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# Geographical re-placement

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**Re-placement is defined as the crossing of functional boundaries of geographical space without crossing the social and cognitive boundaries that result from the socialization to the geographical space of the individual who has moved. The concept of re-placement relegates the functionalist approaches of geographical accessibility and the notion of potentiality to the background, in order to emphasize the relationship to geographical space and examine socio-spatial segregations from the standpoint of daily mobilities.**

## Short definition

Re-placement is defined as the crossing of functional boundaries of geographical space without crossing the social and cognitive boundaries that result from the socialization to the geographical space of the individual who has moved. The concept of re-placement relegates the functionalist approaches of geographical accessibility and the notion of potentiality to the background, in order to emphasize the relationship to geographical space and examine socio-spatial segregations from the standpoint of daily mobilities.

## Long definition

Re-placement is a proposed concept to analyze geographical mobilities based on grouping destinations according to spatial category, in order to grasp their regularities by analyzing the relationship to the individuals' geographical space rather than by more cognitive notions such as routines or habits. Unlike the notion of mobility centered on location, this concept makes it possible to approach people's daily mobilities according to a relational approach that uses an important interdisciplinary concept in social science: that of position, or placement. Re-placement therefore refers not to the act of moving

from one location to another, but to one's repositioning according to one's geographical, social or cognitive affinities (Ramadier, 2017).

To re-place oneself is to cross the functional borders of the geographical space without crossing social and cognitive borders. A relational and socio-cognitive approach complements the interactionist and rationalist approaches (skills, constraints, preferences, habits, etc.) which have so far been dominant. With re-placement, geographical regularity is no longer a competence to be mastered by people (a habit or a routine), one that can predict a spatial practice, but a specific relationship to geographical space.

From a geographical point of view, what makes it possible to understand how the regularity of daily mobility is organized is not the observation and recording of an absolute location (to be or not to be somewhere) but a type of frequented place, that is to say a spatial category constructed by the researcher from hypotheses formulated on people's processes of spatial categorization.

Re-placement addresses mobility not from a single space, but by thinking of geographical space, psychological space (the cognitive space or the space of representations) and social space as inseparable. Re-placement thus helps us to understand the reasons why daily trips are geographically very stable, since 70% of daily trips are spatial regularities (Ramadier, 2017), all the while differing from one social group to another in terms of destination. It also makes it possible to renew the analyzes of social segregation in space, this time including daily mobilities. Indeed, until now, this issue has been almost exclusively studied on the basis of mobility and residential settlements.

To return to the analysis of the regularities of frequented places, an analysis based on their socio-historical forms (historic town centers, urban town centers, former suburban village-centers, large housing estates, residential areas of the first or second suburban rings, etc.) makes it possible to illustrate the notion of re-placement in the context of daily travel. [1] After drawing up a map of the urban forms of Strasbourg (Ramadier et al., 2011), we calculated, from the household travel survey, the share of destinations which had the same socio-physical characteristics as the place of residence (all trips below 500 meters were however excluded from the analysis). As shown in the table below, the most frequent destinations are systematically those which "resemble" the urban form of the place of residence (with the exception of trips originating in the village centers of peri-urban areas). In other words, through a narrow analysis of re-placement, namely a displacement towards a place that is equivalent to that with which the individual is most familiar (the urban forms of the place of residence), we find that re-placement represents between 12 and 36% of daily trips. Insofar as social segregation in space is strongly correlated with the

different spatial categories analyzed, notwithstanding the familiarity in how we understand the geographical space, the social dynamics linked to destinations (friends' homes, workplaces, etc.) also contribute to the observed phenomenon. Finally, re-placement is all the more important as the place of residence is symbolically and geographically "central." In other words, this re-placement modality is probably not of the same magnitude for all social groups. Other, more elaborate hypotheses on spatial categories must be tested in order to understand more precisely the geographical regularities of daily movements. The sociological composition of places and the processes of socialization to public space and geographical mobility are probably the most fruitful avenues to investigate.

