Driving in/between Places: Rhythms, Urban Spaces and Everyday Driving Routes

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Abstract
The use of the private car is one of the key factors that have shaped the contemporary urban milieu and daily life in the city. The paper examines what kind of temporal relations are produced between the driver and the environment in the context of habitual everyday driving routes. The data – utilizing go-along interviews, participant-produced visual material and recorded videos of drives – is examined by focusing on the temporal character of the routes by utilizing a 'rhythmanalytical' framework. The analysis examines ways in which spatial rhythms are produced and interacted with in and beyond the car-space. Focusing on the rhythmicities of everyday driving routes – as sites of everyday life and contexts for the urban experience – uncovers relations, experiences and meanings embedded in these mobile spaces and practices.

Keywords: rhythm, mobility, driving, place-making, everyday life, rhythmanalysis

Introduction: everyday mobilities
This paper builds on the simple premise that mobility is a way to produce meaning and interact with the material and social environment. Nowadays discourses of *life on the move* (Elliott & Urry 2010) are common-place and the contemporary city is seen as consisting of "fragmented and disconnected spatial and temporal connections" (Green 2002, 282). To produce these connections, people move from one site to another – and while doing so, meanings, experiences and relations are produced.

Mobility is, though, often understood as the process of uprooting and displacement (see e.g. Relph 1976), that might break, or at least change, the meaningful relations people have with their environments, with different meaningful *places* (Adey 2010, 53–55; see also Cresswell 2011). However, urban mobility should be considered as "an important everyday life practice that produces meaning and culture", as Jensen (2013, 140) writes, instead of thinking movement only as means of transit (or as "dead time" as noted by Sheller & Urry 2006; see also similarly Miciukiewicz & Vigar 2013). The paper challenges the common notion of mobility as *transport* in favour of a more complex approach, situating itself along the lines of mobility research where emphasis on the study of mobile phenomena is geared towards the experiences and meanings of being on the move, recently framed as the "new mobilities paradigm*"* (Sheller & Urry 2006; see also Cresswell 2011). The paper examines what kind of meanings and experiences are produced in the urban environment through everyday mobilities – which is the mode in which many contemporary urban spaces are "dwelled" in (Urry 2006; 2007).

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The paper is interested in one particular mode of everyday mobilities: car driving. The use of the private car has been one of the most influential, transformative and polarizing aspects of modern societies. Cars have put people in motion from the beginning of the 20th century, and by doing so, the usage of cars has shaped and transformed spaces in both global and local scales through processes of urban and transportation planning, and by producing specific requirements for material uses and social activities, with varying results. (See Sheller & Urry 2000; Urry 2007; Sieverts 1997/2003; Amin & Thrift 2002; Jacobs 1961/2011.) "Much of what many people now think of as 'social life' could not be undertaken without the flexibilities of the car and its availability 24 hours a day", as Urry (2006, 19) writes. The car is "interwoven into the tissue of contemporary society" (Beckmann 2001, 593).

Everyday mobilities are here examined from a phenomenological perspective. What it means to be on the move and what kind of experiences and relations are formed and (re)produced between the body and the material and social environment in everyday mobility? The research leans towards "postphenomenological" orientations (Ihde 2012) by putting emphasis on the relations between the material world and embodied practices, along with (inter)subjective meanings and social relations. Examining driving as a mode of temporally dwelling in public urban space provides deeper understanding of the urban space as a complex site of various intentions, possibilities, meanings and experiences that often might retain contradictory or even conflicting characteristics. Especially it brings to the front the various *rhythms* of everyday urban spaces.

In this paper, the outlook on driving is limited to car use in urban central areas. I am not here interested in examining car travel as a whole, or the various road spaces traversed with cars, but to examine driving and the use of the private car as a way to inhabit and dwell in urban areas, as a mode of living urban space in motion. The streets are sites of multiple uses, meanings and relations (Crouch 1998) and driving is one of the most common modes of using space in contemporary cities. Driving, as an event, also involves various passengers (for the practices and experiences of *passengering* see Laurier 2011; Adey, Bissell, McCormack & Merriman 2012) but here the outlook is fixed on the driver: the focus is on the driver's practicing body, habitual and routine-like interaction with the material and social environment in and beyond the car-space, experiences, the processes of shared and subjective place-making, and the interplay between various spatial rhythms. The paper thus aims to inspect everyday driving routes as sites where meanings and relations between the body and the city are produced, rather than as only modes of transitioning from one place to another. The paper comes to examine if driving could be understood as happening *in* rather than *between* places, as the title of the paper inquires.

In the following sections, I will first briefly introduce the theoretical framework, discussing driving as an embodied practice and the character of urban rhythms; second, introduce the empirical research: the methods, the data sets and the research sites; and third, concentrate on the analysis of urban rhythms on the everyday driving routes. The paper is then concluded with a brief discussion on the results.

City in motion: habitual driving practices and rhythm

The use of the private car encompasses everyday life, daily routines and material and social structures of contemporary cities thoroughly (Thrift 2004, 46). Automobility takes many shapes: urban spaces are designed for driving, enforcing the modernistic ideals of speed, rationality and efficiency (Hubbard & Lilley 2004), and including/excluding other uses of space (Beckmann 2001); daily timetables and possibilities of movement are considered within the framework of

driving, which provides both the possibility and the necessity for movement between various locations (Sheller & Urry 2000; Sieverts 1997/2003); cars as material objects produce distinctive sceneries, events, sounds and even smells (Merriman 2011; Dant 2004); car as a material object produces various material cultures (Miller 2001), symbolic meanings and economic industries (Edensor 2004), and various affective relations (Sheller 2003; Steg 2004). The private car is both the topic of critique and admiration, politicized thoroughly.

