

The Construction of Contemporary Mobility

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Abstract

This paper stems from the issue of the mobility phenomenon, through the pathway tread by individuals in need of connection and access to an uninterrupted flow of information. In this informational, cultural and technological context, the presence of mobile devices, especially cell phones, stands out quite significantly. Such artifacts, which feature not only voice services, but also texting information and Internet connections, are increasingly present in urban settings, changing access, production, and dissemination of information. Therefore, on account of the mobilities paradigm and its connections to globalization theories and information societies, this article has aimed to discuss the role of information and mobile technologies in the constitution of the contemporary mobility pattern. Moreover, this paper has sought to identify and characterize the defining elements of the mobility era through information flows. Here, a prominent factor was the strength of the symbolic construction of a connected society that is constantly available for interactive processes. The connection made possible with the use of mobile technologies has become one of the most significant aspects of mobility for informational flows: connections are established for entertainment, work, study, location, consumption of goods and expression of feelings. Information processes resulting from a range of interactional operations and the mobility implemented by mobile technology have become increasingly complex and established new paradigms for the production, access, and dissemination of current information. This calls for a broader and more accurate view of what the era of mobility and connection is and what its demands are for a continuous flow of information.

Keywords: mobility, mobility paradigm, mobile devices, information flow, globalization theories.

1. Introduction

In the past 20 years, electronic and digital technologies revolutionized the way we produce, disseminate and access information. The Internet, as the ultimate symbol of these transformations, virtually recreates a world where economic, political, cultural and social forces are manifested by the hand of different individuals in distinct contexts.

However, the early 21st century witnessed the rise of another element set to take part in the contemporary informational scenario: mobility. In this sense, while, previously, there was time and place for information (search and access), now, most of our actions seem to interact around key-words followed by a "search"-button click. And, hence, we are armed with our mobile devices, immersed in Wi-Fi environments created by the very technological apparatuses which accompany us or which are spread around the spaces we move through. In certain aspects, such informational mobility spaces and devices eventually cause individuals to adopt characteristics of information users by requiring them to deal with decoding and operating informational systems and, thus, to be able to transit these environments as fluidly as possible.

Among artifacts which implement informational mobility, cell phones, currently converted into smart phones, receive major attention. Such mobile devices, which combine textual pieces of information and Internet connection, in addition to voice services, are increasingly present in the urban landscape. Laptops, palmtops, tablets, Wi-Fi networks, Bluetooth systems, among others, have also grown more widespread and become incorporated not only into the routine of major executives anxious to keep their work capacity available and connected while they are on the go, but also into the lives of individuals who, to a certain extent, demand constant access to information, personally or professionally.

On-the-move production and dissemination of information have significantly changed the way people get informed and relate to each other. By amplifying the capacity of interaction both among individuals and between those and information, such devices end up engendering a potentially ever-connected society; one which is available to participate in interactive processes where such devices work as interactive prostheses or human body extensions.

As previously predicted, mobile devices, more specifically cell phones, have become a type of mobile hub for information management in multiple formats, which means more flexibility for the user to handle information present in his/her personal and professional universe. Thus, there can be seen the emergence of a novel social texture stitched with information, connective devices, individuals and places. As they move around the space, individuals can contemporarily resort to certain devices which allow them to access and receive information while in transit. Therefore, more than understanding the technological structure which allows for the arrangement of this new informational environment, it is necessary to apprehend the cultural and social change underlying this process.

Consequently, this paper aims at reflecting on how mobile information and technologies (particularly cell phones) behave to implement today's mobility pattern. Such analysis is based on the identification and characterization of elements defining this era of mobility, engendered by informational flows via informational and communication technologies, and relies on theories and practices which support such mobility.

What stands out in regard to the era of mobility, when it is analyzed against the backdrop of the informational era, is the intertwining of physical movement and informational flows. Whereas, in the informational era, emphasis was not put on physical body movements but primarily on the fact that information could travel independently of the individuals producing it, in the era of mobility, although information still flows independently of the individuals who produce it, a universal state of connection which encompasses society cause information and physical motions to coincide, substantially modifying the contemporary landscape.