| Spatial category of destination | Spatial category of residence | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Historical Center | Center, large buildings | Old integrated centers | Large housing estates | Residential gardens | Residential large gardens | Village and extensions | Public building zones |
| Agrarian zones | 1.29 | 6.14 | 3.87 | 4.97 | 7.25 | 7.06 | *10.64* | 5.02 |
| Forests | 3.95 | 3.64 | 7.44 | 6.74 | 8.38 | 7.34 | 5.01 | 5.88 |
| Historical Center | **36.29** | *13.50* | *11.15* | 8.59 | 9.38 | 9.98 | ***12.21*** | ***14.01*** |
| Center, large buildings | *14.65* | **27.32** | 8.02 | 7.58 | 8.96 | 9.70 | 5.95 | 9.17 |
| Old integrated centers | 4.94 | 5.82 | **21.49** | *11.33* | *11.67* | ***11.02*** | 8.14 | *13.15* |
| Large housing estates | 3.95 | 6.47 | 8.81 | **13.89** | 8.59 | 7.86 | 2.19 | 7.27 |
| Residential with gardens | 3.87 | 6.95 | 6.77 | 9.81 | **11.67** | *9.70* | ***12.36*** | 8.48 |
| Residential large gardens | 1.52 | 2.75 | 4.15 | 3.62 | 5.84 | 7.40 | 7.51 | 3.29 |
| Village and extensions | 1.14 | 1.05 | 1.02 | 1.26 | 1.33 | 1.43 | 9.86 | 2.08 |
| Industrial & commercial areas | 2.05 | 3.72 | 4.97 | 5.01 | 6.92 | 7.00 | 8.45 | 5.71 |
| Public building zones | *17.46* | *12.13* | 9.47 | *10.78* | 8.17 | 7.40 | 6.89 | *12.63* |
| Stadiums, sports areas | 2.13 | 2.67 | 4.93 | 5.22 | 3.17 | 2.75 | 3.44 | 4.50 |
| *Total* | *93.24%* | *92.16%* | *92.09%* | *88.80%* | *91.33%* | *88.64%* | *92.64%* | *91.18%* |

Figure 1: Distribution, by percentage, of urban forms of destination according to that of the place of residence

# Development

The blind spot in terms of how daily mobility shapes social morphologies in space, as well as in terms of their socio-spatial permanence, seems linked to the temporary and labile

characteristics attributed to these spatial practices. In order to explain re-placement, it is therefore important first of all to return to the scientific conceptions of geographical displacement at a time when the notion of mobility dominates and the concept of flow is popular. Moreover, more and more scientific disciplines are now interested in the conditions and effects of spatial practices, thus diversifying the topics of inquiry: travelling to a place, coveting a remote resource, taking place or positioning oneself elsewhere, redefining a spatial situation, etc. It should be noted from the outset that while the other spatio-temporal categories of travel (migration, travel and residential mobility) won't be addressed here, this is for the sake of simplifying the presentation of this socio-cognitive dimension of geographical displacement. Indeed, re-placement transcends the scientific categories of travel. For example, some works in environmental psychology on residential mobility show that beyond the social and economic characteristics involved, an individual's new place of residence is not unrelated to the one he just left (Feldmann, 1990). These results highlight a principle of psychological continuity in the relationship to residential space, which is based on urban dimensions (urban forms and architecture) as well as geographical dimensions (spatial position in urban space). It is precisely on this relationship between geographical change and stability, generalized to all dimensions of geographical space (physical, social, functional, symbolic, etc.), that the principle of re-placement is based.

## Mobilities that are synonymous with change

There are now innumerable works praising the transformations that mobilities have facilitated in people's social conditions, in their relationship to geographical space, and more generally in their lifestyles. Such works lead us to focus on "flagship" transformations, such as "long-distance commuters," or the geographical changes in lifestyles that more generally affect social structures (Urry, 2005). In short, "mobility" is synonymous with change. In fact, its primary function in social science - social mobility (Sorokin, 1927) - emphasizes the passage from one social stratum to another, with space here being social. Nevertheless, some works show that those who transfer across the social space also carry traces of the social dispositions of their previous position (Gaulejac, 1987), especially socio-spatial ones. Thus, the first challenge for a socio-cognitive approach of the permanencies at the heart of a given trip consists in approaching mobilities from a different angle than from a single space. The notion of re-placement implies adding simultaneously the contributions of both the geographical space and the space of internalized positionings (the cognitive space or the space of representations) to the positions in the social space. These three spaces (of geography, sociology and psychology) don't exist independently of each other (Ramadier, 2017). In other words,

neither of them is the basis for another, rather they each add a dimension (Veschambre, 2006) to the others' foundation.