In this paper, I will not discuss further the different (dis-)advantages that automobility has on lived urban spaces, the natural environment, sustainable resource use, social interaction, its role in the unevenly distributed possibilities of mobility, or its various possible future paths (such as self-driving vehicles) (for these and other discussions see e.g. Böhm, Jones, Land & Paterson 2006; Sheller & Urry 2000; Urry 2006; Beckmann 2001; Thrift 2004). Rather, I will examine automobility as it is *now,* and how driving as an embodied practice, and the car-space as a material context, produces experiences in urban public space. The fact is that many contemporary (semi)public urban spaces are experienced from within the private car. It is this everyday embodied and habitual practice that is in closer examination here, and the various rhythms that are both produced and interacted with in the public urban arena.

Driving: the body, the machine and the "assemblage"

Driving is an embodied practice that is performed in cultural contexts, and is, as any form of embodied movement, also a mode of communication (Edensor 2004; Kalanti 1998, 8–13). Driving is not altogether an active or conscious practice but resides somewhere between being actively present in the moment (and engaging in activities such as observing and assessing traffic) and habitual and embodied routine, as Thrift (2004) suggests.

Driving occurs in various places that are designed for automobility (for renown approaches, see e.g. Appleyard, Lynch & Myer 1964; Venturi, Scott Brown & Izenour 1977). All places are inscribed with various scripts and practices, habitual and routine-like ways of being and acting in space that produce relations between the environment and the body. These habits are created *in* places, not in isolation in the body/subject: "Milieu is not a passive backdrop, but a vital performative agent in the ongoing constitution of the human, suing experience and cultivating habits in myriad ways." (Dewsbury & Bissell 2015, 26). Habit is a process through which knowledge and understanding is produced, and places performed. (Ibid.; see also Hynes & Sharpe 2015.)

Dant (2004) writes that the relation between the car and the body should be considered as an "assemblage": "The driver-car is neither a thing nor a person; it is an assembled social being that takes on properties of both and cannot exist without both." (74). For Dant, the driver-car assemblage is a specific form of embodied relations with the environment, producing possibilities and networks: "The assemblage of the driver-car produces the possibility of action that, once it becomes routine, habitual and ubiquitous, becomes an ordinary form of embodied social action." (ibid.). The paper examines how this distinctive driver-car assemblage as a mode of dwelling produces meanings in the environment.

On assemblages, Dovey (2010, 16) similarly notes that "All places are assemblages": a street is not a thing or a collection of things, but it is the connections between the things and how they come to interact with each other that matters. Everyday mobilities (and spaces as assemblages) are made often invisible by their mundane character (Spinney 2010, 113), but still those activities are there and constitute the urban space as (momentarily) lived and experienced place. Jensen (2009, 140) writes: "People not only observe the city whilst moving through it, rather they constitute the city by practicing mobility." Everyday travel does not necessarily have to entail boredom and frustration, nor does it need to

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be celebrated as something more meaningful than it might be. The everyday often *just is* in our experiences (but not as designed and produced materialities and synchronized routines, see Jensen 2013), and it is this *just is*-ness that produces our relations with the environment we inhabit and dwell in on a day-to-day basis, and what makes these relations interesting and worth of inquiry. In other words, the everyday is taken here as granted in how people inhabit the world but not as a focus of research. In order to better understand everyday mobilities in urban spaces, it is important to examine the repetitions and routines that make these everyday mobilities precisely *everyday*. The temporal and spatial patterns that these habits, routines and repetitions produce – *rhythms* – come to be of interest.

Rhythm: spatial and temporal practices and relations

It is quite difficult to think about urban space without the idea of rhythm, if examining the lived social and material space. Common imagery of urban space is one made of *repetitions* and *sequences*, such as the continuous flows of people moving around and following rigidly the natural day-cycle and various shared/individual timetables. Time-lapse videos are a popular medium to present the living characteristics of public spaces and social events, and the interplay between the static and the moving parts of the urban milieu.

Adey writes, that “Mobilities usually synchronize in rhythmic patterns” (2010, 28-29). These rhythms might not always be unique or provoke great interest by being mundane, far from extraordinary and making up the daily *grind*. *Rhythmanalysis* – the study of urban rhythms – as introduced by Henri Lefebvre, gives focus to the different natural and social rhythms – the interaction between space, time and energy/action. These interactions and connections make the everyday and present the city as a rhythmic ensemble of intersecting and overlapping rhythms that produce the cacophony of urban life: the various material and social movements, encounters and interactions. This urban *polyrhythm* plays out like a musical symphony, resulting in complex urban life that never ceases to pulse. (Lefebvre, 1992/2013.)

Rhythms can be perceived in a two-fold manner: cyclical and linear. Cyclical rhythms refer to natural recurrences – such as the awake/sleep, day/night, growth/decay cycles – and linear rhythms to social activities that are produced (which often take cyclical forms as routines and habits) – such as the daily working hours. However, Lefebvre stresses that even though rhythm refers to repetition, there is always the possibility of change and transformation, as these rhythms occur not only as repeats but also as part of the progressive time. (Lefebvre 1992/2013). Adam (1994, 87) similarly notes on natural rhythms that ”it is in the very nature of those rhythmic processes to differ in their recurrence.”