2. The Construction of Contemporary Mobility

The 21st century has witnessed an acceleration of movement: people, images, information, goods, everything seems to move around in a more dynamic and complex fashion. In this sense, several changes permitted such new state of mobility. Technological, cultural and social developments occurring in transport systems, in mobile communication devices, in border demarcation and its control mechanisms, as well as in other mobility systems and artifacts, are changing the conditions and possibilities of movement and affecting individuals more and more.

Nevertheless, it is noteworthy to mention that mobility is perceived and experienced in different ways. While, for some individuals, movement is faster and more frequent, allowing them to cover increasingly larger distances, for others, moving is somewhat troubled due to "rugosities (wrinkles)" – each place's preexisting conditions (material resources, social, economic and cultural organization) – which interpose themselves into this space of flows, as put so well by Milton Santos (2003).

"Nowadays, we live a world of rapidity and fluidity. It is virtual fluidity, made possible by the presence of new technical systems, mainly informational ones, as well as effective fluidity, accomplished when such potential fluidity is utilized in the carrying out of an action, by businesses and hegemonic institutions. Potential fluidity arises in people's imagery and in ideology as if it were a common good, fluidity for all, when, in fact, only a few agents have the possibility of using it, thus becoming the effective holders of speed." (Santos, 2003, p.83)

In this article, our perspective on mobility originates in the field of Social Sciences and features the mobilities paradigm, developed by John Urry (2007), as its theoretical and methodological framework. Based on the theoretical development and progressively more numerous empirical analyses concerning the mobility phenomenon in the most diverse aspects of life, there is, in Urry's view, the emergence of a novel way of conceiving the characteristics of economic, social and political relations, which would point to a *mobility turn* in the social sciences (URRY, 2007).

"Such a turn is spreading in and through the social sciences, mobilizing analyses that have been historically static, fixed and concerned with predominantly a-spatial 'social structures'. Contributions from cultural studies, feminism, geography, migration studies, politics, science studies, sociology, transport and tourism studies and so on are hesitatingly transforming social science and especially invigorating the connections, overlaps and borrowings with both physical science and with literary and historical studies. The mobility turn is post-disciplinary." (URRY, 2007, p. 6)

John Urry (2007), by developing the mobility paradigm, acknowledges and stresses the diversity of "views" on that theme. To him, issues concerning movement are at the core of attention by several segments of society, owing to the

actions and activities they seek to improve, control or even perform through movement. He goes to the point of stating that the notion of mobility is in the air, actually referring to a new way of thinking about and of perceiving the world and the things in it.

In the field of Social Sciences, Urry highlights the existence of theories and concepts which become connected, providing a basis for the construction of his mobility paradigm. Authors such as Georg Simmel, Walter Benjamin, Gilles Deleuze, Henri Lefebvre, Michel de Certeau and Erving Goffman are identified by Urry as precursors of the early notions on mobility. Currently, a successful theoretical development towards a "mobility turn" in the social sciences can be noticed in Paul Virilo's *Dromology*¹(1997), in Michel Serres' "Angels"² (1995), in Bauman's *Liquid Modernity*³ (2000), in Nigel Thrift's "*spacial turn*"⁴ as well as in Hardt&Negri's views about contemporary society (*Empire*, 2000)⁵.

In the author's words, "this paradigm examines how social relations necessitate the intermittent and intersecting movements of people, objects, information and images across distance". (Urry, 2007, p.54)

For our study, the mobility paradigm is important because of the status it confers on movement and, therefore, on the devices and systems which implement movement. Among the many aspects raised within the analysis proposed by Urry (2007), it is in our interest to comprehend how informational flows constitute themselves in the era of mobility and in what way these flows enable and register new subjectivities. Thus, we have adopted the mobilities paradigm as a background in order to analyze and understand those aspects related to people's movement, messages, pieces of information, images which, at times, overlap, coincide and converge through the digitalization of informational flows.