Geographical displacements as potentialities built with the notion of accessibility Two fundamental notions drive the representations, evaluations, analyzes and diagnoses related to daily travel: accessibility and potentiality. To summarize the evolution of their conception and place in research, we will rely on the three main stages of how science has addressed geographical movements (Borja et al. 2014): the approach by flows, by travel and finally by mobility.

### From accessibility as a synonym for geographical potential...

With the notion of flow (and transport), the conception of geographical travel is based on technical and infrastructural dimensions. The purpose of this approach is to facilitate the movement of goods and people. Accessibility is then studied independently of travel. Above all, it describes possibilities without accounting for the conditions of such possibilities, with which individuals are grappling. It covers entirely the notion of potentiality of travel. But this geographical dimension of accessibility enables, as with anamorphoses, [2] the introduction of a relational approach into a geolocation system, initially built from a geometric frame of reference which tends to essentialize places. However, in this relational approach, accessibility is only an additional spatial quality which is generally subordinate to the geolocation system. Travel practices are not far off, but they remain implicit and in the background, although they are also constructed and analyzed with mathematical flow models. These practices don't yet have a direct link with accessibility. The former contribute to the analysis of how existing infrastructure functions while the latter intervene in their construction. Re-placement is also based on a relational approach to the localization system by considering a location no longer as merely a geographical object, but as a socially constructed spatial category.

### ... to potentiality as a dimension of spatial practices

From the mid-1970s, daily trips were apprehended more from an instrumental approach than from a technical one. Directed towards the resources coveted by the traveler, daily trips are here constructed at the individual scale and defined as being subordinate to an activity (Cullen and Godson, 1975). The concept of accessibility is now based on services and facilities (health, shopping centers, etc.). However, its calculation and analytical reasoning (access to a particular resource, number of accessible resources, etc.) have not undergone any major transformation, making accessibility a dimension of practice that is more theoretical than empirical. This is partly because activities are studied from a list of

georeferenced resources established by the researcher, regardless of whether the individual is aware of them or if they are really resources for him. The cost of travel becomes a central dimension, the modalities of which vary according to the disciplinary approach: price, mental workload, physical effort, interpersonal relationships, etc. The notion of geographical potentiality retains an important place and compounds the confusion between accessible and existing resources. In this model, an accessible resource is an existing resource that is more or less easy to reach depending on the context of the practice (equipment, household structure, etc.). Re-placement seeks to remedy this pitfall by limiting itself to actual spatial practices in qualifying accessibility. Only resources within the realm of possibilities and coveted by the individual are considered in the analysis.

From the mid-1990s, the "mobility paradigm" partially helped overcome this issue by further focusing the notion of accessibility on individuals and their social and cognitive conditions. This time it is based on the individuals' ease of movement, that is to say on their mastery of geographical distances and their movements. Accessibility is now a component of the practice, something which was already proposed by Time Geography (Hagerstrand, 1970) all the while limiting the analysis to the individuals' spatio-temporal context. However, what is targeted is not the various ways of doing things but the amount of control individuals have over travel modes, and their attitudes and values with regards to travel. Grouped around the concept of motility (Kaufmann, 2001), this interactionist approach duplicates the potential of a displacement by attributing it partly to the geographical space and its arrangement, and partly to the individual, as proposed for instance by the notion of reversibility. [3] Potentiality retains an important place, as evidenced by the definition proposed by Levy and Lussault (2003) who include it in their definition of mobility. [4] One can wonder what the reasons may be for such relentlessness in giving so much importance to the notion of potentiality in a geographical displacement.