Spatial rhythms can be perceived, produced and interacted with but for Lefebvre, urban rhythms are always relational to the body, which comes to define them as fast/slow, frequent/infrequent, intense/loose or the like. People produce rhythm, but spatial rhythms are found both in the spaces that bodies traverse in and in the spaces of the body. The body is itself made of rhythms that together constitute the body as a living entity. (Lefebvre 1992/2013.) Meyer clarifies on Lefebvre that “The body is, so to speak, his metronome” that measures rhythm (2008, 149).

The brief overlook on rhythm above gives some insight to the concept but *rhythm* as such, though, is difficult to narrow down empirically and analytically as it appears in many forms, referring generally to the recurrence and change of (any) things. Lefebvre provides a framework for the analysis of urban rhythms but as Koch and Sand (2010, 68) note, there remains a need for “the development of methods to map, document, represent and present rhythm”, in order to fully develop Lefebvre’s rhythmanalysis as a proper mode of research (see also Amin & Thrift 2002, 16–21). Meyer writes that Lefebvre’s “rhythmanalyst is more

receptive to time than to space … He tries to hear the music that the city plays and to understand its composition*"* (Meyer 2008, 156). How to do this remains to be developed, and this paper aims to contribute partly to its investigation. Here, the focus on rhythms is set towards the materialized social practices and experiences and relations that come to the fore in understanding how space is always changing and moving – *becoming* (Massey 2005) – but still though somewhat fixed and structured as a site of everyday life; or examining rhythm as "an element of dynamic stability" (Mareggi 2013, 5).

The analysis of spatial rhythms here makes use of Jensen's (2013) argument that mobilities are "staged" from the *below* and from the *above*: people stage their everyday mobilities through their own embodied practices; simultaneously, subject's mobility is staged by environmental feedback and various social factors, such as urban planning and laws and regulations. Partly following de Certeau's (1984) famous formulation of everyday "strategies" and "tactics", Jensen argues that mobility is both regulated from the top and acted out from the below, formed *in situ* in the meeting point of social interactions, material spaces and embodied performances. This conceptualization provides insightful cues in building a framework for the analysis of urban rhythms in the context of everyday mobilities. It helps to understand how mobilities (and the various rhythms related to mobilities) are produced through embodied spatiotemporal practices in the local and immediate scale (that could here be regarded as staging), and the ways in which social rhythms are imposed on the body, often ranging between the micro-level "place-specific" rhythms (Wunderlich 2013) to more macro-level societal and cultural rhythms, such as shared timetables (see Edensor 2010) (that could here be regarded as staged). Incorporating micro-temporalities and rhythms of the urban scene and mobilities, these notions could perhaps be further formulated into notions of *pacing* and *paced* (referring to temporalities and rhythms, developing on Jensen's conceptualizations of staging/staged) practices, socialities and materialities. These notions will be further examined in the everyday driving route -context below.

On a drive: research methods and data

Empirical research was conducted to examine the rhythms at play on the everyday driving routes. *Mobile methods* refer to various methods of empirical research and analysis that aim to grasp the fleeting and momentary character of mobility (Spinney 2015; Jirón 2011; Murray 2009). Following Kusenbach's (2003) formulation of "go-along interviews" as part of the study of street phenomenology, the study here utilizes similar interview approach (applied to a driving setting), supported by various visual data, to examine the experiences of being on the move in the city.

Different email lists of local organizations and social media were utilized to find informants who in their everyday life drive repeatedly a route that is set partially/fully in the urban centres of Tampere or Turku. Ten (10) interviews were conducted in total, half in each of the two cities that are the largest by population (approx. 220 000 and 180 000 inhabitants respectively) in Finland after the capital Helsinki metropolitan area, and roughly similar size. Conducting interviews in two different cities was done to prevent city-specific details or traits from gaining the upper hand in the data as the outlook on routes is generalizing by focusing on routine and habitual practices and experiences.

The research material comprises of three parts. (1) Thematic interviews were conducted in the car, whilst driving on the everyday route of the informant. A small wide-lens *action camera* was pointed outwards to record video material of the vistas and events that were taking place in front of the car for the duration of the drive. (2) The video – "footage as record" (see Garrett 2010, 525–528) – was then watched together with the informant during a video elicitation interview

following the drive, to provide another look to the route, events and environments without the need for the active practice of driving, the video working as a trigger for discussion (the video here taking partially the form of a "participatory video" (ibid)). The informants also picked points of interest in the video, regarding to the environment, route and events taking place there, which were then saved as screen captures for further reference. (3) The informants were asked to draw a map of their route in advance of the interviews. These maps were examined as part of the elicitation interview *with the informant* to provide deeper insight to the route and the various meanings embedded in these spaces. These maps, although are *visual* by character, and produce an *image*, were discussed as multisensory objects, aiming to bring forward the various affective experiences. (For the use of maps in research, see Lynch 1960; Gould & White 1986.)

The driven routes were ordinary commutes (4), trips to run errands (3) or trips to the places of hobbies (3) (either their own or their children that were given a lift) that are all travelled roughly at least once a week, some on a daily basis. The drives are usually set during the morning, day or late afternoon. The informants were both male and female and aged from their mid-twenties to mid-sixties. The interviews were conducted between late 2015–early 2016. The interviews were conducted in Finnish: all transcript translations further below are done by the author.

