015 the mayoral elections were not held in Kostyantynivka due to a decree that cancels elections in settlements close to anti-terrorist operation. Hence the mayor was not interested in further maintening the tram network, because he did run no risk of losing his position due to discontent of local voters. Locals articulated a desperate feeling of powerlessness against decision-makers whom they also saw at work in the cities next to Kostyantynivka. They were so disillusioned that they thought it was unrealistic to 'continue trying to save the tram system in the city through the efforts of enthusiasts.

Infrastructures gain a special significance near borders, but they are also an expression of borders themselves – distinguishing territories on the both sides of the border through their quality of life and availability of everyday facilities. In Mariupol and Kramatorsk on the one hand, and Donetsk on the other, UET infrastructures also challenge the intended shifting of borders between East and West, since on both sides the same technological solutions had been utilized to achieve comparable results – confirming the success of the dominant social order and ideology, as well as undergirding the legitimacy of the regime. Peripheries get thus targeted by the centers' infrastructural work and ordering, turning into showcases. This may imply that new peripheries emerge at a certain distance from the borders. Kostiantynivka,

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[251] *За збереження трамваю в м. Костянтинівка /За сохранение трамвая* https://www.petitions247.net/forum/154344.
[252] http://transphoto.ru/photo/967982/

which has not been acknowledged as a tactically important border point at the scale of the region, lost a technology that for long time symbolized local urbanity.

The challenges of ending a crisis? Normal vs. permanent

Interventions at the peripheries of Europe have interrupted the 'meantime' at least for some infrastructures. Politically they were not allowed to keep functioning, as my German colleaugues say, *auf Sparflamme* (on a low flame) and further reproduce the crisis. The arrival of Europe entailed the remedying or removing some uncertainties, and urban commuting was one of the domains where this could be done. Sometimes investments were done in the framework of regional programs covering several cities. For instance, in Bulgaria, 2013, one of such programs envisioned the purchase of 100 trolleybuses for the cities of Burgas, Varna, Pleven and Stara Zagora.[253] These trolleybus networks effectively exited, at least for some years, the period of decay and uncertainty that most of them had experienced in post-socialist Bulgaria. However, trolleybus systems in cities that failed to be included into this program (e.g. Pernik and Dobrich) went from bad to worse, that is, from decline to closure. For many countries becoming part of Europe carries the hope of an end to transitional uncertainty and the beginning of normalcy. Where previous deregulation led to decay and depression, such normalcy is now sought for in political decisions. But regulation does not always mean construction. Some situations of suspension are resolved by the decision to pull the plug out completely. Not removing the tram and leaving it to function could be perceived as a sign of the state's weakness.

How the uncertainties are removed – via rehab or removal – depends on a local context: political decisiveness can be expressed in opposite interventions and technological solutions. In many cases, both in the Ukraine and in Romania curtailments are intensified together with the intensification of improvements. In Kramatorsk, in 2017, investments into the trolleybus network were accompanied by a critical investigation of the remaining part of the tramway network. The examination stated that the configuration of the tram network, which had been planned in Soviet time, was largely irrelevant to the flows of movement in Kramatorsk today.[254] The tram network deteriorating ever since the end of socialism was predicted to close as early as 2004, has survived the 'hard times' of the 2000s but was closed

[253] *"Шкода електрик" е избрана за доставчик на новите тролейбуси за Бургас, Варна, Плевен и Стара Загора* http://gradat.bg/infrastructure/2013/09/03/2133815_shkoda_elektrik_e_izbrana_za_dostavchik_na_novite/.
[254] *В Краматорске решили ликвидировать трамвай*. Entry on 03.05.2017 http://slavinfo.dn.ua/novosti/675028.

