

# CONTEMPORARY PERIPATETIC ADAPTATIONS: MOBILITY, MARGINALITY AND INVENTIVENESS

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## ABSTRACT

### **Contemporary Peripatetic Adaptations: Mobility, Marginality and Inventiveness**

The anthropological study of contemporary peripatetic adaptations is based on selected anthropological literature dealing with peripatetic nomadism, mobility and marginality as well as ethnographic research in which the author observed the lives of 'liveaboards' who travel and live on boats in the Eastern Mediterranean and elsewhere. The peripatetic group of liveaboards can be theorized within peripatetic nomadism, yet the surrounding context of global modernity that brings to the fore increased living standards, technological development, recession, redundancy and disillusion with national state system is of particular importance. In the first part the development of the anthropological perspective on peripatetic nomadism will be presented in order to discuss parallels between traditional and contemporary cases. In the second part a discussion of mobility, marginality and inventiveness will be developed in relation to contemporary ethnographic accounts.

KEY WORDS: peripatetic nomadism, marginality, mobility, peripatetic liveaboards

## IZVLEČEK

### **Sodobne peripatetične adaptacije: Mobilnost, marginalnost in iznajdljivost**

Antropološka študija sodobnih peripatetičnih adaptacij temelji na izbrani antropološki literaturi, ki obravnava peripatetični nomadizem, mobilnost in marginalnost, kot tudi na etnografski raziskavi na območju vzhodnega Mediterana, kjer je avtorica opazovala življenje »barkarjev«, ki združujejo delo in potovanje na jadrnicah v Mediteranu in drugod. Čeprav lahko peripatetično skupino barkarjev obravnavamo znotraj teoretičnega polja peripatetičnega nomadizma, pa je kontekst globalne modernosti, ki s seboj prinaša porast življenjskih standardov, tehnološki razvoj, recesijo, pojav odvečne delovne sile in razočaranje nad nacionalnimi državnimi sistemi, še posebej pomemben za razumevanje tega pojava. V prvem delu članka bo predstavljen razvoj antropološke perspektive na peripatetični nomadizem z namenom razpravljanja o vzporednicah med tradicionalnimi in sodobnimi primeri. Diskusija o mobilnosti, marginalnosti in iznajdljivosti se bo v drugem delu članka navezovala na sodobne etnografske primere. KLJUČNE BESEDE: peripatetični nomadizem, marginalnost, mobilnost, peripatetični barkarji

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## INTRODUCTION

Winter in the Peloponnese, December 2009. I am heading towards the unfinished marina at the end of the town, where the Dila is being dry docked this winter. The owners Trisha and Paul have invited me for tea. Paul has just come back from the boatyard where he has been grinding the boats' hulls. He is carrying a piece of dark blue canvas. Someone ordered a sail cover from him. The Dila can often be spotted in places such as unfinished marinas, anchorages at the edges of towns and remote fishing villages. In the park in front of the unfinished marina there are Roma people; in a shabby hut near the anchorage, once painted by Trisha's boys, there is a group of Pakistanis; parked next to the Dila is a hippy looking Dutch theatre boat with two men and a steel home-made sailboat belonging to a German family which is about to achieve their dream – to sail around the world; on the fishing boat parked near the Dila, three Egyptians, hired workers, live during the winter, earning money by fishing. Some of these people hardly communicate yet they share the same place. Their reasons for being there are different, their ends are incomparable, but the unfinished Greek marina is their common reality. The place is marginal but cosy. Nobody charges here; nobody comes here; one can get free water on the pier. The children sometimes play ball with the Pakistanis, the Roma children sometime steal bikes from Trisha's children, Trisha sometimes lends CDs to the Egyptians. She lends one, she lends another, and then she got warned by a French woman living on the land. "You should be careful with those people," the woman said. "Those people do not talk with us. They are weird!", say the Egyptians. Trisha still brings them CDs, and she still goes to the French expat parties. [...] Winter in Peloponnese, December 2011. The pier looks empty. Paul and Trisha are in the South Pacific, where Paul got a job in a construction site and anyway they wanted to move further, to experience new places. The Dutch theatre boat has sailed away to Southern France, to take part in a street theatre festival, the shabby hut is empty, the German family joined an eco-village and rented a piece of land to fulfil their second dream – to be self-sufficient and to grow their own food. The fishermen are probably somewhere out on the sea. Only the Roma are left in the park (Excerpts from fieldwork journal (2009–2011)).