3. Methodology

When we look at the mobility engendered by informational flows, we attempt to understand how information and mobile technology contribute to the articulation and/or the implementation of today's mobility pattern. According to Urry (2007), there are several types of movement which are interconnected and dictate life's current pace. Among those cited by the author, we highlight: the compulsory movement of exiles, refugees, homeless people and migrants; work movement, which refers to professional travels for acquiring knowledge, to global executives, to daily work-related journeys (pendular migration), to the movement by workers seeking better opportunities around the world and, especially, to global cities; leisure and adventure movement, which encompasses a range going from young backpackers and *aupairs* in search of overseas experience, to package tours, to trips for visiting family and friends (strong ties in movement).

In this context, based on the types of movement described by Urry, we set out to screen some subjects whose mobility is an intrinsic part of their lifestyle and whom we later interviewed. Here, we chose to look for subjects who move around impelled by work as well as by leisure and a wish for adventure, which, in part, would characterize a more autonomous mobility, not entirely compulsory. With regard to recruiting subjects who met those characteristics, we adopted a strategy similar to that by sociologist Stanley Milgram, who carried out an experiment in the 1960's with the objective of capturing the degrees of separation existing among individuals. (Kadushin, 2004; Recuero, 2004.)

In Milgram's experiment, people were invited to try to make contact with others who had been previously indicated by the researcher. Accordingly, the first endpoint was supposed to establish as many connections as necessary to reach his/her target contact person. All this was performed by means of (mailing) letters and, in the end, Milgram was able to find that, out of the successfully established contacts, the number of links needed in order to reach the final target was

¹Dromology: science or logic of speed and acceleration (understanding today's individuals as kinetic subjects, constituted with the condition of moving in the cognitive, emotional and affective planes and in the relationship with others).

²To Serres, society is built through communication, thus he acknowledges that, nowadays, social ties are increasingly based on the circulation of information. He uses angels as metaphors for informational networks and flows. Serres, Michel. *A Lenda dos Anjos*. São Paulo, Aleph, 1995. 304p.

³By citing fluidity, lightness and mobility as characteristics of liquids, Bauman, subsequently, uses them as metaphors capable of capturing the essence of the new phase of modernity.

⁴Thrift, Nigel. Movement-space: the changing domain of thinking resulting from the development of new kinds of spatial awareness. *Economy and Society* 33:4 (November 2004): 582-604.

⁵The text proposes a reflection on the articulation existing between contemporary phenomena such as new information technologies, developments in genetics, the crises of national states, the social organization into networks, capital flows, ecological conflicts, etc. Such phenomena are approached in their interconnections, thus characterizing a new form of power, conceived by the authors as 'Empire'. "Hardt, M and Negri, A. *Empire*, Cambridge, Mass, Harvard University Press, 2000, 478 pp.

small, that is, there were few degrees of separation among individuals; hence the *small world* model present in analyses of social networks (SNA)⁶.

In the context of this research, letters were replaced with social network contacts. Out of a complex network formed by “friends, friends of friends”, six subjects were selected who met the abovementioned profiles and who were willing to cooperate with the research.

Five of the interviews were held via Skype. The interview with the “adventurer” was the only one conducted via e-mail due to the difficulty in reconciling a suitable time slot and quality internet connection so as to ensure a complete via-voice conversation. Interviews were recorded and lasted 35-40 minutes, on average.