on August 1st in 2017 as a result of the renovation and development program. In the same year, in Mariupol, simultaneously with the arrival of the new and new-old rolling stock, a tram line to Aglofabrika and two trolleybus services were closed. Transport amateurs in the Ukraine criticize the quality of the arriving vehicles and put into doubt the necessity of some of the newly build lines. The arrival of new vehicles also causes the withdrawal of older ones which could otherwise have served longer. As of 2017, the flow of second-hand transfers to the Ukraine seems to slow down again, and some cities e.g. Zaporizhzhia experience new cutbacks in UET service.[255] In Galați a tram line to the shipyard was suspended for an undefined period in April 2017.[256] Lines 22 and 23 in Braila were serviced by medium-capacity buses instead of trams as of 2016; and the re-introduction of tram service was promised for the spring 2018. However, as of 12th May 2018 lines 22 and 23 were still 'bus replacement routes'[257]; whereby maxi-taxis were abolished from the city.[258] Here and there, the developments are ambiguous; many suggest, however, that one should be happy even with some minor and imperfect improvements after decades of inaction.

These changes might be seen as transition not out of crisis, but from one type of crisis (the end of the command or planning economy), to another type of crisis, which Athena Athanasiou has called 'a mode of neoliberal governmentality' (Athanasiou 2014). This shift from crisis to another poses, next to new possibilities, several challenges for urban communities. As the state has started to assert itself with its decisive interventions, will people not become more dependent on authoritative decisions and less ready for resistance? Does it not mean the withdrawal of 'fans' and 'the wider public' from engaging with UET?

Getting out of the crisis presents not only a financial but also a managerial challenge as far as it requires a change in previously established patterns of governmentality. Crisis might be seen as an unavoidable ingredient for the functioning of the everyday which becomes part of the ecosystem, a necessary element to keep things working. On the one hand, in this 'crisis culture' trouble becomes the pre-condition for minor change: crisis management and improvised solutions for structural shortcomings become routine. On the other hand, in Eastern European countries which nowadays have to integrate themselves in different

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[255] http://transphoto.ru/city/147/ Section 'Chronology', entries from 01.09.2017, 02.09.2017, 01.12.2017
[256] http://transportlocalgalati.blogspot.de/2017/03/cele-din-urma-curse-electrice-spre-bazin.html.
[257] Thread *Traseele SC BRAICAR SA*, message 194830 http://tramclub.org/viewtopic.php?t=8634&start=100
[258] *"Braicar"copleşit de eliminarea din piaţă maxi taxi* http://obiectivbr.ro/content/%E2%80%9Cbraicar%E2%80%9D-cople%C5%9Fit-de-eliminarea-din-pia%C5%A3%C4%83-maxi-taxi .

supranational structures crisis becomes delocalized and increasingly blurry. Mismanagement becomes ever less controllable and less transparent due to the growing role of supranational or geopolitical formations. The growing number of aid recipients becomes dependent on a limited number of sources of help that remains as small as it was. The lack of funding is now classified as a European deficiency, not the state´s or municipal one. The responsibilities for the crisis are thus re-distributed and re-scaled; the re-scaling of intervention means re-scaling of a crisis.

Urban communities hope to proceed into 'a better life' infrastructurally, but at the same time they are confronted with new limitations to local direct action. This combination has mixed effects when the popular notion of good life implies a reduction of civic involvement based on notions 'what a normal state should do'; being primarily understood (and longed for) as an efficient command mechanism that distributes standardized versions of welfare. Infrastructural trouble, paradoxically, was epistemically productive, but it will be hard to preserve the hard times' creative potential after the crisis has ceased. The infrastructural limbo of Romanian and Ukrainian trams and trolleybuses mediates this prolonged tension between 'yearning for a normal life' and 'permanent temporary' at the periphery of Europe.