The above fieldwork outline depicts the emergence of contemporary forms of mobilities and enclosures fostered, enabled and caused by post-industrial economic changes, neoliberal globalization and socio-technical transformations. It speaks about increased standards of living and technological development, as well as about recession, redundancy and disillusion with national state systems as expressed by many of my interlocutors. My involvement in this research is twofold. In the first two years I was involved in this lifestyle as an insider. As an unemployed anthropologist I was involved in precarious work as a free-lance journalist, living and travelling on a boat and fulfilling my dream of spending time with my children while travelling. During the following two years I worked on an anthropological project studying lifestyle migrations of liveaboards<sup>1</sup> in Greece and Turkey. Combining work and personal motives with mobile dwelling I realized that these lifestyles and livelihoods are characterized by a constant and loosely patterned travel much like traditional peripatetic nomads (see also Juntunen, Kalčić, Rogelja forthcoming; Rogelja 2012). Even though a series of parallels between the contemporary and traditional cases should not be ignored, the importance of the contemporary context of their lifestyles will be of special interest for this article. As for peripatetic liveaboards, I will argue that they can be theorized

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1 The word liveaboards is used mainly in the Anglo-Saxon context to refer to people that live and travelling on sailboats or river boats. As the most popular sailing blogs and forums are in English language, the word liveaboards came into use also within the more general public, as was evident in my ethnographic research. Even though the term is used here as a general descriptor for all my interlocutors, differences in terminology between various cultural contexts should not be overlooked. Other liveboard examples include liveaboards living on the European rivers, traditional examples from southeast Asia where several groups such as the Tanka, Moken and others live on boats and maintain nomadic lifestyles at sea or other local examples such as San Francisco Bay where during World War II, when housing was scarce, many labourers created living quarters from old boats and any other materials they could scrounge (A Short History of Liveaboards on the Bay 2001). Each of these examples must be put in a specific socio-historical context.

within peripatetic nomadism (with the exception of the ethnic dimension) (Berland, Salo 1986), yet the surrounding context of global modernity<sup>2</sup> in which people live highly mobile lives brings new peculiarities to the fore. Rapport and Amit (2002: 34–35) observed how economic globalization has changed the nature of human mobility and blurred the conventional distinctions between moving subjects. Furthermore, in the context of increased mobility the new mobilities paradigm takes the position that power relations are at the heart of the issue (Sheller 2011) and that “mobility is a resource to which not everyone has an equal relationship” (Skeggs 2004: 49 in Sheller 2011: 3). Following these observations I will develop a discussion leaning on the analytic concepts of mobility, marginality and inventiveness. On the basis of exposed ethnographic cases I argue that *mobility*, *marginality* and *inventiveness* lie at the heart of peripatetic adaptations and can thus offer a platform for comparison and understanding of the various frictions of contemporary mobile lifestyles.

## PERIPATETIC NOMADISM AND ANTHROPOLOGY

In 1985, the *International Symposium on Peripatetic Societies*<sup>3</sup> was held in order to increase the understanding of nomadic adaptations beyond the traditional domains of pastoral herding and hunter-gathering strategies (Berland, Salo 1986). One of the observations as well as questions highlighted at the symposium was the curiosity over the fact that peripatetics have been overlooked in the mainstream social sciences by historians, sociologists and anthropologists. As Berland and Salo (1986: 1) wrote, they have been either ignored or dismissed as social anomalies regardless of the numerous prehistoric, classic and modern records stating that countless rural and urban generations have experienced regular contacts with spatially mobile people such as craftsmen, entertainers, traders or transporters. However one can notice that there is a large body of romantic literature dealing with peripatetic communities or individuals as well as pseudo-scientific accounts producing stereotypes about peripatetic nomads prevalent among sedentary communities. One particularly exemplary example of European peripatetic nomads in popular as well as pseudo-scientific discussions are the Roma (Janko Spreizer 2002, 2011: 12). The imageries of innate migratory instinct and the cliché of the eternal Gypsy have developed into one of the most persistent stereotypes of peripatetic nomadism in Western culture.