## The stability of geographical movements

This insistence on securing a place for potentiality stems from a scholastic bias in favor of those who observe the spatial practices of others (researchers, managers, traders, etc.) instead of the ways in which people move about. For example, the potential is reintroduced into the cognitive notion of a habit to emphasize the predictability of practices (or the obstacles to behavioral change). But one may wonder whether being able to plan for a known destination or ensuring a certain familiarity once there (a socio-spatial condition that can be transposed geographically) [5] is the reason why 70% of weekly

urban trips are to destination for which the individual doesn't consider any alternative or particular planning, much less any indirect opportunity linked to a geographical location (passing nearby, for example). Especially since the strong stability of daily trips can be observed in Quebec just as in Strasbourg, whether one is retired or working (Ramadier, 2010).

With re-placement, we argue that destinations relate to something other than automatic reflexes, habits or routines. Indeed, research based on these notions analyses the modes of travel or planned activities much more than the destinations, which thus become a blind spot of geographical constancies. They are not automatic reflexes because nothing tells us that the geographical stability of movements observed at a given time has the same geographical content at another. They are not routines either because a stable destination, for a given activity, can be subject to temporal adjustments if the context requires it (for example, the habit of shopping in a particular store but changing, on different occasions, the day of the week and/or time of the day). Finally, they are not habits insofar as what breeds a feeling of familiarity (environmental meanings, ways of behaving, etc.) in some contexts rather than others, is less the learning of a skill through repetition than a specific relationship to the geographical space based on socio-cognitive dispositions. A habit is a concept which, in a way, makes a bet on future practices based on past regularities, which is why the notion of potentiality is still very much present. Re-placement seeks to grasp the regularities of people's relationship to space from the reconstitution of places as spatial categories which are already practiced.

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## Notes

①To our knowledge, only the articles by Slater (2008) and Anstiss et al. (2018) explicitly use the notion of re-placement in terms of the socio-cognitive relationship to geographical space, without however using it for research on daily mobility.

②Geographical maps with metric distance between objects that are calculated with non-geographical distances, such as travel time. See Denain and Langlois, 1998.

③In the case of reversibility, the accessibility of a location would be linked to the available infrastructure, not just to reach that location but to return to one's place of departure according to the constraints of one's lifestyle (for example, returning the same day).

④"For each actor, mobility is both a proven process, which translates into effective movements, and a potential, an unrealized virtuality, which is precisely what authorizes the realized movement" (p. 613).

⑤For example, the ease with which one is comfortable taking a seat in a pizzeria is transposable to any other restaurant of this type, while it isn't always easy to transpose this in a world-famous restaurant offering a different kind of service.

Mobility

> For the Mobile Lives Forum, mobility is understood as the process of how individuals travel across distances in order to deploy through time and space the activities that make up their lifestyles. These travel practices are embedded in socio-technical systems, produced by transport and communication industries and techniques, and by normative discourses on these practices, with considerable social, environmental and spatial impacts.
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> More

Residential mobility

Broadly speaking, residential mobility refers to a household's change of residence within a life basin.

More

Movement

Movement is the crossing of space by people, objects, capital, ideas and other information. It is either oriented, and therefore occurs between an origin and one or more destinations, or it is more akin to the idea of simply wandering, with no real origin or destination.

More

Motility

Every person, every group can be characterised by greater or lesser propensities for moving around a geographic, economic and social space. "Motility" has been the name given to these aptitudes, a reference to the use of this term in biology.

More

Lifestyle

A lifestyle is a composition of daily activities and experiences that give sense and meaning to the life of a person or a group in time and space.

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Keywords : **daily mobility**, **psychology**, **re-placement**

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Thierry Ramadier is director of research at the CNRS in psychology. He approaches the theme of spatial mobility from the socio-cognitive representations that individuals have of urban spaces. On this matter, he has developed two theoretical principles: the social legibility of space and mobility as replacement.

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[1] https://en.forumviesmobiles.org/marks/mobility-450

[2] https://en.forumviesmobiles.org/marks/residential-mobility-3204

[3] https://en.forumviesmobiles.org/marks/movement-460

[4] https://en.forumviesmobiles.org/marks/motility-461

[5] https://en.forumviesmobiles.org/marks/lifestyle-1756

[6] https://en.forumviesmobiles.org/mots-cles/daily-mobility

[7] https://en.forumviesmobiles.org/mots-cles/psychology

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