Ideas about Europe representing normal and good life and a sustainable environment may conflict. Despite the latest European policy documents on future mobility providing 'incentives for clean and energy efficient vehicles'[259], Eastern Europe experiences an explosive growth in automobility, whereby automobiles are seen as vehicles of freedom. In Romania, the abolition of a *taxa de mediu* only invokes the arrival of more cars to Romania, so that people may switch from maxi taxi to car and not to trolleybus. Acquiring a second-hand car from Germany thus communicates another kind of European-ness than the Mobility Guidelines of the European Commission proclaim. In Eastern Europe, the rapid growth in car ownership is a crucial circumstance to have in mind when analyzing developments in the public transport sphere. It crucial character, however, is often overlooked, even by experts. Reports write that 'a particularly low motorization rate is recorded in Romania (261 cars), despite a growth in the number of registered cars of almost 19% over the last five years'.[260]

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[259] *European Comission. Guidelines on financial incentives for clean and energy efficient vehicles* 28.2.2013 https://ec.europa.eu/transport/sites/transport/files/themes/urban/vehicles/directive/doc/swd%282013%2927-financial-incentives.pdf

[260] *Passenger cars in the EU* http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Passenger_cars_in_the_EU

The document underlines so that the number of cars in Romania is small in comparison to Western Europe instead of stressing that it is rapidly growing.

Car in the Europeanized post-socialist city becomes an ambiguous sign: it reflects the vision of Europe that many people in Europe want to separate themselves from; symbolizing the end of transitional crisis for Eastern Europe, in Western Europe it is seen as carrying the messages of climate change and crisis of public sphere. Haussermann (2005) mentions the organization of transport as a public affair, along with a water and electricity provision, among features of 'municipal socialism' constituting the 'European city' as different from the 'American city' run by private owners. The municipalization and privatization of publicly used infrastructures today is discussed across the entire Europe, not only in its post-socialist part. The relations between public transport and the proliferation of private cars exemplify one of the challenges on the way of shaping the shared European concerns.

Conclusion

In my research I explored the meanings that tramways and trolleybus infrastructures in Ukrainian and Romanian cities had for different social groups, as well as ways in which these groups engaged with public transport infrastructures in the settings of continuous crisis. Trams and trolleybuses were meaningful to the cities in many ways: as mere transportation; as a means of re-scaling of place and shaping its urbanity; as a medium of social assistance both alleviating and reproducing social inequalities; as a material object that constitutes communities of passionate technological interest and urban activism; as a representation of belonging to an expanding European region; as a source of normalcy and contingency at the times of turmoil. UET and crisis found themselves in various relationships: trams and trolleybus manifested crisis but they also communicated the overcoming of trouble and depression. The condition of UET was many times perceived, characterized, and treated as a crisis throughout the decades of post-socialist transition. Crisis was a factor of UET deterioration and led to stigmatization of UET; made it into a form of social assistance and modified the meaning of social assistance itself. This mutual social construction of UET technology and urban infrastructural crisis subsequently (but with numerous overlaps and clashes) indicated wider processes in the midsized post-socialist city: privatization, social stratification, the growing income gap, ageing of the population, the decay of 'heavy industry', Europeanization etc. The crisis of UET manifested itself in different forms, stepping out as the fall of the planning system, a symbol of economic recession and the aging of infrastructure, as a consequence of corruption or violation of ethical contract on use of infrastructure. It demonstrated the cleavages in subsidization system, and the relocation of imagined borders of Europe. The developments in the public transit provision in post-socialist Romania und Ukraine were affected by gaps in legislation, weak control, and lack of legally guaranteed provision, resulting in upsurge of private bus service, maxi-taxi in Romania and marshrutka in Ukraine. Both countries became an arena for informal initiatives supporting tram and trolleybus in midsized and small cities. The crisis mobilized actors for various forms of entrepreneurship, resistance, and adaptation; it invoked forms of grassroots, political, and oligarchic participation. Forms and practices of local mobilization were shaped by dynamics of the crisis and tactics of its detection, as well as generally poor availability of external assistance. By shortage of resources provided by state, UET was supported by and in some cases dependent on enthusiasts and civil participation. Weakness of the state played an

ambiguous role for such activities, communicating the freedom to act together with the feelings of loss and being forgotten. It`s the unstable, semi-anarchic structures of local governance that allowed local actors to promote, more successfully than in the rest of post-socialist space, the preservation of transportation infrastructures they wanted and needed. It is these very structures that made the population suffer during the decades from the crisis conditions in which those vital infrastructures` worked.