The researchers attending the symposium agreed about the high level of diversity and heterogeneity of peripatetic nomads (Berland 1986: 189). Nevertheless, one of the common findings was the exploitation of social rather than natural resources among peripatetics, even though longer periods of sedentarism among nomadic groups have been recorded (Salo 1986: 7). In most cases, the accumulation of property (houses, land, etc.) or business establishments does not rule out mobility. As Berland and Salo (1986: 3–4) noted, the levels of mobility/sedentarisation are not viewed as opposites – as either desirable or undesirable conditions. Different states are thus perceived as potential opportunities. In fact, maintaining as wide a range of options as possible is one of the main and most persistent charac-

2 With reference to global modernity, various authors emphasize the sense of the world as a single place (Robertson 1992), time-space compression (Giddens 1990), increased involvement in the network society (Castells 2000) as well as post-industrial economic changes and neoliberal globalization. Arif Dirlik (2011: 4) writes about global modernity which is modernity globalized, where the political and economic integration of the globe has been accompanied by new fragmentations as well as intensification of earliest ones. The ethnography of live-aboards can be understood in the context of the economic globalization and technological development that has changed the nature of the human mobility and caused new fragmentations resulting in blurred distinctions between moving subjects.

3 The symposium was held in Washington D.C. and coincided with the 1985 American Anthropological Association annual meeting. Nineteen international scholars attended and presented papers on their research among peripatetic communities. The papers were published in December 1986 in a special issue of the journal *Nomadic People*.

teristics of peripatetics. To be sedentary for a certain period of time is seen as one of these options that should be kept open (*ibid.*). Flexible skills and knowledge about resources in the larger social system they exploit (including the knowledge of several languages) is furthermore one of the important characteristics of peripatetic adaptations noted by numerous authors (Acton 1981; Berland 1986; Berland, Rao 2004; Heyden 1979). As such they are sensitive to changes in social as well as economic circumstances, and as Berland and Salo (1986: 3) wrote, it is often their knowledge of political, economic and ecological factors that motivates their patterns of mobility as well as influence the choice of certain skills, goods and services. Researchers also noticed that not all patterns of mobility are economically determined, but they can be also related to curiosity, the desire to explore a new region or to certain political constraints (Berland, Salo 1986; Gulliver 1975) and a fact that they cherish freedom of movement (Berland 1986: 197).

A strong sense of ethnic identity, exclusiveness, endogamy, attachment to the values of cultural tradition, and a sense of separation from the larger social systems are also among the listed characteristics of peripatetic nomads (Berland, Salo 1986: 4). Another of their peculiarities is the ability to maintain a wide range of social relations from nobility to beggars (*ibid.*: 4). Furthermore, the negative attitude of sedentary groups towards spatially mobile people, especially towards peripatetic communities, is also documented. Descriptors such as Gypsy (Janko Spreizer 2004) or Khanabadosh (people who carry their houses on the shoulders) in the case of peripatetics in Pakistan (Berland 1986: 198) carry a strong negative connotations. Nevertheless, negative connotations work both ways. As Berland (*ibid.*) noted, the peripatetics also view sedentarists with considerable disdain.

Despite the ethnographic accounts, questions, dilemmas and different categorizations among researchers of nomadism and peripateticism still remain. What and who can be categorized as nomadic? How widely can the concept of nomadism reach? Is it necessary to relate the term peripatetic nomadism to a group of people or should it also encompass individual travellers? What kind of degree of nomadism is required to talk about people as peripatetic nomads? The sociologist Thomas Acton defined nomadism as an economic phenomenon, challenging the culturalist perspective, stating that nomadism gives rise to culture (or can be culturally informed) but is not culturally inherent (Acton 2010: 8).