The focus of the analysis is set towards car travel in urban centres, although many of these routes partially took place in areas that were further away from the quite compact centres (that are even walkable in distance) of the two cities. The routes, except one, either began/ended in the city centre areas, one route being more of a drive-through route (with possible occasional stops in the centre by combining the commute to running errands).

Content analysis – based on the rhythmanalytical framework described above – focused on the temporal material and social interactions, sequences and (inter)subjective meanings that relate to moving in the environment. Aspects of the interviews that deal with temporality, routine or habit came to be of interest. The overall research approach is not to be taken as fully encompassing experiences of being on the move but rather understand that the data can only provide snapshots of these aspects that are always "partial, incomplete, in process, becoming" and thus difficult, or even impossible, to attain fully (Jirón 2011, 36). Vannini (2014) calls for new methods that might take *non-representational* forms to approach the study of complex lifeworlds, such as urban life. Although the practical research data utilized in the study still consists of various forms of representations – interviews, videos and maps – the study leans towards non-representational approaches by utilizing rhythmanalysis as a mode of inquiry (see Lefebvre 1992/2013; Koch & Sand 2010, 63–65) and by noting the challenges and limits of grasping experiences and affective relations through representations and communication.

Rhythms on urban driving routes

Building on the notion of rhythmanalysis, and the driver-car assemblage as a mode of dwelling in urban space, the paper next examines the empirical data gathered on the driving routes. The analysis focuses on two larger themes: first, how rhythms – in a driving context – are staged both from the *below* and from the *above* (following Jensen 2013), and second, how temporal social interactions take place on the routes. The role of the private car-space in the public urban space, (temporal) route knowledges, driving practice and its regulation, physical spaces and boundaries, and choreographies between different mobile bodies, are discussed.

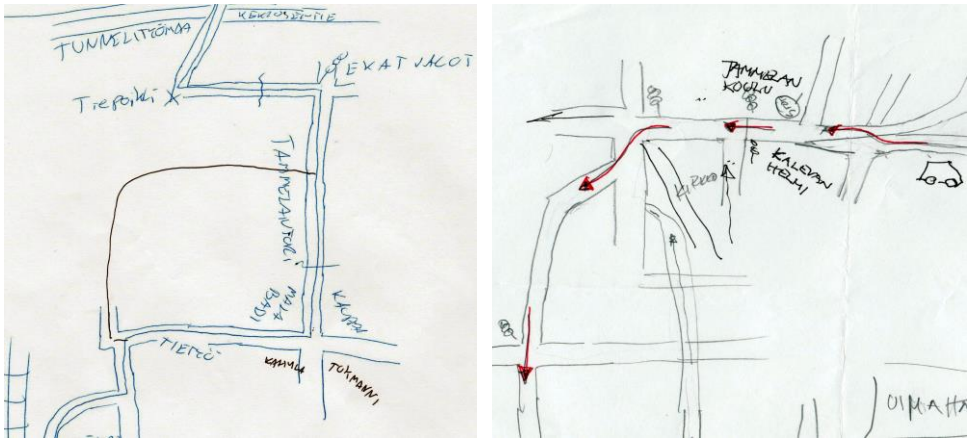

Figure 1. Route blueprints. The route maps present the script, or the process of events, for the route. In most cases, only the streets and intersections relevant to the route were marked in the maps, highlighting the route as a specific mobile site. The maps also included notions such as "*cut-off street*" and "*first* [traffic] *lights*" (left figure) that highlight the dynamics and the linear form of the route. Excerpts from the informants' route maps.

Embedding and perceiving rhythms on the move

Rhythms as staging: knowledge, embodiment and habit

The informants noted that a key reason for them to use the car is either the ease and freedom it provides, or the requirements of various everyday needs that necessitates its use. The private car provides possibilities to organize one's life, whether through *necessity* or *choice*, and car use is reasoned through these notions (for similar observations, see Maxwell 2001). Most informants also used other modes of transport to move around in the city (such as walking, cycling and public transport) but for these specific routes the car was often the preferred choice. The seasons also have an effect: the weather of the cold and wet winter months (when the interviews were conducted) was preferably met with the car rather than, for example, on a bicycle that was often preferred during the spring and summer seasons.

The routes that the informants introduced are quite fixed between the point A and the point B, both in the form of used pathways and timeframes, and any detours or other stops (such as going to the supermarket on the way to home from work, or to run other errands) are often part of the *route plan* – or the 'episode' (Aura 1993) – the routes having a clear blueprint that is embedded into space. This is though not to say that the routes are meticulously planned but rather that these routes have become habitual and routine-like. The informants brought up how some of their driving routes are almost fully automatized. The informants often referred to the car as a living being here: it was the car that *knew* where they were going and drove them to the destination if one was not actively thinking about where to go (see similarly Laurier 2011, 70). Also, driving itself was automatized as an embodied practice. Some of the informants, though, brought up their earlier anxieties about driving, and recollected past occurrences in the traffic, but for most, driving, as a practice, was more or less automatized. One informant (Female, 26) noted jokingly that she probably would sooner forget how to walk than to drive.

