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A practiced-based approach to the conceptualisation of geographical mobility

Authors: Mathis Stock & Philippe Duhamel

Abstract

Geographical mobility increases in all domains and at all spatial scales: touristic practices, migrations, business trips, commuting, leisure circulation and so on. It has become an important phenomenon for research in the social sciences. Nevertheless, the attempts of conceptualisations still are heavily limited because mobility is rarely viewed as a system in which the ensemble of movements would be linked. It has become necessary to build a comprehensive approach of mobility that focusses on the different practices effectuated and that takes at aim different types of mobility. Indeed, the following question is raised: how to conceive and interpret the numerous circulations and migrations? How to succeed a classification of the different movements of population? We will attempt here a quite original approach: to classify different practices of mobility by a “geographical code of practice”. This code takes into account the conditions of realisation of the movement and the qualities of the place that is practiced. We hope that will be one path to a theory of geographical mobility which leads to a new appreciation of the ways individuals dwell the geographical places.

Key-words: Mobility – Practice - Dwelling

Résumé

La mobilité géographique s'accroît dans tous les domaines et à toutes les échelles spatiales : déplacements touristiques, migrations, voyages d'affaires, circulations domicile-travail, circulations de loisir etc. Elle est devenue un phénomène important pour les chercheurs en sciences sociales. Cependant, les tentatives de conceptualisation restent éparpillées du fait que l'on aborde que rarement la mobilité comme étant un *système* dans lequel l'ensemble des mouvements serait lié. Il est devenu nécessaire de tenter une *approche globale* de la mobilité, qui part des différentes pratiques de mobilité effectuées et qui arriverait à dégager différents types de mobilités. En effet, il se pose la question suivante : comment ordonner et interpréter les nombreuses circulations et migrations ? Comment arriver à une classification des différents mouvements de population ? On tentera ici une approche originale : classer les différentes pratiques de mobilité pour dégager les types de mobilité à l'aide d'un “code géographique des mobilités”. Ce code tient compte à la fois la qualité des lieux pratiqués (lieu du quotidien, lieu du hors-quotidien) ainsi que du rapport au lieu qui est impliqué dans la mobilité effectuée (lieu familier, étranger, exotique etc.). C'est ainsi que nous espérons contribuer à une théorie de la mobilité géographique qui ouvre vers une nouvelle appréciation de la manière dont les hommes habitent les lieux géographiques.

Mots-clé: Mobilité – Pratiques – Habiter

1. Mobility as a problem for geography

One main aspect of the geographical context of human societies is the increased mobility of persons, goods and information. Tourism, leisure, business, residence, migrations etc. are fields of this mobility. The figures allow nowadays to illustrate this fact at numerous spatial scales: in France, there are 6,4 millions of business trips in 2002, 28% abroad; 715 millions of “international tourists” in 2002 in the World; 35 millions of tourists in Las Vegas in 2001; 75 millions of border crossings in France in 2002 etc.

Although mobility is recognized as an important field of geographical investigation, the implications have not yet been clarified. Often, mobility is seen as flux of persons, goods and information (Bassand et al., 1985), but one sees mobility as “taken-for-granted”. We are not astonished when facing mobility, but we should; then we would see that mobility arises in a certain context, that geographers had approached places and spaces as there were no mobility and that there could be conceptual difficulties by dealing with mobility. Indeed, mobility raises several problems for the geographical investigation of place¹,

Fundamentally, mobility affects places in the sense that the exchanges take place and relate a great number of places. But, it is interesting to observe that places are more and more concerned with mobility. It is Helmfrid (1968) who understood this remarkably well. In his study of mobility in Sweden, he underlines the signification for the places². First, he sees that the maps of settlements only take into account, in the meilleur des cas, the “night population”. Secondly, he sees that “*Mit der Abgrenzung eines beliebigen, kleinen Teiles des Landes erfassen wir heute aber nicht mehr eine bestimmte dauerhafte Bevölkerungsgruppe, mit der Abgrenzung einer bestimmten Bevölkerungsgruppe erfassen wir keine bestimmte abgrenzbare Landfläche*” (Helmfrid, 1968, p. 450). Finally, he sees that “*Die wachsende Beweglichkeit und Bewegung der Menschen lassen herkömmliche statische Raumstrukturen an Inhalt und Bedeutung verlieren. Wir können dies am Beispiel der Bevölkerungskarte beleuchten. Die traditionelle Bevölkerungskarte zeigt heute keine tatsächliche Verteilung der Menschen im Raum, nicht einmal den Durchschnittszustand, sondern nur Punkte, wo laut Volksbuchführung die Menschen legal registriert sind. In dem Fluß der Bewegung können wir heute drei sich oft wiederholende, verhältnismäßig stabile Verteilungsmuster der Bevölkerung im Raum beobachten, denen jeweils eine “Bevölkerungskarte” gewidmet werden müßte*” (p.446). It concerns the “night-time population”, the work-time population and the leisure and holiday-time population.

