

Affordances in Boating Performative Practices: The Case of Leisure Boating from the Swedish West Coast

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Abstract : While environmental policy makers are trying to increase pro-environmental behavior among tourists or outdoor recreation users through changing users' attitudes, the focus of this paper is turned to the importance of so far marginalized – materiality in the users' practices. The case study of leisure boating in Sweden used in this paper demonstrates how through the change of materiality (i.e. equipment and physical size of the leisure boats) emergent affordances in materially bound practices are transformed, and the boater-boat-sea nexus is redefined. Participatory observation and in-depth interviewing of Swedish West Coast visitors reveal two stories, first one points to the fact that sail boating practice is becoming increasingly motorized and second one describes how leisure boats are becoming increasingly perceived and used as mobile summer houses. Hence, such practice increases energy and matter consumption. This paper describes how that change happens through practice theory and affordance theory, thus points to visibility and the importance of materiality in shaping human nature nexus. Boating practice changes through the change of the materiality of the boats. In particular, energy consumption increases through the change of engagement with the matter. This study puts focus environmental attitudes focused strivings in question, for the fact that it is too individual-centered and lacks contextual understanding of the materially bound practices and may fail in the very thing it is aiming to do - reduce the environmental impacts.

Keywords : practice theory, affordance theory, leisure boating, materiality

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