Recent approaches to nomadism take several directions; they either relativize the boundaries between mobile Westerners<sup>4</sup> and contemporary nomads (Kohl 2009), apply a much wider perspective of nomadism and its sub-categories, also encompassing individual travellers (McVeigh 1997: 9), speak of nomadic theory as grounded in masculine subjectivity that ignores the gendered production of space (Skeggs 2004), develop the philosophy of nomadology (Deleuze, Guattari 1980) or alter the nomadic concept into new contemporary variations they call neo-nomadism (D'Andrea 2006), professional peripatetics (Amit 2007b), peripatetic liveaboards (Rogelja 2012) or Western peripatetic road nomads (Kalčić 2012). All of these contemporary variations should be recognized and explained within the power of discourses, practices and infrastructures of mobility that create the effects of both movement and stasis (Sheller 2011: 2).

## CONTEMPORARY PERIPATETIC ADAPTATIONS

In the face of the neoliberal globalization and technological development that forces and enables people to have mobile lives and/or peripatetic careers and makes it impossible for others to move, the questions of nomadism and sedentarism seem highly relevant. In his article on the relation between sedentarism and nomadism, McVeigh (1997: 9) defined sedentarism as a system of ideas and practices

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<sup>4</sup> The term Westerner is used as a loosely defined category that refers to people from the more affluent countries of Western Europe, and from the countries with firm historical, cultural and ethnic ties to Western Europe (The United States, Canada, New Zealand, Australia; see Juntunen, Kalčić, Rogelja forthcoming).

which serves to normalize and reproduce sedentary modes of existence and pathologies and repress nomadic modes of existence. As McVeigh (ibid.: 17) continues in his discussion on nomadic-sedentary transitions, the final triumph of sedentarism was represented by the arrival of two distinct but related phenomena in human history – the nation state and modernity. Consequently, with the arrival of national state borders, rules and restrictions, there were fewer and fewer places for nomads to move on to. Apart from the border regime there were also intellectual and spiritual dimensions to the drive for order and control. “A continued existence of nomads was a key symbol of the survival of unwanted elements from the pre-modern” (ibid.: 18). Ethnographic documentation of restrictions with respect to traditional nomadic groups has been gathered all over the world, and historical records show that certain groups, e.g. the nomadic pastoralist group the Maasai, were actually more physically mobile in the past than now (Salazar 2010: 3). Furthermore the “Gypsy problem” and the “vagrancy problem” have been addressed with genocidal implications and have resulted in legislation such as the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act of 1994 in England which threatens the survival of New Travellers and nomads alike by criminalizing all those who lead a nomadic life (1997: 8). Besides the actual motion that has been a source of concern to European states for centuries (McVeigh 1997: 8), the alternative sedentary practices that resemble nomadism also represent stumbling blocks for the national states. The recent events in France, where the Sarkozy government introduced the new crime bill (in 2010) in order to raid the Roma camps, connected the individualized actions of the younger French generation, who moved sporadically to rural areas and built yurts in search of an alternative or cheaper lifestyle, with “traditional” peripatetic groups. As the proposed crime bill includes a clause that gives local officials more power to break up “illegal installations that threaten public health, security or tranquillity” (Yurts Cause Controversy in France 2013), many yurt dwellers (called modern nomads on internet sites) (ibid.) were afraid that this legislation would be used against them.

## Mobility

If travelling was once the domain of the world’s relatively affluent people, today the number and strata of people who travel have changed radically. As Amit (2007: 2) noted, today we are dealing with many active participants whose wealth may be relatively modest or they may even fall into the category of poor, unemployed or redundant citizens (Berntsen 2011; Kalčić 2012: 103). Economic prosperity is thus not the main clue to their mobility; having the “right” citizenship, the cultural myth of travel and escape, technology (the development of transportation, navigational and communications technology) are all significant factors, and even the recession plays an equal if not more important role. According to ethnographic data gathered in the course of the 21st century, an increasing number of people have adopted mobility as a way of life (Amit 2007; D’Andrea 2006; Elliot, Urry 2010). In these cases mobility and work can be mutually connected and the blurring of the boundaries between leisure and work appears (Amit 2007: 4). As Amit (ibid.: 5) wrote: “An increasingly important segment of ‘guest’ workers, a status once identify with relatively disadvantaged migrants, is thus now ironically comprised of middle-class Western youth”. Many researchers agree that detailed ethnographic work within the “new mobility context” should bring to the fore new researchable entities and unexpected relationships (Sheller 2011: 8), and reflect critically on romanticized notions of travel and nomadism (Martin 2002: 733).