Another problem for geographical studies is the presence of people other than the residents. Often, the question of the dwelling is raised only for the residents and their socio-economic-demographic characteristics define a place; but fundamentally, the quality and/or identity of place is also defined by those who do not live there. Two types of places could be genuinely

¹ For the authors embedded in French geography, they don't use the conception of “place” in an anglo-american way. The latter draws the distinction between “place” and “space” in order to acknowledge the part of subjectivity of “place” in opposition of the objectivity of “space”. This distinction misses the main problem: space is a synthetic concept for all kinds of results of the process of spatial dissociation, place is a synthetic concept for all kinds of results of the process of localization (spatial association). It leads to a fundamental gap between “logics of space” and “logics of place” and is one of the most damaging distinction made in geography. This is remarkable because there are possibilities of solving this problem: place as a “species of space” with others like “territory”, “network”, distinction based on the different kinds of distance (Lévy, 1999). See Sack (1980), Lévy (1994), Cox (1995), Werlen (1995), Stock (2001) and Lévy (2003) for the problem of space and place.

² In fact, Helmfrid's study permits to conclude to the impossibility of “traditional” regional geography for the “region” is not a homogenous bloc, but affected by mobility. This standpoint is still useful: all types of places, not only regions, can be seen as places with “temporary inhabitants” (Stock, 2001).

termed a “ place of mobility ”³ : towns/cities and tourist places. Indeed, the research on cities or urban places acknowledge the function as market places (Bairoch, 1985) and, more sophisticated, defines cities as places “ who maximise face-to-face interactions ” (Claval, 1981 ; Lévy, 1994). That means the necessity of the presence of non-residents. In the same vein, tourist places are fundamentally places where “ strangers ” encounter locals⁴. Often, the opposition between “ insider ” and “ outsider ” is drawn in order to acknowledge that difference⁵. But, it seems also the presence of tourists in a tourist place is legitimate: through the acceptance of the local population – offer of hotels, bed & breakfast, tourist offices, signs, tour guides and so on.

These two problems lead to a major question for contemporary geography: to identify, in studies on particular or generic places, the presence of permanent *and* temporary inhabitants. Indeed, the generalized mobility leads, from the point of view of a place, to two modalities: inhabitants leave, others arrive.

Thus, the problem of mobility is not only a scientific problem, but also an ethical and political problem: which rights and which duties for non-residents? Which participation to the cost of their presence? The actual development, in Europe, of urban “ time politics ” is another attempt to solve the problem of presence of non-residents. But, there is also the other side of the medal: for individuals are mobile, they are not present all the time in their residence place. They may work in other places, go for holiday or business trips. They are “ temporary inhabitants ” of their home place (Stock, 2001).

2. Searching the adequate words for mobility

Nevertheless, what does “ mobility ” mean? How can we set up an adequate approach to this phenomenon? First of all, different definitions are possible: mobility as flux, as “ practice ” (Juan et al., 1997) and as “ system ” (Bassand et al., 1985). From the point of view of the individual, mobility can be approached as the expression of the localization of practices in an other place than the place of residence. The move from one place to another is an interesting topic of analysis : some of those itineraries concern familiar places, places of the quotidian ; others imply a *déplacement*, a move from the home place to places of otherness.

How to term the reality of mobility? We can try out six words for it: movement, migration, mobility, circulation, transport, *déplacement*. How to distinguish them?