Part of staging is the way how the environment is traversed (Jensen 2013): the skills and knowledge that are required to navigate through the space and to make it known (Figure 1). This knowledge often relates to the understanding of how different mobile trajectories meet and interact with one another in specific points of the route, and how these trajectories change and transform in cycles through the day, as well as other temporalities. Traffic congestions, rush-hours, intervals of traffic light changes, slippery parts of the road (during winter season) and potential encounters on the crosswalks are all examples of the knowledge regarding the *choreographies* (Merriman 2011) of the various trajectories of the street that were often brought up in the interviews. This knowledge transcends also into traffic regulation: the speed limits, one-way streets and other regulations are known – and embodied – and not actively investigated on every drive, as are

sharp turns and small unevenness in the surface of smaller streets and other drivers' movements anticipated (more on these in the next section).

The knowledge of the route's spatial and temporal structure often condensed in specific locations or parts of the route: one informant (F55) notes the multitude of the different pathways she could take to reach her destination, but how she usually comes to use the same route; another (Male, 42) talks of the smaller streets he drives around the central railway station as something like a secret route that not all drivers know about. All the informants brought up different notes on temporalities: how the roads usually jam up during certain times of the day and how they set often their own travelling accordingly (if possible) by delaying their departure for a few minutes or running errands on the weekends rather than during the week. Also, the various pathways used for other routes in other mobile contexts, were brought up. These are all examples of the small skills of navigating and moving in the urban space, of knowing the routes and the locations from a movement perspective. These staging "tactics" (Certeau 1984; Jensen 2013) are here habitually utilized in the *rhythmic* and *temporal* urban space.

As the route is known, so is the car-space itself. Driving is often accompanied with managed soundscapes: many informants noted that they usually listen to music (often through music streaming services) or to the radio while driving. Bull (2004) notes how sound becomes part of the driving practice: selecting what to listen is a way to exercise power and to privatize the inner car-space in the otherwise public arena, to "produce a seamless web of experiences from door to door" (247), or mobile "surrogate homes" (251). Rhythm, in addition to physical movement and trajectories, is also produced in other ways, such as through utilizing technologies, such as the car stereo here, to augment the sensed auditory space, or to connect to other (virtual) spaces through various digital connections.

The car is also a space of social interaction when travelled in company. Aside from the interaction between the driver and the passengers (see e.g. Adey et al. 2012), Barker (2009) notes that the car-space has become one of the most frequently inhabitant spaces for children in contemporary cities, and the car is turned into a space of everyday family interaction. This was also evident in those three interviews that took place on routes that were driven because of children: the informants brought up how the route is a moment to interact and discuss, even regarded as a *break* in the daily schedule. One informant (F36) talked how the twice-a-week trip to the hobby of her eldest child is a rare moment when they can have a chat just between the two, as younger children at home require more attention and care – although the use of a mobile phone or a set of headphones from the child's part might prevent these chats from taking place.

All these notions above present the driving route as a specific place in motion: as a set of mobile practices, ordered and synchronized to the rest of the private everyday life through timing, wayfinding, automatized driving practices and interaction inside the car-space. These notions bring up the (habitual) ways people set rhythm to space through their embodied (everyday) mobility. The above shows how people build knowledge around the various limitations and possibilities car travel entails, and produce knowledge of the spatial, and especially *temporal*, order of various mobile trajectories on the specific route. This knowledge is embodied into habits and routines as the city is navigated. These staging practices – both the habitual and the intended – show temporal relevance, as practices of *pacing* the urban space.

These practices though do not operate in separation from the environment. How the car-space, driving practices and the route itself relate and extend to the environment (and vice versa) are examined below.

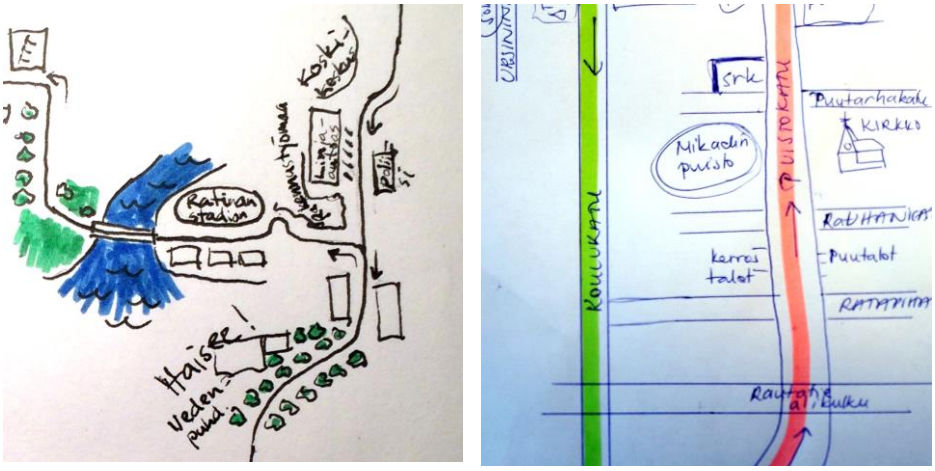

Figure 2. Driven landscapes. The maps provide insight to the various distinctive landmarks and areas that characterize the route – such as specific buildings and park areas – with both shared and subjective meanings. Mostly the maps convey the visual aspects – which are prominent in the driving practice – but also other sensory observations are possible, such as the "*Stinks!"* remark next to a water treatment plant suggests (left). These observations, though, are easily damped by the enclosing character of the car. Excerpts from the informants' maps.