In-depth Interviews held in 2011					
	Country of Origin	Place of Residence	Age	Mobile Devices	Gender
Interviewer 1 (Journalist)	Brazil	Moscow, Russia	26 years	iPhone4 and Notebook	M
Interviewer 2 (Researcher)	Brazil	Campinas, Brazil	N/A	iPhone4, Tablet and Notebook	F
Interviewer 3 (former-Executive)	England	Minneapolis, EUA	78 years	Palm-Treo and Notebook	M
Interviewer 4 (Adventurer)	Argentina	Somewhere in Australia	25 years	Nokia and Notebook	M
Interviewer 5 (Musician)	Brazil	São Paulo, Brazil	31 years	iPhone4 and iPad2	M
Interviewer 6 (TV Producer)	Brazil	Maputo, Mozambique	28 years	BlackBerry and Notebook	F

Table1. Interviewers' Profiles

Questions were formulated with the intent of describing and characterizing movement as well as perceiving how mobile technologies interrelate with such mobility in terms of access to information and of personal and professional interactions. Audios with the interviewers' narratives were transcribed and analyzed in relation to each other according to thematic blocks. Thus, we approached the concept of narrative as the very act of telling, explaining and analyzing behavior or as the way individuals deal with mobility through informational flows. The following questions guided our analysis: What is in fact “mobility” when we associate all these perspectives together? What is regular for these profiles, and what is discrepant? The goal behind this approach was to capture the place of technology and information in situations of mobility (mobility engendered by information flows.) What interests us is to show that, although subjects are distinct and have each a peculiar mobility, there are some regularities in their behavior and perception of movement. Individuals are mobile because they mobilize themselves in the form of information. Their social and cultural processes become informational flows.

4. Mobility Narratives: accounts and practices in movement

It is well known that an individual's relative position in the space of flows will determine whether he or she will be able to follow such movement, thus having a more effective presence in such scenario. Those who are not to be found strategically positioned in this space, while coordinating the directions and intensity of flows, are drifted downstream.

In this manner, for our study, a choice was intentionally made for subjects belonging to the category named

⁶ Studies about networks were developed within two traditions, the first being Social Network Analysis (SNA), with strong roots among sociologists focused on the employment of quantitative methods, while the second circle reflects on the anthropological issues of these networks. Currently, several studies carried out in the field of Information Science favor both approaches. Although studies are often conducted on the basis of Social Network Analysis, the insertion of a qualitative perspective approximates them also to social anthropology. The social networking phenomenon, under the light of Information Science, admits analyses related to informational flows, to interpretative and cognitive processes and to actions by individuals in distinct spaces. The metaphor and methodology of networks are present in studies about social movements, scientific communities, organizational environments, and spaces of flow created by communication and information technologies, to name but a few.

"globally mobile" by Bauman (1999). Such subjects are thus called because their movement is not compulsory, even if it is subject to certain job requirements: those subjects easily transpose the real and the virtual spaces. They differ from the ones who constitute the "locally-tied" world, for whom the territory is enclosed around and presents with the impossibility of conquering the "space and the virtual access to distances which remain stubbornly inaccessible in effective reality". (BAUMAN, 1999, p. 96)⁷

Dwellers of the first world and of the second world: this is how Bauman (1999) characterizes the social types emerged according to whether they are capable of moving or not, as mentioned before. The cosmopolitan and extraterritorial first world, according to the author, is inhabited by "global businesspeople, global culture controllers and academicians". As for the other side, "for the inhabitants of the second world, walls constituted of immigration control, residency laws, the "clean street" policy and "zero tolerance" have grown higher; ditches which strand them from their places of desire and from their dream redemption have become deeper, whereas every bridge turns out to be a drawbridge as soon as they try to cross it." (BAUMAN, 1999, p. 97)

Although the discourse of mobility presents, on the surface, a romanticized view of movement, one which merges with an image of a cosmopolitan individual, who initially looks at the world from a humanized and open-minded perspective upon meeting new cultures, that discourse is fostered by capital flows. Therefore, elimination of temporal and spatial distances engendered by technology does not make the human condition more homogeneous; instead, it eventually produces a polarization between those who see themselves emancipated from territorial restrictions and those tied to a senseless territory who, as a result, can no longer withdraw meaning or even identification from it. (BAUMAN, 1999)

In this regard, it is worth referring back to Bauman's work (2001) when he alerts us to the fact that in the "solid stage of the modern era", nomad habits were perceived negatively and, in such a context, being a citizen meant to avail oneself of a fixed place, settle down in (a) space (work, family, social position). Nowadays, on the other hand, while vagabonds and homeless people are still perceived negatively, nomadism makes a comeback as personified by global extraterritorial elites. "The contemporary global elite is composed of absent nobles", he says.