First of all, we can distinguish “ migration ” and “ circulation ” (Zelinsky, 1971). “ Migration ” could be defined as a change of the place of living – the *espace de vie* or activity space (Frémont et al., 1984) – where the centre of gravity of the activity space changes. The research approaches different spatial scales of migration: international migration, interregional migration, migration from the country to urban places and so on. But, this implies also the definition of a temporal scale: usually, the year is the base of those changes, be it in the statistics or in research. Thus, the practice of a second home is not migration, because the temporal scale is often a weekly or monthly one. The temporal scale of a year

³ The term “ place of mobility ” is used by Thrift (1993) to speak of the actual geographical conditions : the “ not quite places of mobility ”

⁴ The german word “ Fremdenverkehr ”, “ traffic of strangers ” express this point.

⁵ See Relph (1976) for this distinction and an contestable appreciation of touristic places as “ other-directed places ” although he develops also a more subtle approach of the different ways being in relationship with a place.

means also that migration is an exceptional change of place, a break in the routine of everyday life. The change of place implies the encounter and the confrontation with a new place, often a strange place, which has to be transformed into a familiar place⁶. That is the most difficult for migrants moving from one country into another. One of the technologies of appropriation of places are in this context the networks of immigrants and the creation of clusters in metropolises⁷. Fundamentally, migration implies a change of dwelling.

“Circulation” does not necessarily imply to leave the *lieux de vie*, but expresses a temporary practice of places at the scale of the day, week or month. The lieu de vie does not change and the recursive practices take place in the space-time of the everyday life. The regularity is a pattern of the commuting, but also of numerous leisure practices. Often, the local or regional scale suffices for that kind of practices, although the high speed modes of transport allow the extension of the number of places accessible in a day. Indeed, for a Londoner, it is now possible to go for a day skiing in the Alps or to go clubbing in Ibiza; Parisians can go clubbing for a night in Dublin; Israelis have the possibility to go shopping for a day in London and so on. Circulation designs also the practices made in the non-everyday life: tourism is a perfect example. It implies the temporary abandon of the lieu de vie for other places situated in the sphere of the non-everyday life. But, the temporary practice which implies a retour distinguishes it from migration. Indeed, it does not question the integration in the (local, national) society and the circulation is practiced in regard to the place of residence, place of the everyday life.

“Transport” and “*déplacement*” (displacement?) do not define forms of movement, but the conditions of realisation of those movements. Some movements mean and imply a displacement of the person, others a simple transportation from one point to another. *Déplacement* means that the movements are made to “other places” (*lieux autres*) where the people go beyond a “horizon of alterity” (Lazzarotti, 2001). They are non-familiar places⁸. Individuals find there specific sense of place: that of break with the places of the everyday day which are familiar places. It is a definite break in the case of migrants or temporary in the case of touristic practices or business trips. “Transport” is reserved to a simple realisation of the movement where no break with the everyday life – even in the case of great distances. A certain routine in the practices comes into being where the individual does not raise the question of the when and the how. This is expressed by a perfect knowledge of the technologies of movement, like timetables of the trains or airplanes, but where reflexive practices exist at the moment of departure and arrival (Lahire, 1998; Juan et al., 1997). No particular effort is undertaken to produce the act, no particular preparation. We could say that if mobility is movement, then transport is movement without *déplacement*, that is individuals do not franchissent a “horizon of alterity”, whereas *déplacement* is enacting an alterity.

The ensemble of those differentiated movements, where the individual changes between circulation and migration, where he experiences successively transport and *déplacement*, could be termed “mobility”, also by including the values of mobility and immobility, the representations and the future movements (Lussault & Stock, 2003; Kaufmann, 2002). We can acknowledge with Remy (1996) that the contemporary most developed societies are

⁶ See Stock (2001 ; 2003) for the different ways of transformation of places from strange to familiar places.

⁷ The different “Chinatowns” in Paris, New York, San Francisco or “quartiers” of other ethnic groups (Koreans, Japanese, Indians, Pakistani) are examples of that.

⁸ Michel Foucault (? ? ?) speaks also of “ other places ”, which could be questioned by a “ heterotopology ”. But, the sense is not exactly the same : here, “ lieux autres ” means places where there is alterity for the individual.

societies where mobility is valued, whereas in the ancient regimes societies, immobility had been valued⁹.