Rhythms as staged: landscape, observation and affect

Driving as a mode of mobility is heavily regulated, *staged* from the start (Jensen 2013). Many sites (such as parking lots and highway ramps) and signs in the build environment are there for the purposes of car-use (Thrift 2004). Streets and roads are *choreographed* for automobility from the get-go (Merriman 2011) and they are also tightly governed and managed as how these spaces are used by non-motorists (Urry 2007, 117). These various regulations of car traffic are part of the routine driving practices in the environment, and not necessarily actively observed. In the interviews, the various driving regulations were usually only noted when reaching a certain portion of the route, such as during a transition from a highway to an urban central area, where a new set of rules for the movement, such as lower speed limits, come into place.

The interviews show that staging of mobilities also takes other than regulatory forms, such as urban landscapes (Figure 2). Activities in cities are not only about movement: different events and happenings, of both *everyday* and *special* character, take place in urban public spaces, and these events and happenings are occasionally investigated briefly while driving by in the everyday route -context. Many informants emphasized, however, that the car is first and foremost a mode of transport for them, and that usually their drive is done in a state of mind that is not the most analytical towards the everyday (mundane and familiar) surroundings. The drives' functional form was emphasised: functionality of the movement was often intended but the driving situation also set certain limits to what was possible on the route. One informant (F37) noted, for example, that usually on her morning drive to work it is still dark outside so that "there is not much you can look other than the taillights of the car in front of you".

Driving, as a mode, comprises of movements and stops. It was these various *stops* that came up in the interviews as moments when the surroundings could be most attuned to. Stopping at the red lights, for example, provided possibilities for people-watching: the material interaction with regulatory sings produces possibilities and restrictions for other activities to take place inside the car. It was evident in the interview situation that the stops often provided also a clear break from the driving practices and helped the informants to refocus and make notions about the environment. Driving, as a practice that requires bodily coordination and concentration, was not seen as a limiting factor towards perceiving the environment as such but the informants noted that their environmental attention often steered towards issues relating to traffic when in motion (see next section).

The interview situation seemed to direct the informants to present the environment in a detailed way. Discussion rose around the perceived landscapes, which is not surprising as driving heavily emphasises the visual

sense (see Appleyard, Lynch & Myer 1964; Venturi, Scott Brown & Izenour 1977; Kalanti 1998). Only few non-visual or non-movement types of sensory remarks were made. The informants often pointed out (un)enjoyed vistas, sites where something once was (such as demolished buildings), sites of personal relations and memories (such as previous homes and places of study) and sites of ongoing changes in the environment (such as construction sites and recently finished buildings, or road infrastructures that were not only perceived but which also had an effect on the travel by reconfiguring the route). In driving, the landscape is experienced in motion: as sets of openings, turnings and closings of perspectives (Appleyard, Lynch & Myer 1964). In the interviews, though, the notions on landscape were more-or-less *static* in nature. One informant (M64), for example, talked in detail of the various planned construction projects in the local area, which he followed closely; another (F48) talked in detail of her earlier memories of living in the area, and noted how "All these corners bring up some memories, every intersection". These affective aspects of the route came most evidently visible in the elicitation interview. The video (and the pausing and rewinding of it) provided possibilities for these recollections and memories to emerge (Figure 3).

These observations concerning landscapes are not necessarily part of the daily travel, examined analytically again and again during the drives. Still, they bring forward how the environment is connected to in and beyond the particular driving route, and how various contexts overlap and merge on the everyday drives. Many informants noted how they perceive spaces differently depending on whether they are travelled by car, on foot, by using the bus or by bike. In many cases, the discussion that revolved around the more detailed issues of the landscape, such as material details, specific buildings and their uses, or various temporary uses of specific spaces, were often *learned* about through other means than driving, such as by reading about it in the media or engaging with the space in an (mobile) activity other than driving. The spaces along the investigated routes that are only engaged through the car were thus often only briefly discussed in the interviews (sometimes noted that "there is nothing here" (F54)), were examined mostly through their visual characteristics (how something looked like) or through the amount of traffic. Urry (2006, 23) notes that the speeds of car travel make one lose the ability to perceive local detail, which even in the central urban areas, where speeds are often limited to 30–40kmph, plays a key role in the possible engagements with the environment. The driving route provides a specific context to engage with the space – framed by the regulated movement and the timing and organization of the everyday life – which often seem to result in fleeting engagements with the landscape that other contexts support and augment.

Figure 3. Affective scenes. Various landscapes dot the route that wake occasional interest on the way, and act also as potential triggers for discussion and interaction inside the car if driven in company. "*Cinematic*" apartment buildings and the various everyday social events taking place in the doorways (upper left); riverside restaurant boats that pulse life during the warmer seasons (upper right); a park next to the main library (left) with occasional social events and happenings (below left); an old freight station (left) and an open culture house (right) as current topics of urban renewal (below right). Excerpts from the videos by the informants.

What the above brings forward is how everyday mobilities are shaped and influenced by various spatial rhythms that are interpreted and engaged with on the move. Driving practices are *paced* by various spatial rhythms of which others

are more collectively shared (such as driving regulations) and others more personal and subjective (such as affective relations to landscapes). The traffic regulations and other social, cultural and material *place-specific* rhythms (Wunderlich 2013) of passed by places provide a frame for the various staged rhythms to play out in and beyond the car-space but these aspects did not come forward strongly in the communicated experiences in the interviews.