Tramway and trolleybus technologies in cities like Galati, Mariupol, Kostyantynivka, and Horlivka have a complex and recurrently contested temporal status, being alternately connected to the past or to the future, recognized as outdated or promising. Although tramway and trolleybus are positioned as 'European', 'civilized', and up-to-date in the 2010s, the earlier reason for their preservation (or slowing down the deterioration) was their social function of servicing low-income groups, which was followed by stigmatization and marginalization of UET as obsolete. The temporal status of UET infrastructure drifted between a long perspective project and a matter of sporadic managerial efforts; a reliable spine of transportation system and an occasional 'city ghost'. In the midsized cities during the crisis, different urban groups saw the myth of permanency deconstructed. They were able, however, to inhabit the state of uncertainty and to invest meanings into the cases of short-term improvements and postponement of the deterioration. This is quite subversive, I believe, in regard to the paternalist totalitarian ideologies that throughout the decades justified hardships of now by the welfare awaited in a distant future.

The engagements of passengers, entrepreneurs, activists, and authorities with the crisis presented different ideas on normal infrastructure. With a different degree of success, tramways and trolleybuses were presenting 'normal urban life' through lower prices, safety, punctuality, and sustainability; in the meantime, shared taxis staked on speed, comfort, and flexibility. Transit modes thus mediated the competition of ideas in the cities that were especially challenged by post-socialist macro-economic, demographical, and political context. Outliving socialist policies and ideologies, trolleybus and trams bridged past and future ideas of urban mobility, connecting a socialist city with 'Europe in becoming' and 'Europe proper'. Local histories of trams, trolleybuses, and share taxis also show how important is the interpretation of urbanity, justice, and Europe, and how a single technology can be inscribed in radically different projects of a city.

When the end or interruption of the crisis effectively happens, discursively and/or via material change, modern urban infrastructures manifest state power, control, and relative superiority over the neighbors. For a decision-maker, scholar, and critic the end of transition crisis at the outskirts of Europe presents new questions on form and content, on framing and prioritization – the questions to which this research has only arrived at the end. How foreign investments are interpreted in the places where Europe is relocated to or from? How do peripheries and centers relocate under the nesting orientalism, territorial disputes, and upsurge of populism? How infrastructural nationalism affects non-capital cities? Which relations and, probably, new crises emerge between environmentalism, populist politics, and neoliberal urbanism after the crisis of transition?

Crisis finds itself in the foundation of contemporary ethnography, of its ways to problematize things and pose questions. It is detected, integrated into a topic, and used for analysis – by communities, decision-makers, and researchers. After all, ethnographic research is itself a form of crisis, which we co-habit together with others. Just as a crisis, an ethnographic project has to have a scope, a beginning, and an end, otherwise it dissolves into life without bringing any change. A crisis with clearly articulated local and temporal borders is a way to receive attention, and many places are badly lacking resources for its articulation. One of ethnographer's roles might be in exploring the ways to locate crisis, and define it – that is, to describe in a way meaningful for different stakeholders who reproduce crisis, address it, or suffer from it. The ethnographic study of meanings, perceptions, and experiences of infrastructural trouble implies dealing with several formative uncertainties, and I conclude with their outline that hopefully may be of use for the future ethnographies of crisis.

My first task was to understand who detects and declares the beginning and the end of a crisis. The public transport crisis was both a lived sociomaterial experience and a declared state of art that enabled acceptance or rejection of particular decisions and circumstances. The scenarios of coping and living with, dramatization or alleviation of the crisis are explored simultaneously by entrepreneurs, governors, alarmist movements, charity structures, local politicians, ideological supporters and opponents of public transit etc. There's a generational and gender dimension in how senses and meanings of crisis are produced and consumed. Crisis is negotiated and narrated in different ways in order to locate the present moment on timelines of regress, development, and stagnation.