Observing mobile professionals from Canada working on projects founded by national and multi-lateral aid agencies or development banks, Amit (2007b) reported on peripatetic professionals, mostly consultants, who travel/work three to six months per year. He noted that the spatial mobility of these “international consultants” entailed an acute compartmentalization between the work and domestic spheres of relationships (Amit, Rapport: 2007: 61). Being highly mobile, these professionals were on one hand disconnected from the social environment of the company they worked for and on the other their absences engender a sense of displacement even at “home” (ibid.: 62). Nevertheless, as Amit (2007b)

pointed out in observing transnational consultants and expatriate professionals (Amit, Rapport 2002: 33), the cultural motivations connected with adventure and travel are also a significant part of these stories.

Anthony D'Andrea (2006) on the other hand was involved in an ethnographic project in Ibiza and Goa observing a highly mobile group of people that integrated mobility into their economic strategies and expressive lifestyles. He calls them expressive expatriates or global nomads, who embody a special type of agency informed by cultural motivations that defy economic rationale. Their cultural hyper-mobility is characterized by mobility and marginality, a dyad that is not unique only to neo-nomads but has also been found historically among traditional nomads (2006: 106). On the other hand the cultural motivations of D'Andrea's interlocutors must also be understood in the context of values that were born in the USA in the 60s and in Europe in the 70s and had a big influence on contemporary generations.

Peripatetic liveboards<sup>5</sup> form a special yet comparable phenomenon to the cases discussed above. In the second part of the 20th century long-term cruising on small sailboats was no longer exclusively connected with "heroic actions", sporting achievements or short-term amateur sailing excursions, but was supplemented with long-term living and/or travelling on sailboats. Especially in France, in the context of the protests of 1968, characterized by rebellions against military, capitalist, and bureaucratic elites, the anti-consumerism movement as well as the example of the famous French sailor Bernard Moitessier,<sup>6</sup> many young people engaged in a liveboard lifestyle by constructing their own home-made boats from second hand materials and "sailed away". These "pioneers" were later followed by people with various backgrounds. Nowadays, as a result of the opening of internal borders within the EU and the rapid development of affordable navigation technology, there is according to my ethnographic data a constantly increasing number of people in the Mediterranean who have adopted a lifestyle that revolves around living, working and travelling on boats. As stated elsewhere (Rogelja 2012) the liveboard phenomenon is a highly diversified – touching on several migration forms such as IRM (International Retirement Migration), long-term (sabbatical) travel, tourism, lifestyle migration and connected with several historical contexts.<sup>7</sup> The vast majority of peripatetic liveboards can be distinguished from other liveboards by several characteristics: they are highly mobile, they use their boat as their home most of the time, they earn money while they travel, their work position is precarious and one can trace several parallels between peripatetic liveboards and the urban-rural migration described for example by Hoey (2010) or the yurt movement in France (Yurts Cause Controversy in France 2013). They usually move in the Eastern Mediterranean region (mostly Greece and Turkey), the Caribbean, the South Pacific and South-East Asia, and hold American, Canadian, Australian, New Zealand and European passports. Mostly they are still of working age and the majority travel with their partners, although families and single men are not rare. Liveboards represent different social strata and age groups, they have widely varying sailing experience (from none to sailing instructors and competitors) and their break with their sedentary life occurred in a variety of ways (Juntunen, Kalčić, Rogelja forthcoming; Rogelja 2012). The broader beginning is usually marked with the books they read, with the stories they heard (usually

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5 Even though ethnographic data also reveal the emic use of the word liveboards, the differences in terminology between various cultural contexts when referring to sailors should not be overlooked (see also footnote 2 in this article). The word liveboards came into use among people living on boats and coming from different cultural contexts in pragmatic terms and not so much in the sense of community or belonging, as was evident in my ethnographic research. For the purposes of this paper, I will use it as a descriptor.

6 Apart from his books where he writes about distancing himself from consumerism and environmental destruction in the West, he became almost a legend with his public gesture of *stepping out*. In 1968 he participated in the *Sunday Times Golden Globe Race*, which would reward the first and the fastest sailor to circumnavigate the Earth solo and non-stop. Although Moitessier had a good chance of winning, he quit the race and sailed to Tahiti rather than returning to England.