As described by Augé (2010), our present-day nomads do not resemble the ones typically featured in ethnographic studies, either. They do not search for sense in a territory, in a place, in time or in the return. Their nomadism is configured in the context of a "supermodern"⁸, mobility which:

"(...) is expressed by population movements (migration, tourism, and professional mobility), general instant communication and circulation of goods, images and information. It corresponds to the paradox of a world where we can hypothetically do everything without moving out of place and where we nevertheless move around." (AUGÉ, 2010, p. 15-6)⁹

From this perspective, these nomads would roam through "non-places", which, according to Augé (2000), represent spaces of transience where it is not possible to initiate a process of identity construction. Consequently, "non-places" are opposed to anthropological places because the former cannot be that which is defined by the latter: identity, relational and historical. Such spaces materialize in highways, in large supermarkets, in shopping centers, airports, that is, in spaces of flow.

In Augé's argumentation (2000), anthropological places begin to dissolve as supermodernity starts imposing itself on account of time and space excesses as well as those by individuals. Concerning the latter, as soon as there is a weakening of collective references associated with what Canclini (1999) called the space of historic territorial culture (time vs. space), the rise of an exacerbated individualism can be witnessed. Thus, by compromising with that which is transitory, non-places impose loneliness upon individuals, since the former are occupied by travelers, individuals in transit incapable of relating to those with whom they physically share this space of flows, in the author's view.

However, what we will perceive from the following narratives is that, many times, non-places can be given new meanings through the use of mobile technologies as they actualize an absent presence. But they can also transform places into non-places insofar as a presence becomes absent by engaging in interaction processes. Their commitment to

⁷ All of the excerpts of Bauman's books mentioned on this article have been loosely translated back into English from the Portuguese version.

⁸ "Super", in the author's words, has the meaning of the English term "over", indicating an "abundance of causes which complicate the analysis of effects". (AUGÉ, 2010, p.15)

⁹ Excerpts of Augé's book "Por uma antropologia da mobilidade" have been loosely translated into English from the Portuguese version.

a certain technology can be so absorbing that people seem to have been erased from the settings they inhabit. “One is physically present but is absorbed by a technologically mediated world of elsewhere.” (GERGEN, 2002, p. 227)

The narratives and practices of individuals in movement put in perspective concepts which are dear to the theme of mobility – copresence, proximity, productive mobility, space of flows, informational territories, ubiquity – and offer us a rich and complex scenario for understanding the relationships among individuals, devices and information in situations of mobility.

4.1 Narratives in perspective

On the basis of the interviews carried out for this study, we can observe that, although individuals have distinct motivations behind movement and transit specific mobility contexts, there are regularities in such behaviors and in the very perception of mobility.

One of the first aspects to be highlighted concerns the fact that individuals perceive movement itself as a constituent and characteristic aspect of their lifestyle, whether this movement is seen from a broader perspective (moving to another city, trips) or considered as a movement of smaller amplitude, related to daily routine.

There is no pattern. I don't know what is going to happen next month. Suddenly, a gig comes up and then we go wherever. So, it's always been like this. But, usually, on weekdays, I am in São Paulo, dealing with musical stuff. (Interviewee 5)

It's quite a long time I haven't had a fixed routine. Since I graduated from college, I've been travelling around the world. (Interviewee 4)

My routine is, actually, little routine. (Interviewee 1)

Hence, mobile technologies, in their different manifestations - smartphones, portable computers, tablets - are of great importance to the interviewees, as fundamental partners for the accomplishment of several activities associated with their work and personal universes.