Thus, mobility is a “system” at different scales: at the scale of society, it ties together. But, we could also work with the notion of “individual system of mobility” (Stock, 2001; 2003) where there are chains of movements, and interactions between for example touristic and business trips, migration and commuting (commuting as substitution for migration) and so on. This leads to the observation of very differentiated systems of mobility, characterized by more or less mobility, but also of different moments in the life-time, characterized by moments of immobility and hypermobility.

People practice a great number of movements and this raises the question of the adequate distinction between them: everything is “mobility” nowadays whereas everything has been “migration” till the 1990’s¹⁰. This does not solve the question of the new forms of mobility and the difference between the movements in an industrial society: the difficulties with the “international counter-urbanization” (Buller & Hoggart, 1994), soon termed “residential tourism” – which is a definitional absurdity because the antinomical character of residence and movement – are examples of movements that come into being and which we do not approach easily. If we recognize these problems, then the problem of classification of the practices arises. How can we draw adequate distinctions between the multiplicity of mobility practices ? What are touristic practices in relationship to leisure and business trips ?

3. Elements of a practice-based approach of mobility

We approach mobility as a practice¹¹. This leads to the construction of the knowledge of practices of mobility. More generally, the purpose is to understand/reconstruct what people do when associating practices and places. Thus, mobility is approached as a practice related to places. This approach is conceived in order to see practices not only as “social practices”, but also as “geographical practices”: they are always related to a place, they take place¹². One can advance the hypothesis that the different practices express and need different places to be *adequate*¹³. Moreover, each practice has its appropriate place¹⁴. But also, there is a different degree of “involvement” – to use the word of Elias (1991) describing a certain way of the being – or “insiderness” – to use the word of Relph (1976) as one way of being with places.

How can we define “practice”? Some elements will help us to *cerner* the meaning of this important concept in the social sciences. First, practice can be seen as what people do. In this,

⁹ This leads not necessarily to an adequation between practice and value : as Roche (2003) shows, in modernity is a society where immobility is valued, but where certain categories of persons are nevertheless mobile : compagnons, students, and so on.

¹⁰ In French geography it is interesting to observe this shift from “migration” to “mobility”: for a long time, the terms “migration domicile-travail” and “migration touristique” were current. Nowadays, the migration studies become more aware of the non-permanent character of “migrations”: the search for words who grasp this new realities illustrates this. For example, the expressions “circulation migratoire” or “mobilités post-migratoires” come into being as does “transmigration” in the anglo-american geography.

¹¹ Approaching mobility as place practices is embedded in the more general “practice turn” in social sciences in general (Schatzki, 2001). In geography, Thrift (1996), Werlen (1997), Lussault (2000), Stock (2001) acknowledge the importance of practice for the construction of space.

¹² See Casey (199 ?) and Entrikin (1991) for this point and Stock (2001) for the development of an approach of “*pratiques des lieux*”.

¹³ See Stock (2001) for the and *infra* for th

¹⁴ This is typically a question for the most developed societies, for the quest of adequation of practices and places is the most striking process of spatialisation.

“ practice ” seems to be different from “ behavior ” and “ action ”. The theoretical perspective is not that of a “ stimulus-response ” conception, as in the case of a theory of behavior, where the man-environment relationship is a mechanic one¹⁵. The distinction between “ action ” and “ practice ” is less clear. For Max Weber, “ *soziales Handeln* ” is action directed to another individual. The term “ practice ” takes at aim the process of “ doing ”, rather than “ action ”. It has been developed in different fields of social and human sciences (economy, sociology, linguistic), often termed “ praxeological perspective ”. It develops an opposition between “ representation ” and “ practice ” and is thus termed “ non-representational approach ” by Nigel Thrift (1996)¹⁶. It is without no doubt Pierre Bourdieu (1965 ; 1982 ; 2000) who insisted on this important : his theory of practice tries to express the tension between the individual and society by focussing on the habitus as a disposition socially and individually informed. Through regularity, the habitus is forged and used without reflexivity¹⁷. Further, Michel de Certeau (1990), by acknowledging the possibility for the individual not to execute the action as it is expected, is able to focus on the “ *manières de faire* ”. Indeed, practice is not only “ routinized ” practices as in “ non-representational ” approaches (see Bourdieu, 1980 ; Thrift, 1996) who are only in the domain of the everyday, but also non-everyday practices, as tourist practices, where the distanciation, the constraint of self-control is less necessary (Elias & Dunning, 1994).

