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Book Review: Under the Weather: Reimagining Mobility in the Climate Crisis.

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Sodero, Stephanie. 2022. *Under the Weather: Reimagining Mobility in the Climate Crisis*. Montreal: McGill-Queens University Press. ISBN 978-0-2280-1462-1 (cloth) 978-0-2280-1597-0 (paper)

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Under the Weather: Reimagining Mobility in the Climate Crisis is an insightful, important book that reports on a fine-grained investigation Sodero made of the consequences and response to the disasters resulting from Hurricane Juan in Nova Scotia in 2003 and Hurricane Igor in Newfoundland in 2010, with comparisons to Hurricane Sandy in New York, Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans, Hurricane Maria in Puerto Rico, the 1998 ice storm in northeastern North America and the Icelandic ash cloud. One original feature is the focus on mobility, how indispensable it is in modern societies, how it is disrupted by extreme weather, and the necessity of restoring and improving the mobility infrastructure in the context of climate change to make it more robust and resilient. Sodero traces how mobility is at the centre of disasters, in terms of disrupting the movement of humans and their mobility infrastructures, as well as in terms of nature's "ecological mobilities". Another original feature involves investigating fossil-fuelled mobility as the cause of these extreme weather disasters. Natural science demonstrated that contemporary climate change has human causes, and now its attribution studies are beginning to document that specific disasters are caused by climate change, but it hasn't yet disaggregated overall gigatons of greenhouse-gas emissions into their causal sources, like driving and flying. Sodero argues that such fossil-fuelled mobility worsens severe weather and resulting disasters. This opens up neglected research into the demand for fossil-fuelled mobility as a cause of climate change. She quotes Naomi Klein: "I continued to behave as if there was nothing wrong with the shiny card in my wallet attesting to my 'elite' frequent flyer status" (25). The other four billion people flying annually in heavy planes propelled by jet fuel causing enormous emissions,

as well as the wealthy in their big private jets, also assume they do nothing harmful, and the number keeps growing. The increase of fossil-fuelled mobility has hitherto harmfully offset both efficiency gains and the introduction of low-carbon energy such that fossil fuels still account for eighty per cent of global energy used, thereby undermining mitigation of the climate crisis and of disasters.

Sodero's ecological approach to mobilities explores the tight coupling between socially constructed mobilities, fossil fuels, and disasters. The concept "charismatic mobilities" is introduced, which refers to impressive winds and waves that draws people to appreciate the force of the weather. She argues that disasters like Hurricane Juan produce charismatic immobility thereby increasing disaster awareness and facilitating climate action. When the hurricane destroyed roads and bridges, improvised alternatives like boats, quads, helicopters, etc., - referred to as "scrambled mobilities" - enabled communities to be resilient. Energy disruptions by hurricanes underscored how lean the fuel supply chains are as well as the contradiction between safeguarding fossil fuel flows and the need to transition to low-carbon energy to avoid climate change disasters. Transport resilience ensuring the flow of goods and people is examined not only as the capacity to bounce back or better but also as robustness, connectivity between points in a spatial system and accessibility to obtain goods and services. It is seen as a reaction to vulnerability. Social-ecological resilience includes both adaptability within the dominant fossil-fuel paradigm and transformability to a new paradigm, such as a post-carbon mobility transition. "Infrastructure resilience entails creating systems where both human and ecological needs are accommodated and future-proofed to survive a changing climate" (14).

On the policy side, Sodero proposes the concept of “climate routing” to imagine how mobility could be decarbonized and resilience built during and after the climate crisis. The concept comes from weather routing where a ship’s course is altered to take advantage of wind, water currents, and tide to minimize fuel use. Climate routing consists of five recommendations for reimagining how mobility can work with, instead of against, the climate: revolutionize mobility, prioritize vital mobility of medical goods and services, embrace ecological mobilities, rebrand redundancy, and think flexibly. What do they mean? “Revolutionizing mobility entails fundamentally rethinking human mobility in relation to ecological limits, namely restricting global heating to 1.5° C” (15). Unlike normal times when all mobility is uncritically accepted, in the chronic climate crisis priority needs to be given to essential over non-essential mobilities. This is like times of acute disasters. As an example of ecological mobilities, Sodero gives the ‘Room for the River’ initiative in the Netherlands, which relocated homes to allow the Rhine to flood seasonally. Rebranding redundancy and back-ups as valuable is needed during the long-durée climate crisis instead of labelling them as wasteful as done presently. Think flexibly implies accepting that extreme weather disruptions will occur in the climate crisis and be prepared to adapt promptly.

This well-written book makes an original contribution to the comparative study of disasters. It also proposes solutions, as indicated by the subtitle “Reimagining Mobility in the Climate Crisis”. This is valuable as far as it goes, but it needs to be complemented by the next step, namely investigations of why imagined solutions are or are not implemented. There is a long history of imagining solutions to the climate crisis: the UN Conference of the Parties is now at COP27 and counting. But these imagined solutions have not been implemented, hence most

global energy is still provided by greenhouse-gas emitting, disaster-causing fossil fuels. Canada – my country and Sodero’s – has been prolific at imagining solutions for global warming, but they have not been implemented, so one critic called them ‘global hot air’. Thus, Canada remains one of the world’s highest greenhouse gas emitting countries per capita. Imagining solutions is easy; implementing them is a wicked problem because it confronts myriad vested interests, costs, predispositions and habitus, etc. After all, fossil fuels have become entrenched as the principal energy source for activities needed or enjoyed since the industrial revolution, but by emitting greenhouse gases, they have perilous long-term consequences of provoking extreme weather disasters.