My job would disappear if I didn't have access to all of this stuff. So, in a way, I exist because of the tools which are available. If the tools were not available, I could not do my job and therefore my job would not exist. My position would not have any value. (Interviewee 3)

I frequently use my cell phone to check (my) Twitter (page). Facebook (too), obviously, but not as much as Twitter. I also check my e-mails. I also use (my) iPhone to rehearse, because I have an app to connect my guitar to it. I use it as well to check my bank accounts: I access and use the bank apps. Ah, and I am a columnist for a site that talks about Palmeiras (soccer team) and, sometimes, I write the columns with (my) iPhone (itself). (Interviewee 5)

Here in Moscow, I use my mobile phone to do almost everything! Such as purchasing subway or train tickets. In Western Europe you don't get much of this, but here in Moscow it's an extremely common practice. There is a terminal (machine) to which you simply approach your mobile phone and it validates your pass. And, if there isn't one at the entrance, the guards also have a device which permits checking the ticket through the phone. It is also possible to do the same thing to purchase cinema and theater tickets. (Interviewee 1)

An aspect that catches our attention concerns the sense of security promoted by the constant access to mobile technologies. This is revealed by the subjects' narratives when they claim to feel freer to move as they can easily access fixed or mobile points in their multiple networks of connection (virtual copresence).

It's all very dynamic, the only existing pattern is that I have my Twitter, my Facebook, my e-mails, this is my island. In spite of being at different places, one settles in to something. In the virtual world, you have your fixed environment, don't you? (Interviewee 5)

Another aspect which presents itself somewhat linked to the sense of security, but relates primarily to these technologies being widely disseminated – causing individuals not even to realize how immersed they are in connective environments (transparent/ubiquitous technologies) –, involves the uneasiness caused when it is not possible to access mobile networks.

I don't know, I think that this movement, this dynamic is something you take for granted; you don't even stop to think (about it). I mean, you only stop to think (about it) when you are without it, when you get blocked. As it happened to us in China and as it happened other times– running out of battery, or having technical problems with the network, losing signal. I'm talking as if cybernetics here in Mozambique were marvelous. Sometimes, here, the telephone network doesn't help. Mobile telephony breaks and the whole country stays out of communication. The entire system here is by means of optical fiber and, when it gets ruptured, all these problems happen. Ah, here we also face the problem of network traffic overload. (Interviewee 6)

The only thing that annoys me is when the whole thing doesn't work. The day before our interview, there was a tornado in Campinas and, here at home, lights went out at 6pm. Do you know what time it came back on? One in the morning! So, I used up the notebook battery and all the phone battery to do the things I needed. Even the candle burned out (laughs), since I was typing with a candle beside me and then, the candle burned out, there was nothing else I could do and so I went to bed. This cloud thing is much more productive when you have a corresponding structure. Everything works better, everything goes right. Here we go ahead with "little blows" (little steps =move unsteadily). (Interviewee 2)

Last year I went to Byelorussia to cover the elections, and I had both my Russian and a Byelorussian telephone. And my editors in Brazil already knew that my Byelorussian phone would be blocked because Byelorussia is a dictatorship. So, they would call me on the Russian telephone and I dictated the news story via telephone. At the time of the vote counting, I was at the square and all the journalists were deprived of telephone (service). The telephones provided by Byelorussia's consulate were cut, we were without Facebook, the sites of opposition parties were taken down, we couldn't connect to Google and then a way out was to use the telephones of our "home" countries. The solution was to dictate the information and my editor in Brazil managed to give it its final form. (Interviewee 1)

In order to prevent this type of situation from happening, some participants end up adopting procedures to guarantee that information, or certain actions, deemed important, will always be at hand or easily accomplished.