Secondly, often “ practice ” refer to “ social practice ”, but there are other dimensions in practices than the social one. Indeed, practice has got also individual, temporal, spatial and symbolic dimensions. This had been developed by Norbert Elias (1996) who named this approach a “ penta-dimensional model ” of what human beings do. That means the practices are : 1) acted by human individuals: individual variation of practices and who express their Self in those practices and experience individually those practices. Individuals have got a singular history ” - past, present, future – and are informed by emotions, reflections and so on ; 2) socially informed : they are not only individual practices, but also socially informed for the individuals are embedded in social systems, there are socialized by the relationship to the other individuals and the social institutions ; 3) temporal dimension : practices are situated in temporal coordinates. They occur at a certain moment and for a certain *durée*. It’s a social and individual constructed time as the legislation of the working time assigns certain obligations, and the individual choice of time as “ *temps vécu* ” ; 4) spatial dimension : practices occur in places and spatially differentiated. Certain places are devoted to certain practices and are the context, referent of practices ; 5) symbolic dimension: all practices mean something, for the individual and for the other, as Schütz (1937) could show, the attention and intention of practices are directed to the society (*Fremdverstehen* versus *Eigenverstehen*). Moreover, the communication with other is made by symbols, language and others.

From a geographical point of view, it is interesting to note that all practices are also “ geographical practices ”, that is practices with reference – explicit, chosen, prevalent, intentional *or not* – to place, landscape, space, milieu and environment. The very differentiated ways of the use of the “ geographical ” in the practices are therefore an interesting research project. Practising places implies therefore the *in situ* character of places where the experience, and thus, the body, plays a certain role.

¹⁵ Nevertheless, the concept of “ affordance ”, as in Gibson’s (19 ?.) conception, seems to be adequate to describe the ways human beings are confronted with the environment. One condition is the socially constructed ways of recognizing objects in the environment.

¹⁶ Bourdieu (1972 ; 1982 ; 2000) is classically seen as the reference.

¹⁷ See Lahire (1998) for a critical appraisal of this way to think.

4. Towards a comprehensive approach of mobility

Individuals are practising places, but they don't practice only *one* place. That's why we speak of mobility. Indeed, we have to take into account the *ensemble* of place practices, what could be termed, from the individual's point of view, "individual system of mobility" (Stock, 2001)¹⁸. That would allow to consider the articulations and the possible substitution of different kind of mobilities¹⁹ : commuting as substitution for migration in case of the change of residence, links between business trips and touristic trips, etc. A comprehensive approach tries also to embrace, with a few clues to it, the different place practices which involve mobility.

Figure 1 : *The first distinction : everyday place/non-everyday place*

	Quotidian place	Non-quotidian place
“ De-routinized ” practices (here: recreation)	Leisure practices	Touristic practices
Routinized practices (here: work)	Commuting	Business trips, conferences,

Source: modified after Stock (2001), Knafou et al. (1997)

What could that mean, the distinction between quotidian and non-quotidian practices and places ? First, the difference between practices of everyday and non-everyday (*hors-quotidien*) lies in the more or less routinized, more or less “ de-routinized ” character of practices, that are practices where the constraints of the other people or emotions are more or less present (ELIAS & DUNNING 1994). Cette distinction s’insère dans une théorie qui considère que les hommes se trouvent dans des contextes où l’autonomie et le fait de pouvoir laisser libre cours aux pulsions sont plus ou moins permis et possibles. L’autocontention serait le propre des pratiques routinières du quotidien, les loisirs au contraire seraient une des possibilités d’avoir un moindre contrôle et donc des émotions plaisantes. “ *Le déroulement du fil théorique qui parcourt le spectre [du temps libre – M.S. & Ph.D.] permet de dire que toutes les activités de loisir expriment un relâchement contrôlé des contraintes sur les émotions. [...] Les classes du spectre du temps libre se distinguent en général par leur degré de ‘routinisation’ et de ‘dé-routinisation’, ou, en d’autres termes, par l’équilibre différent entre ces deux tendances dans chacune d’elles. La dé-routinisation va plus loin dans les activités de loisir, mais, là aussi, elle est une question d’équilibre. La déroutinisation et le relâchement de contraintes sur les émotions sont étroitement liés. Que ce relâchement des contraintes soit lui-même socialement et individuellement contrôlé est une des caractéristiques très nettes des activités de loisir, et ce non seulement dans les sociétés industrielles fortement ordonnées, mais, pour autant que l’on puisse en juger, dans toute*

¹⁸ See for the term “ system of mobility ” Bassand et al. (1985), Knafou (1998), Stock (2001).