Second, I sought to understand how practices and artifacts are supposed to communicate crisis and how these messages are interpreted. Is the deviation from normalcy seen in rust and corrosion of the vehicles (due to interruption of the command planning pattern) or in the expansion of list of concessions (which meant non-marketable approach to UET)? In the Ukraine, the problematization often targeted causes of mobility rather than hindrances on its way: i.e. the problem was seen in the fact that pensioners had to move around the city to satisfy their basic needs, but not in the obstacles for their mobility. Mobility practices indeed may reflect growth of poverty and inequality rather than privilege, and movement of pensioners looking for cheaper edibles can stand in line with the mobilities of refugees, migrants, and suitcase traders (*chelnoki*). On the other hand, tram trips for the elderly fulfilled functions of promenade, checking city news, and meetings with acquaintances. In decay UET generated contradictory meanings. Corroded tramcar can be interpreted as an evidence of corruption and the dismantlement of valuable socialist heritage, but it can also be dispraised as a leftover and a natural sign of the transition to market economy. The decrease in mobility, depending on the context, can communicate a privilege, result of discrimination, or green practice. In the cities of my study these contexts proved to be closely interwoven.

Third, I asked where is the crisis and how is its location defined? Re-scale of infrastructural management may sometimes dispossess communities of control over the crisis but not of its hardships. Also, as a city is placed on the map of Europe or EU, such map virtually never reflects territories claimed to be outside of Europe. Overcoming the crisis is probably linked to the global circulation of inequalities: if a deficiency is replenished in particular place, it may cause emergence of this deficiency somewhere else.

My last point here is about takeaway of a crisis. How do we learn from the performance of particular crisis? How do we make crisis from an explanation into an object of analysis? Where is the knowledge about crisis stored, how is it structured, and what it needs to be developed? People whose infrastructural lives my research described were impressively creative in answering these questions notwithstanding the destruction nearby.

Epilogue

During this research things have changed considerably for the places it described. My research sites in Donetsk region, a few dozen kilometers from each other, now belong to different geo-political worlds, and the cultural gap between two seems to be growing. Horlivka passed into the control of separatists and, as of 2018, belongs to a self-proclaimed

Donetsk People's Republic. Druzhkivka, Kostyantynivka, Kramatorsk, and Mariupol survived the presence of separatist forces for several months in 2014, and since that moment turned into a place of post-war revival through discoursive and material changes. Major investments, although already claimed far insufficient, are allocated for the urban infrastructures, and especially those visible to everybody. The city is now much more present in blogs, literature, and research.[261] Such developments suggest that the location overlooked by researchers now will be studied more.

In 2017 Romania became a fastest growing economy in the EU. Along with some other positive changes in the life of Romanians, signs of this growth are visible in the development of the public transport infrastructures all over the country. The city of Galați purchased a bunch of new trolleybuses in 2017. Other Romanian cities consider projects of development of urban electric transport: plans to construct two new tram lines are discussed in Arad; in January 2018 tram service has been reintroduced between Sibiu and the suburb of Rașinari; in București negotiations on the purchase of a hundred new tramcars are on the way. Trams are about to be manufactured in Romania itself again.[262]

However, the trope of crisis has not disappeared from the lives of local populations, despite the paths of the two countries I worked in significantly diverge. Of course, the crisis is present in very different ways in Romania, in the Ukraine controlled by Kyiv, and in the parts of Donbas held by separatists. In Romania, animation caused by current growth is mixed with fears of entering another crisis as the public debt of the state is increasing. Similarly to Hartman who reported Romanians saying 'when we enter Europe' (i.e. become European Union citizens) in the 2000s (Hartman 2007, 189) I heard the same already after EU accession. In the Ukraine, the crisis is reproduced primarily by geopolitical condition that does not seem to change in the near future. In turning their heads towards western or eastern neighbors, many people still express hope to see something better and to learn from it: for many, the Europe is imagined as the space of a 'normal life' that still has to arrive.