I think what you try to do is try to anticipate when this may happen. So you don't lose control of the situation. You try to anticipate when the person you need to talk to will not be available or if you are not going to be available. (Interviewee 3)

Here in Brazil, if you are at a place where everybody else decides to use the connection, then you get (cut) offline, or everything gets very slow. Then, using cloud computing in such a precarious situation is quite difficult. Even our broadband connection is very bad. Our internet is very slow. And, for me, it's no use, I always try to carry my files on me, but they are never as updates as those I upload to the cloud. (Interviewee 2)

Issues linked to the concept of productive mobility also appear rather frequently in their narratives. According to Urry (2007), the development of information and communication technologies paved the way for what has been conventionally called productive mobility. The author stresses that, in this context, mobile technologies permitted not only the typical activities related to being in movement but also the accomplishment of several other activities, mainly those associated with work and more personal interactions. The spaces of interaction created by this movement are named *interspaces* by Urry (2007). "These are places of intermittent movement where groups come together, involving the use of phones, mobiles, laptops, SMS messaging, wireless communication and so on, often to make arrangements 'on the move'." (URRY, 2007, p. 12)

The potentialities provided by mobile technologies to perform the micro-coordination of daily life have already been discussed by other researchers, such as LING (2004), KATZ & AAKHUS (2002), and are frequently utilized in advertising campaigns involving mobile devices. Since the pace of modern life imposes an accelerated routine upon individuals, for a portion of the adult, urban and economically active population, mobile devices have increased the possibility to coordinate everyday activities from a distance.

Thus, individuals who make use of mobile technologies, by integrating them to different activities along their daily routine, eventually establish new ways of "being in the world", situating themselves between real and virtual movement, on account of the informational flows which they produce, access and disseminate.

Besides permitting an improved coordination of activities, as there is the possibility to better organize routines, the access and production of information in movement seem to shorten distances.

As regards mobile information, time travels faster and we get closer to those things we are used to: family, friends, work. You receive an important e-mail from work and manage to answer it in time. I remember (last) year's end, when I was about to travel, and then an assignment came along, the title sequence for "Cinema em Casa" (Home Cinema), on New Year's Eve. If it were like in the past, the person would have probably called me at home, and after not reaching me,

would have given the job to someone else. (Interviewee 5)

In the narratives presented, we observe that the connection provided by the use of mobile technologies is one of the most significant aspects of mobility through informational flows. We get connected for leisure, work, studying, directions, shopping for goods and expressing feelings. All the time, through the use of these technologies, we corroborate our presence in the world. The important points previously highlighted reveal distinct subjects in mobility and the type of needs they have to connect their lives. Thus, we regard the mobile individual as a subject who, at every moment, reconfigures his or her mobility needs, combining physical movement, technology and exchange of information together.

5. Final Considerations

Putting oneself in movement, be it physically, or through the information which circulates in mobile networks, is something that, for a determined social group, has become a lifestyle. We can even state that the intensification of physical movement rises from the capacity of individuals to keep connected to each other most of the time: accessing and disseminating information. Thus, experiencing the simultaneity of events that occur distant from one another in space eventually becomes commonplace, while informational flows intertwine in a hectic pace determining the pulsation of these travelers in and out of places and “non-places”.

In addition to the perception that locomotion time is reduced – as is taken up by other activities –, the presence of technologies of movement also brings about the perception of proximity to things that are important to individuals, such as family, friends and work.

Routines are changed; so are work and friendships; even love becomes more liquid (Bauman, 2004). Once individuals get so accustomed to constant access to and the siege of technologies, troublesome situations arise from moments when it is not possible to establish a connection.

Certainly, the expansion of ‘the wireless platform’ represented a significant change regarding informational exchanges. Therefore, access to technologies, nowadays increasingly impacted by the characteristics of mobility, is not a sole major factor in the composition of a society in which individuals can exercise their citizenship but, as put by Augé (2010), mobility in space, despite being a distant ideal for many, becomes a condition that allows for a “real education and concrete apprehension of social life”.

However, he alerts us to the fact that we must not lose our capacity to move in time. When we live in a world of simultaneity, of immediacy, managing to accomplish mobility in time represents a major step towards the most authentic form of freedom: the mobility of spirit. That is because, by becoming aware of time, we divert our eyes from the perennial present and move across history, thus becoming able to develop a less “naïve or credulous” view, and setting ourselves free.

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