¹⁹ See Bassand et al. (1985) and Rémy (1996) for the idea of “ substitution ” of mobilities.

autre société” (ELIAS & DUNNING 1994, p. 130). Those practices of more or less “auto-constraints ” can be localized either in places of the quotidian or in places “ out of quotidian ”. There are thus a multiplicity of practices which can be associated et executed in more or less familiar places. This leads to the hypothesis that mobile individuals dont develop the same relationship to places, according to the character of the places as familiar or non-familiar places (Stock, 2001).

Fig. 2 : *The second distinction : towards a “ geographical code ” of practices*

Quotidian (Q)	Choice (C)	Familiar (F)	Proximity (P)	“Non-exotic” (NE)
Non-quotidian (NQ)	Obligation (O)	Strange (S)	Far away (FA)	“Exotic” (E)

Source: authors’ conception

This double distinction is not sufficient to qualify the underpinnings of the practices of mobility. One way is to characterize the practice and the framework of effectuation, be it the quality of the places or the temporal dimension, as approached by the individuals. We can distinguish two first criteria that express the conditions of realization of the movement: 1) everyday/non-everyday²⁰ and 2) choice/obligation²¹. The first means, as already settled out, the break between routine and non-routine. Secondly, we could define by obligation the fact not being able to refuse a practice without breaking the existence of the integration in the social system(s). “Choice” is therefore the “non-obligation”, that is the possibility of a greater autonomy of decision-making. The difference between “business trip” and “touristic practices” lies primarily in the “choice” character of the latter and the “obligation” character of the first.

The three other criteria express the *qualities* of the place in regard to the relationship to the place the individuals tie at the moment of the observed place practice²². The purpose is to approach the differential between the place of departure (place of the quotidien) and place of arrival after the movement. This différentiel quality of place could be termed “alterity”: when people move, they move to other places, societies, persons, “selves”. The first question to ask is that of familiarity: is it a place that is regularly practiced or not? Is there rather a familiarity or rather a strangeness of the place? This is the distinction familiar/strange²³ that focusses on the place more or less regularly practiced. Nevertheless, the alterity is not only a question of frequentation or non-frequentation, but also a question of being introduced to the place by somebody or not. Indeed, the second distinction proximity/far away²⁴ focusses on the introduction by somebody (*mediateur*) or not. This mediation between the individual and the place is a very important point that often conditions the possibility of access to a place. Some places like Le Touquet-Paris-Plage are only accessible by persons who possess a second

²⁰ “*Quotidien/hors-quotidien*” in French

²¹ “*Choix/obligation*” in French

²² The word “ quality of place ” seems to be particularly adequate to describe what a place is *par rapport* an individual. It is Brunet (1990 ; 1993) who insists on this point.

²³ “*Familier/Étranger*” in French

²⁴ “*Proche/Lointain*” in French

home. To gain access to a place, individuals – if they do not possess the “keys” to it (in terms of cultural and economic capital, to choose Bourdieu’s words) – need technologies of mediation²⁵. It is thus rather not a physical distance. Finally, the alterity of a place could be measured by certain “objective” elements in regard to the individual: the non-exotic/exotic²⁶ focusses on the differences in language, alphabet, habits, food, sexuality, gendering and so on.

These elements define a certain “geographical code” of the practices (fig. 3) which corresponds to the combination of the different elements. Each practice – playing football, doing research, going on holiday, going to cinema and so on – can therefore be expressed by the different geographical dimensions.