7 In the British context the long nautical tradition mixed with romantic sea imagery and the tradition of river boat liveboards is of special significance.



Figure 1: Vonitsa (Photo: Nataša Rogelja, Greece 2009).



Figure 2: Vonitsa (Photo: Nataša Rogelja, Greece 2009).

about a man who sailed off) or with childhood experiences with the sea or sailing. The concrete instances, the point when the departure happened, is on the other hand usually connected with a very specific event – the possibility of early retirement, being made redundant, a political event, blocked career choices, disease, divorce or accident, the birth of children, to set up on one's own (in the case of the younger generation) or inheritance as well as various other kinds of circumstances that enable the beginning of the journey.

Groupings of liveboards are situational and momentary, usually appearing in the winter periods.<sup>8</sup> Similarly to how Amit (2002) described temporary communities, groupings of liveboards arise out of individuals' search for identity and personal fulfilment through temporal collective participation. Even though the term liveboards is used frequently during interviews (also in the form of "liveboard community" or "sailing community"), my interlocutors hardly ever expressed any sense of belonging to the "liveboard community". Despite this, my interlocutors expressed a wish to meet other liveboards (whom they called liveboards or sailors) in order to share lifestyle experiences or to form temporary groupings. The personal networks which develop in these temporary communities are an important source of information and are maintained long after the grouping occurs.

Being without regular income, people who live and travel on boats have to resort to various flexible economic strategies; temporary work in marinas and construction sites (offering various skills such as canvas repairing, sailmaking, painting, grinding), periodic work in agriculture and fishing, long-distance work through the Internet, chartering, boat delivering or entertainment work (such as the theatre boats). Even though peripatetic liveboards' travel routes are often outcomes of spontaneous decision making, by no means do they wonder aimlessly. Destinations keep changing along the travel trajectory, largely depending on the social, political, economic and climatic conditions in the localities traversed and on the availability of the work. Seasonal rhythms of mobility between touristic centres, home countries and winter locations in the Mediterranean following various work arrangements were also not infrequent.<sup>9</sup>

## Marginality

For those from more prosperous Western backgrounds, constant movement is often portrayed as a positive experience and a conscious choice. However with time the romantic visions of the mobile life are changed and supplemented with the concrete experiences that bring to the fore more critical views of mobile life. During my fieldwork I noticed that marginalization, uprootedness and dispossession may come for Westerners<sup>10</sup> later on, as a cost of this way of living, a fact which is often overlooked by anthropologists dealing with relatively privileged people. As Amit wrote, "What is most disappointing about the anthropological tendency to over-privilege peoplehood in explicating contemporary patterns and conceptions of movement is the resulting failure fully to engage with some of the internal contradictions and costs of separation, flexibility and cosmopolitanism which weave through other travelling accounts" (2002: 37).

Before going further into ethnographic details it is essential to explore briefly the analytical potential of the notion of marginality for understanding contemporary peripatetic adaptations. The link between marginality, poverty and vulnerability has often been stressed by geographers and measured in economic indicators (Coudouel et al. 2004; Gerster 2000; Gurung, Kollmair 2005). This understanding of marginality is undoubtedly relevant in many different social contexts, yet detailed ethnographic case studies may bring serious challenges to the fore. Sarah Green (2005: 2) among others has pointed out that marginality implies a difficult and ambivalent relation to the "heart of the things". In her eth-

<sup>8</sup> This is true for the Mediterranean where the sailing conditions are difficult during the winter.

<sup>9</sup> This is especially connected with the Mediterranean area due to the climate conditions.

<sup>10</sup> See footnote 3 of this article.



nographic study in the Pogoni region, marginality can be understood as the lack of particularity (2005: 13). In other contemporary ethnographic accounts of Greece (e.g. Herzfeld 1997; Serematakis 1991; Papataxiarchis 1999), marginality has been closely associated with accentuated otherness, resistance and social critique, together with claims to empowerment. In the Indonesian context, Anna Tsing (1993) largely follows the same line of argument, indicating that marginality is often turned against the centre in order to destabilize central authority, and thus implies the idea of redemption. The case of peripatetic liveboards can be set in relation with to the understanding of marginality. It can be understood through uprootedness and dispossession (as in the case of the hyper-mobile lifestyle whose adherents had their positions in their home countries blocked once they left), it speaks about a world of fluidity, ambiguity and uncertainty (future plans are blurred, made according to the given situation, uncertain and without economic security; many peripatetic liveboards do not have right to basic health insurance since they lack a permanent address, etc.) but also about inventiveness and the possibility of making something new out of invisibility and in-betweenness.