As the researchers, practices, and pieces of knowledge come to the outskirts of Europe, the reverse movement gains traction as well. As Hrytsak notes, *the more Ukraine is*

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[261] Recently books are published dedicated to Donbas or Mariupol specifically. See for example Project "Donbas Studies" at the Izolyatsia. Platform for Cultural Initiatives 2016 https://izolyatsia.org/en/project/donbas-studies. Since 2015 Anna Balasz, University of Manchester, is conducting an ethnographic research in the city. See one of her ethnographic texts here http://www.retrograd.org.uk/2015/09/a-soviet-pompeii-war-and-revival-in-mariupol/.

[262] *Cum arată cel mai modern tramvai produs în România* https://ro.sputnik.md/society/20170727/13783571/tramvai-modern-produs-romania.html.

Europeanized, the more Europe becomes Ukrainianized. The problems of the latter — the instability of political and economic structures, refugees, social inequality, and populism — are increasingly similar to Ukrainian ones.[263] It is tempting to add that the location of outskirts of Europe also changes, especially after the Brexit. German pensioners move to live to Bulgaria to make affordable living[264], the average salary in ex-Soviet Estonia becomes higher than in Greece, and the populations that aspired so passionately to join the EU, now increasingly vote for Eurosceptic parties. It does not mean, however, that, as the periphery and core of Europe mix together, the crisis ultimately merges with the normalcy and the life becomes identical everywhere. Instead, in regard to the persisting inequality both inside European states and between them, the normalcy, welfare, and the 'better life' are increasingly distributed along other lines than national borders. For the heroes of my study, it is not only the crisis but hope for improvement became an important part and driving force of their urban life. As long as different groups of infrastructural citizens try together to improve their infrastructures, here and now, a better life beyond the crisis definitely exists, as a shared idea, goal, and practice.

[263] *Україна секонд-хенду*. Entry on 08.07.2017. https://nv.ua/ukr/opinion/grytsak/ukrajina-sekond-hendu-1445733.html.
[264] *Hundreds of German Pensioners are Settling in Bulgaria*. Entry on 25.08.2017 https://www.novinite.com/articles/182667/Hundreds+of+German+Pensioners+are+Settling+in+Bulgaria.

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Fieldtrips

2011, June – August: Mariupol, Horlivka, Druzhkivka

2012, January, July – August: Mariupol, Kostiantynivka, Horlivka, Yenakieve

2013, January, July – August: Mariupol, Kostiantynivka, Horlivka

2014, January: Druzhkivka, Mariupol

2015, April, September – October: Galați, Brăila

2016 March – April, August – September: Constanța, Galați, Brăila

Quoted interviews and conversations

2011-2012, Mariupol

Inf. 1 – f., born in 1951, living with the daughter and grandson, pensioner since 2006, worked at MMKI.

Inf. 2 – f., born in 1937, pensioner since 1998; living alone, worked at MMKI.

Inf. 3 – f., born in 1937, living with the grandson.

Inf. 4 – f., in her mid 60s, pensioner.

Inf. 5 – f., born 1950, pensioner.

Inf. 6 – m., born in 1937, living with his wife, pensioner, worked at Azovmash factory.

Inf. 7 – f., born in 1939, pensioner, worked at MMKI, living with her husband.

Inf. 8 – m., born in 1939 г.р., therapist at factory clinic, living alone.

Inf. 9 – f., ca 50 years old, of which more than 10 years worked as a ticket seller in marshrutka.

Inf. 10 – f., born in 1935, living with the husband.

Inf. 11 – f., born in 1939, postwoman, living alone.

Inf. 12 – f., in her mid 40s, working at MMKI.

2015-2016

Inf. 13 – in his late 20s, active in Ukrainian enthusiast community in the 2000s and 2010s.

Inf. 14 – active in Ukrainian enthusiast community in the 2000s, has managing experience in transport companies.

Inf. 15 – in his 30s, was active in Ukrainian enthusiast community in the 2000s.

Inf. 16 – in his 30s, living in Galați, active in Romanian enthusiast community in the 2000s ca 12 years of enthusiasm, working at the steel works.

Inf. 17 – born in the 1930s, living in Galați, pensioner.