Above I have examined how mobilities and rhythms are staged by the collective embodied/spatial practices, materialities and socialities. One key question is then what happens when these different embodied staging practices meet and connect as collective and momentary relations, as assemblages.

On the beats: interaction, encounter and collective choreography

To move is to interact, both materially and socially. The street is a limited space and the interaction between drivers is unavoidable as cars move in a regulated and linear form (Urry 2007, 123). Interaction between the driver and the other users of the space came up in the interviews mostly in the context of traffic and movement. Streets are sites of multiple uses, as already noted above, but in the case of driving experiences, the street seems to be foremost a site of traffic. The traffic is not only noted but used as practical knowledges by anticipating the trajectories of others or increasing one's attention in specific locations on the route where multiple intersecting trajectories often means some kind of interaction. These interactions are the result of multiple individual staging practices meeting in the staged mobile spaces.

In regards to other motor vehicles, the flow of traffic was often discussed in the interviews and many remarks were made of the events relating to it: the slow/fast parts of the route, the perceived tightness/roominess of the driving space, the number of other users, the particular locations with identifiable characteristics that affect the way people move there, and the overall variations in the driving styles of other motorists. One informant (F55) noted of a particular intersection consisting of multiple lines, in the outskirts of the city centre, that the drivers who are used to driving there (the locals) and the ones who are not (the nonlocals, tourists) are clearly identifiable by how they managed their driving in it. Edensor notes that driving as a practice includes practical norms that are embodied, but which are also under constant observation from other drivers and their "disciplinary gaze" over the driving performance: "These collective performances engender mundane choreographies of the road and everyday motoring knowledge" (Edensor 2004, 112). Rhythms can be contested by different actors (Allen, 1999) which here, in the case of driving routes, often means the various material trajectories and how they blend together.

Figure 4. Flow of traffic as a mode of interaction. The interaction between the inside car-space and the environment is limited. Interactions with the different users of space comes through most evidently as micro-level events in traffic, where various trajectories meet and cross in various ways: lane changes and different velocities (upper left); crosswalks and pedestrians (upper right); cars joining or departing from the flow of movement (below left); traffic lights and street crossings (below right). Excerpts from the videos by the author.

These micro-relations in traffic also include interactions with non-motorized movements. Often, the interactions were related to specific locations where

encounters between different modes of mobility could be anticipated, such as crosswalks, light guided intersections, certain long stretches of streets where crossings were made in multiple points (other than the appointed crosswalks) and the nearby areas of schools (and the unpredictable behaviour of children) during mornings and afternoons. The locations were *part of the route,* and the interaction, similarly to the interaction with the motor traffic, was routine-like.

Thrift notes that driving as a mode of interacting with the outside and other users of the space (beyond the (semi)private car-space) is quite limited. The car as an extension of the body renders much of body language impossible to read. The language of the car is distilled into velocity (and its changes, such as speeding up or braking), horns, lights and hand gestures. (Thrift 2004.) In the interviews, the notes on various interactions were based on the visual sense, and often relating to velocity. The mobility rhythms were thus often considered from a movement perspective, the act of moving being the most important method of communication between people (Figure 4). These signs are habitually read and interpreted in various mobile situations, such as ordinary street crossings. These material and social encounters take either “eurhythmic” or “arrhythmic” (Lefebvre 1992/2013) forms – either producing harmonious interactions or frictional encounters where the different rhythms meet disruptively.

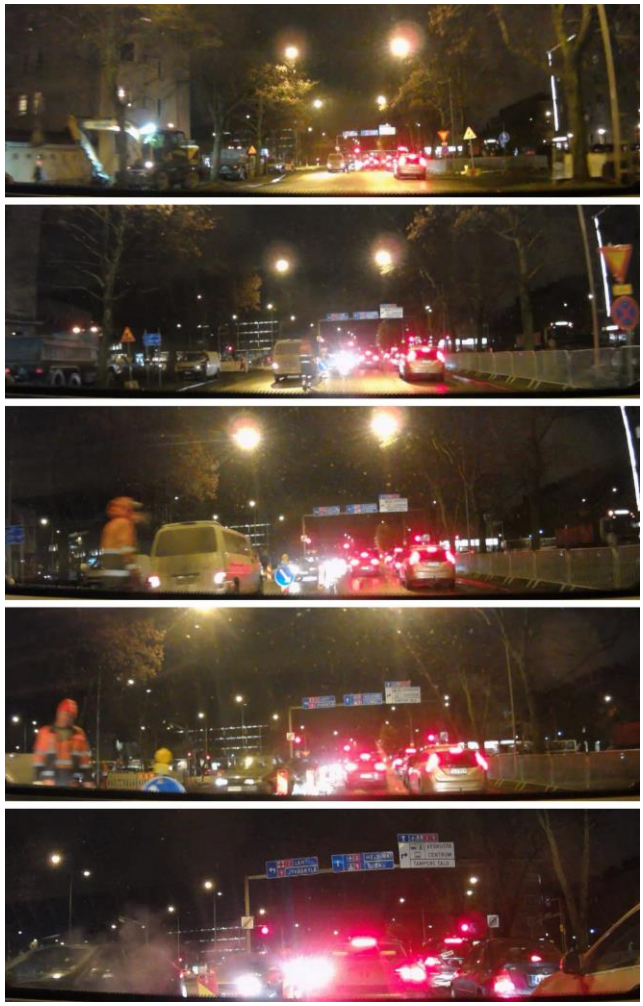

Figure 5. Material and social encounters. Unexpectedly encountering a street maintenance site during an early evening drive. The routes are not fixed scripts that repeat unchanged but small reformations produce new micro-events of material and social interaction. A fifteen second sequence from a drive-along video, excerpts by the author.