Invisibility and in-betweenness is in the case of peripatetic liveboards true the in administrative sense (permanent address) as well as in ways of self-expression. Many of my interlocutors expressed the feeling that they do not belong entirely to their home society or to the societies they traverse.<sup>11</sup> In time, the old relations with friends back home seem to fade, which leads to a feeling of alienation. As one of my interlocutors said, "I have a feeling I am disappearing for the folks back home!" However, national flags are still an important element of recognition among liveboards, even though the attachment to the home country and fellow citizens are used pragmatically and critiques towards national state regimes are common. Invisibility is another important issue. They usually do not travel in groups. If they travel together it is at the most two or three boats together and for a limited period of time. In exceptional cases a flotilla of 8-10 boats is formed in areas known for having piracy problems. Some maintain contacts or share information via the internet long after the actual grouping occurred (see also Juntunen, Kalčić, Rogelja forthcoming; Rogelja 2013). These "communities" are characteristically situational, fluid and composed of people with multiple and simultaneous attachments to several such groupings. The basic clues to understanding their communality are thus situational circumstances and personal networks.

## Inventiveness

It has been noted that under current economic and political conditions and imperatives people are experiencing different forms of distress that can be seen as a direct consequence of the political and economic crisis (producing social tensions such as deprivation of security and home, violation of fundamental values, marginalization, redundancy in early 50s, youth unemployment, etc.) but it can be also seen as an isolated phenomenon referring to a crisis of deeply moral dimensions which has violated peoples' fundamental values and produced feelings of disconnectedness (Hoey 2010) and a lack of critical spatial and temporal stability (Sennet 1998).

In the case of peripatetic liveboards, mobility can be recognized as creative individualized action aiming towards improving life. The main issues driving the inventive strategies of the peripatetic liveboards are: how to earn money and how to live economically, how to get around the official rules as

11 Nevertheless, many (mostly British, French and German) liveboards maintain contacts with their fellow citizens. Especially in the Mediterranean, British, German and French expatriates represent an important point of contact for liveboards. This network is important for assistance and information concerning social and political conditions, market prices and health care services in the places they traverse. Apart from this connection they engage in temporal multi-national communities interacting frequently in unofficial marinas, sharing information on proper anchorages, and vital resources such as water and electricity as well as information about job opportunities.

well as how to avoid unofficial expectations and standards (for example not to be charged as ordinary tourists), and how to use the symbolic capital (of their status as sailors, Westerners, travellers, etc.).

The first two questions are directly related to the ability to gather as much information as possible. Information is gathered in contacts between liveaboards, some maintain contacts with their fellow citizens on land or they gather information among the local population (usually from the owners and workers in the boatyards, bar owners, fishermen, etc.). The internet is an important source of information gathering and communication. Peripatetic liveaboards usually rely heavily on ICT technology; they use it for their work (advertising charter activities, translation work, freelance journalism, etc.) for communication with friends and family, as “memory” storage (photos) and as navigational devices (with the appearance of electronic charts that can be synchronized with GPS, computers or mobile phones are also used as navigational devices). Usually they possess a great variety of knowledge and skills and are very flexible when it comes to job opportunities.

Fritz, a German civil engineer in his late forties, for example, has held a variety of jobs in his 15 years of peripatetic existence. He has worked at private construction sites in the villages and towns he traversed; he has worked on other peoples’ boats maintaining engines, doing repair work on fibreglass, wood and steel boats; he ran charters on his boat for several years during the summer; he occasionally writes for several German newspapers; he occasionally returns to Germany if some odd job appears; while staying in the Canary Islands he worked as a boat surveyor and yacht broker; he also took a job delivering boats around the Mediterranean and in the future he plans to do educational tours for Rudolf Steiner primary schools.<sup>12</sup> Some of the work positions he holds (e.g. at construction sites) are the same positions that were once identified with relatively disadvantaged migrants.