Fig. 3: *Some examples of a geographical code of practices*

<i>Example of practices</i>	Geographical code	Abbreviation	Type of practice
<i>A Londoner going on holiday to Morocco</i>	Non-quotidian/Choice/Strange/Far away/Exotic	NQ-C-S-FA-E	<i>Touristic practice</i>
<i>A Londoner going to Marrakech to a conference</i>	Non-quotidian/Obligation/Strange/Far-away/exotic	NQ-O-S-FA-E	<i>Business trip</i>
<i>A Brightonian going to work in London</i>	Quotidian/Obligation/Familiar/Proximity/Non-Exotic	Q/O/F/P/NE	<i>Commuting</i>
<i>A Londoner going to Brighton & Hove to stroll on the beach</i>	Quotidian/Choice/Familiar/Proximity/Non-Exotic	Q/C/F/P/NE	<i>Leisure</i>

Source : authors’ conception

In this example, we can see that the first two elements have got a heavy importance to the classification of practices. “Quotidian/Non-quotidian” and “Choice/obligation” determine and the other elements can vary. Indeed, what is interesting, is that we can analyze different forms of mobility: for example tourist mobility is defined by the first two elements, and then are variable: we can go to places which are familiar, or non-exotic/exotic and so on. But also, we can see why there is so much confusion about the classification of practices, for example between touristic and business trips. Their geographical code is likely the same: the only element which changes, is the “choice” for touristic trips and “obligation” in the case of the business trips.

5. Questions and perspectives

This “geographical code” leads to 64 possible combinations of the conditions of realization and the qualities of the place. Some raise important question for research on mobility: for example, it is possible to associate a holiday trip to a familiar place (NQ-C-F-FA-E)? If yes, could this be termed “tourism”? More generally, these hypothetical insights raise two questions.

²⁵ The Tour Operators are one of those mediators which have permitted the access to holidays for people who had never traveled abroad, roughly from the 1950’s on.

²⁶ “Non-exotique/Exotique” in French

Firstly, how can we conceive a “system of mobility” for the individuals? Although it is important to conceive scientifically the ways of associating practices and places, it seems not sufficient to stay on an individual level, but to conceive a “system of mobility” (Bassand & Schuler, 1980; Knafou, 1998) which acknowledges the links, on an aggregate level, of the flux. Furthermore, we can formulate the hypothesis that each individual constructs an “individual system of mobility” (Stock, 2001).

Secondly, wouldn't the question of a “system of place practices” – with or without circulation or migration – be one way to approach the way of *dwelling* of the human societies? The concept of dwelling could be used at least in three ways in a geographical approach of mobility. Classically, geography approaches dwelling as the “human being on Earth”²⁷. This takes into account the irreducible human condition as individuals living on Earth, and the problems of the relationship with Nature. We could say that it is an cosmological approach which uses the concepts of a “human ecology”. Another approach seems possible, that of dwelling as spatiality of individuals²⁸. The difference to the first approach lies in the non-ecological problematic: the question is not the relationship to “human milieus” – as Berque (2000) expresses it –, but the relationship to places and the agency (*agencement*) of places. The more or less familiar, more or less strange places, the emotional embedding with places, which finally is one way of approaching the problematic of “lived space”²⁹. Finally, we could define dwelling, from the point of view of mobility, as the ensemble of place practices, including at once the practice of places and the relationship to places, imagined or practiced (Stock, 2001). In this perspective, we could conceive different “*modes d'habiter*”, more or less based on mobility, more or less based on sedentariness (Stock, 2003).

To conclude, social scientists face a moment in the development of societies where mobility constitutes more and more the condition of the realization of social action and social relationships. Multiple places are practised in multiple intentions. Practices are not only effectuated in one place, the home place, but also associated to other places, many places. Therefore, there are *déplacements* to do. It is this fact that expresses and can be called mobility. Trying to grasp some aspects of this association of practices/places which include or not movements, was the purpose of this paper. We have now to demonstrate and prove empirically those hypotheses.

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²⁷ A large literature draws upon this theme, beginning with Heidegger (1927) and the phenomenological approach in philosophy, but also in geography (Dardel, 1952; Relph, 1970; Tuan, 1971; Seamon & Mugerauer, 1989) and Berque (1999; 2000) for the most intelligent way to approach the question of “human milieus”.

²⁸ See Stock (2001) and Lévy & Lussault (2003)

²⁹ Merleau-Ponty uses the acception of the French word “habiter” to show one definitional possibility: intense involvement. Bollnow (1963) develops the idea of lived space, see also Lefebvre (1974) and Frémont (1972; 1976) for the development of the notion of “lived space”.

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