

# Resonances between truck drivers and their vehicles?! Comparative research in Germany and Bolivia

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## Information on the project

My research project goes into the trucking milieu and tries to understand, how truck drivers form, maintain and evaluate relationships towards different human and non-/more-than-human beings. I will compare the living situations of individual truckers, as well as the formation of a collective identity amongst truckers in Germany and Bolivia. A special interest goes to analyzing rituals and to the question, what characterizes a „good life“ in the trucking milieu.



## Research questions

- 1.) How do trucks and truck drivers assemble in Germany and in Bolivia? Which (religious and non-religious) rituals do form these associations/relationships? To what extent are these relationships resonant/repulsive/indifferent?
- 2.) How does the relationship between truck and truck driver inter-influence with other relationships of the truck driver (on the social, diagonal, existential and self-referential axis)?
- 3.) What are the similarities and differences between the East-German and the Bolivian context (linked together thanks to the use of the same trucks)?

## Data and Material

My main sources are empirical, I am working on my research questions around „good life(s)“ in the trucking milieu from three perspectives: The first perspective is given by the narrations of my interview partners, truckers from Thuringia and Bolivia. In a second perspective, I am trying to follow the acts of the truck as a non-human being, including its transatlantic migration. The third perspective is my one: As a part-time trucker, I gather bodily experiences on which I am reflecting in combination with the data from the two above mentioned perspectives.

## Aim

My aim is to contribute to the internationalization and de-bourgeoisiation of the resonance research and while establishing a dialogue between different „good life“ phantasies (Rosa's resonance theory and sumak kawsay discourses) help to close the research gap between Western science and non-Western knowledge.

## Methods

I am doing field research in Germany and Bolivia, triangulating different methods of empirical social research. So far, I am using semi-guided interviews, participative observations and autoethnography. I might include methods from visual anthropology and analysis of social media data.



## Next steps

The processes of doing fieldtrips and interviewing drivers will be intensified during the upcoming months. Furthermore, a research séjour in Bolivia is planned for 2021 (at the Universidad Mayor de San Simón in Cochabamba). Further next steps are to continue transcribing and coding the gathered interview material according to Grounded Theory and to participate in car blessing ceremonies.

Photographs by Manuel Moser

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