Living economically is another strategy; it includes staying at anchorages or at free berths (such as unfinished marinas, fishing ports or city piers), handling all the maintenance jobs on the boat by themselves and living a modest lifestyle in general.

With regard to official national legislation, peripatetic liveaboards constantly “balance their lives between two ends” (Juntunen, Kalčić, Rogelja forthcoming). They stay invisible in order to “minimize the contacts with state bureaucracy, but they also maximize the benefits granted by the citizenship and legal residence” (ibid). For these reasons, peripatetic liveaboards “apply various inventive strategies that arise out of their marginality/in-betweenness in order to convince the state authorities that they have a permanent address and are thus available for authorities when needed” (Juntunen, Kalčić, Rogelja forthcoming; see also Rogelja 2012).<sup>13</sup> Another equally important inventive strategy is the ability to “juggle” established cultural imageries and myths of freedom, the sea, escape, romance of travel, etc.<sup>14</sup> On Corfu, the unofficial harbourmaster who normally charges for berths within the city port told me that he did not charge a French couple since they are “round-the-world travellers and not ordinary tourists”. A German family that I met in Corinth Channel on the other hand explained to me that they often use travel as camouflage in front of their family, friends and school back home. At the same time they also stated that they are very inclined towards travelling and sailing but their first reason to abandon the sedentary life was connected with the idea of spending more quality time together. Due to several reasons (high cost of living, long working hours in order to pay the bills, etc.) this was not possible for them in Germany. As the mother explained: “It would be weird to go and live somewhere in the mountains in order to spend time together. [...] If you say I travel you are normal. [...] If you say I sail you are like a hero.”

12 Rudolf Steiner schools, also known as Waldorf schools, apply is a humanistic approach to pedagogy based on the educational philosophy of the Austrian philosopher Rudolf Steiner, the founder of anthroposophy.

13 Obtaining personal documents, certificates, licenses, participation in the banking system and health insurance in most cases require a permanent address.

14 Cultural perceptions of the sea are an important component for understanding the cultural motivation of liveaboards, but are not subject of this article and are mentioned only sporadically in relation to ethnographic data that refers to the inventive strategies of liveaboards.

## FINAL REMARKS, OR HOW WE CAN THINK ABOUT CONTEMPORARY PERIPATETIC NOMADISM

Marginality, mobility and inventiveness, the characteristics highlighted by Juntunen, Kalčić and Rogelja (forthcoming) when describing marginal mobility, stand in close relation to various peripatetic adaptations. On one hand nomadism can be positioned at the margins of the sedentary oriented “centres”, on the other hand, the ethnography of peripatetic liveboards speaks about a world of fluidity, uncertainty and inventiveness (ibid). In such cases, marginality becomes a central adaptation for escape, subversion and creative actions. On the basis of ethnography of liveboards (Rogelja 2012), the contemporary peripatetic adaptations can also be understood as a practice of resilience, as an integral part of life strategies aiming to improve the individual’s circumstances. To stay mobile or merely to emerge in the Western dream of “hyper-mobility” enables individuals to deal with blocked careers, redundancy, youth unemployment and disorientation.

Following the introductory excerpts from the fieldwork journal we can also see that people meet who would not have met in everyday life, categories that seemed clear become blurred and life itself becomes ironic as never before. This is not to say that the fluidity of the social world and contacts between people didn’t exist before or that the boundaries are disappearing. With the increased mobility of people, objects and ideas, the fluidity of life and the banal injustices (migrant regimes, systems of surveillance, racist and xenophobic practices and discourses etc.) simply became more evident than ever before and “new fragmentations as well as the intensification of earlier ones appeared” (Dirlik 2011: 4). If the “travelling underworld” of peripatetics has been a source of concern for European states for centuries, as McVeigh (1997) observed, today both those who do not move right and those who do not dwell right have become stigmatized by the national state regimes. It seems that in this reflexive theatre nomadism becomes a façade not only for those who make legal adjustments but also for those who try to subvert them and use the peripatetic lifestyle as a resilience strategy.

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