Adey writes that “It is often when rhythms break down that we become aware of the scale and scope of these mobilities” (Adey 2010, 28–29). Interrupting the predictability of the route produces moments that break the accustomed and routine practices. Various construction sites were noted as producing much of

the changes and surprises in the otherwise known pathways and (mostly) automatized driving practices. Encountering a construction site often also resulted into a reconfiguration of the aforementioned blueprint of the route as certain streets were closed and others opened (Figure 5). This, again, is not to suggest that people have a finished, ready-made script in their head, which they just act out, but that people have come to expect certain issues in certain physical sites through repetitious engagement with the space, and the route is seen as a more-or-less stable choice of pathways.

Various collective driving activities, such as rush hours and traffic jams – ”when everyone else is going too” (M45) – are often attempted to avoid by managing own time and movement. As Edensor (2010) notes, many everyday rhythms, like the ones produced through everyday commutes, are partly made of actions that are organized collectively and shared between subjects. One informant (M64), talking about his route to a weekly morning sports event for male seniors, noted how “five hundred guys, all arriving with their own cars” not only has an effect on the availability of parking space at the sports arena (the route’s destination) but also on the congestion of traffic in certain parts of the city. The individual pacing processes come to interact in a collective mode, producing individual-and-shared rhythms.

The relations between the individual and the environment are not necessarily always intimate, actively engaging or reflective – as the informants’ narratives here bring forward – but are still crucial in the formation of our relations with the daily lived spaces, whether these spaces are traversed through or dwelled in for a longer period of time.

Together the staging practices produce habitual and routine-like interaction and relations between the body and the everyday urban environment. The routes are repeated as part of the daily life – and thus known from a movement perspective – but the changing landscapes and street networks constantly shape the experiences of everyday mobilities. Spaces are paced through staging practices of embodied mobility, which in turn are paced by the spaces traversed through, producing a complex assemblage of various trajectories and movements. The route provides momentary possibilities to connect to the surroundings even though the functional character of the drive comes to the fore in the communicated experiences.

Conclusion: embedding/perceiving/moving in rhythm

Driving produces specific rhythmic temporalities in urban spaces, in the form of materialities, interactions and embodied driving practices. Urban spaces are routinely experienced through this setting that comes to produce specific relations with the environment. Understanding everyday mobilities as meaningful sites of everyday life gives insight to how urban spaces are lived and experienced, and how the embodied context in which the environment is engaged in comes to shape these experiences. The relations between the individual and the environment are not necessarily always intimate, *actively* engaging or reflective – as the informants’ narratives here bring forward – but are still crucial in the formation of our relations with the daily lived spaces, whether these spaces are traversed through or dwelled in for a longer period of time.

The paper, by developing another take on the rhythmanalysis framework, set out by Lefebvre and others, introduces a perspective to everyday mobilities and urban spaces on the move that focuses on rhythms as pacing/paced, and the interactions between. Rhythms are produced by the driver-car assemblage through movement, and the place-specific rhythms provide a local framework in which these rhythms play out. The barrier -like character of the car presents the temporal relations between the body and the city as tightly managed and scrutinized but, still, as the informants’ stories bring forward, incorporates a set of micro-skills/knowledges/relations that are embedded in these mobilities. Even if on the everyday driving route the environment is sped by, it is a site where people set momentarily their own pace into the shared urban space through routine and habitual embodied practices, and are in turn paced by their surroundings, and interact with others embedding their own pace in it.

The future developments in automated driving technologies, such as self-driving vehicles, might change the character of driving (as an embodied practice and context for body-environment relations) in the coming years, shifting the role of the driver towards the one of a passenger. This, though, does not change the fundamental character of the use of the personal car that separates it as a specific mode of mobility in the urban environment: the personal and personified inside space of the car in the public arena, and the possibilities and necessities of movement in the organisation of everyday life. Changing urban planning paradigms – that put emphasis on walking and the use of public transport – and urban densification might, though, be changing forces in how built environments are lived and engaged on the move in profound ways.

Still, car driving is something that happens in the contemporary city. On one hand, it impacts greatly on the overall character of urban milieu, and on the other, it is a common mode of inhabiting daily urban spaces, creating a distinctive set of relations between the subject and the city. Mapping the various rhythms that are produced and interacted with in everyday driving practices, reveal connections and structures between spaces, temporalities and activities. Examining these rhythms of everyday mobilities, that often might be regarded as mere trajectories in time-lapse videos (as noted in the beginning of this text), come to partially explain what kind of contexts they actually provide for the experience of the material, social and subjective spaces. The city is rhythmic, but the rhythms work in different ways depending on whether examined from within the practices and spaces they are engaged in or from afar, driving – as an embodied context – being one piece in the overall puzzle. Further study is thus required to connect these notes of rhythmic spaces from *within* driving practices to other notions of spatial rhythms. This will perhaps provide a more encompassing understanding of urban rhythms in general that will reveal everyday urban spaces not only as spatial but also as temporal sites, enabling us to draw concrete cues for planning and design processes and to deepen our understanding of our daily lived environments.

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