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Mobility as “arts of dwelling”: conceptual investigations

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Abstract

Dwelling (*wohnen, habiter*) and mobility are linked through the individual manners of practising places. For the individuals in (post/late-)modern societies, mobility implies the practice of an increasing number of places – more or less familiar/strange ones –, actualized through different intentionalities in different situations. This unprecedented situation raises the need of conceptual tools allowing to grasp the different ways individuals cope with space. These “arts of dwelling” are conceptualized here. First, by establishing the conceptual bases of dwelling as practices of places, where the theoretical shift from dwelling as being-on-Earth towards dwelling as coping with space is undertaken. This allows thinking the places as well as the movement, and I will insist upon the notion of experience and the symbolic charge of movement. Secondly, by showing how mobility takes a more and more important part of contemporary arts of dwelling. Finally, by raising the question of how mobile dwelling implies the deployment of geographical competences. These conceptual investigations shall contribute to a more adequate understanding of the very differentiated ways of the individuals’ coping with space and to give a conceptual framework for mobility studies.

Introduction

Approaching the arts of dwelling seems to be more and more an investigated field. It focuses on the problem of the different ways individuals cope with places, or practice places, although the theoretical underpinnings have not made clear yet. As such, it tries to contribute to the understanding of the contemporary societies from a geographical point of view. In French geography, the issue of dwelling is becoming more and more an important one: several researchers (Berque, 2000; Hoyaux, 2000; 2002; 2003; Knafou et al., 1997; Lévy, 1994; Lévy & Lussault, 2003; Lazzarotti, 2001; Stock, 2001; 2004; 2005) struggle with conceptual and empirical issues of dwelling, be it from an ecological point of view or from the point of view of spatiality. This research tries to seriously engage with the ongoing shift of geography as a scientific discipline from a “science of space” towards the study of the spatial dimension of society, which means a thorough analysis of the constitution of society through space. The question of dwelling goes even further in taking at aim the question of the individual, not only as subject, but as socialised and spatialised actor. It is therefore an enterprise that goes beyond

the phenomenological approaches in the 1970's geography, where the subject was understood as ego- and loco-centred (see Tuan, 1977; Buttimer, 1980). The ongoing critique of those approaches, namely from the point of view of mobility, permits now to go further.

Indeed, dwelling – as it is used in a phenomenological tradition – focuses on the geographical being-in-the-world: as Martin Heidegger put it, *Dasein* necessitates dwelling. And in contemporary society where mobility has developed as a positive value (Rémy, 1996; Thrift, 1996), dwelling is not restricted to the habitat – defined as local arrangement of dwellings –, but of a multiplicity of habitats, including the places of the quotidian (the multiple places for work, residence, leisure, shopping, to use broad categories) and the non-quotidian (the multiple places for tourism, business, visiting friends and relatives, pilgrimage, and so on)¹. In this sense, mobility is one way of inhabiting the places of the World, and leads to a poly-topical mode of dwelling. It raises therefore the question how individuals cope with space and, more specifically, construct the geographical referents of identity or of attachment, called classically “sense of place”. It therefore contributes to go further than the analyses of the attachment to *one* home place, conducted in the 1970's.

But, there is a second interesting point: the expression “arts of dwelling” implies that there are different manners of coping with space. As such, the “arts of doing” – Michel de Certeau's (1990) “*arts de faire*” – permit to realise that mobility and immobility are experienced differently through practice. Practising Paris as a tourist, as a resident, as a parent, as a lover, as a businessman/woman, as a worker, as a municipal civil servant, as a tour guide, and so on implies different ways of dwelling defined not only through different intentionalities, but also through the variable quality of place, for example as “other place” or as “home place” (see Stock, 2001; 2004; 2005). It might be that the multi-faceted personality of individuals, acting in different situations as is the very expression of what the French sociologist Lahire (1998; 2004) calls “*homo pluralis*”, a person acting differently in the varied situations in which he/she is engaged. “Arts of dwelling” might therefore be the geographical expression of this plural being in the world, designing the “geographically plural individuals”, because engaging with many different places.

The intersection between mobility and dwelling is one important domain of research I will develop here. This is a very important issue since the conditions and realizations of arts of dwelling have dramatically changed in the relatively more developed societies, in which mobility can be seen as a key element of their “constitution”. Indeed, the context of the late-modern arts of dwelling is that of a highly differentiated society, a multiplicity of places for individuals practices in everyday life and in lifetime, a highly developed accessibility system of information, commodities, persons, money, a capitalist system, where mobility is required to “survive” (for individuals and firms), and more

¹ The thesis of mobility as a positive value is certainly sustained by the importance of holidays, « city breaks », business trips and commuting in contemporary discourse in which being mobile is positive. Yet, counter-discourses appear relying on the impacts of CO2-emissions by namely airplanes and cars on the atmosphere and use this argument in order to plead for mobility as negative (see Maurer, 2001).

differentiated situations and urban space. This leads to ways of dwelling that are much more informed by mobility and the encounter of strange places than that of relatively more sedentary societies. As Thrift (1996) termed it, there is a “machinic complex” and a “structure of feeling” informed by geographical mobility. This seems to be at stake for geography in the 21st century: taking seriously and not for granted the implications and consequences of mobility on human societies².

Different approaches of this problem are possible. One approach, developed here, is to encompass the problem of mobility and to embed it in a broader questioning of dwelling. That means the study of the practices of places where one can measure the more or less importance of movement in the association of practice and place, and the meaning of the place. It also means the conditions of mobility in a “regime of dwelling”.

A first section will deal with the concept of dwelling and ask the question of its adequacy and consistency; a second section will interpret the problems of mobility in the light of the problem of dwelling. Finally, I try to put forward one interpretive element of mobility: the use of spatial competences of the individual actor when confronted with mobility.

1. From dwelling as being-on-Earth towards dwelling as coping with space

Dwelling can be understood as concept that allows the intelligibility of the ways individuals cope with space. This rather simple expression can be delineated and developed in its meaning by trying to show the innovative character of the proposition. It should take the individuals in the centre of the geographical investigation without neglecting the embeddedness of the individuals in frames that surpass them. I hope it will lead towards a more precise analysis of the geographical dimensions of human societies. In order to achieve this goal, we shall try to give first an account of the (meta)theoretical and epistemological underpinnings of such an enterprise, then moving forward to explain the main concepts.

The relationship to the Earth expressing the cosmological and ecological dimension of humanity is the ground on which geography as scientific discipline has been developing at least since Carl Ritter. This reaches its climax in the 20th century in the thorough thinking of the relationships between nations, groups, and individuals to the Earth³. The great theoretical achievement to this respect constitutes the

² This is particularly present in the British context of social sciences, where the works of Urry (2000) around mobility as culture – which evokes also dwelling and “dwellingness” – and Bauman (2000) for « fluid » societies and Cresswell (2006) also point into this direction.

³ See Demangeon (1945) and Le Lannou (1949) for the importance of the habitat, Dardel (1952) from the point of view of existential phenomenology; Relph (1976), Tuan (1977), Seamon & Mugerauer (1989), Berque (2000; 2004) for the development of an expanded phenomenology of space.

taking into account of the symbolic dimensions of landscape and the geographical milieu. One interesting contribution is that of the philosopher Martin Heidegger (1927; 1952) for whom the very human existence is a “being-there” (*Dasein*). In developing this issue, he makes the following formulations: ‘dwelling’ as ‘*die Weise, wie die Sterblichen auf der Erde sind*’ (2004a, 142), as ‘*Grundzug des menschlichen Daseins*’ (2004b, 183), or as ‘*Bezug der Menschen zu Orten und durch Orte zu Räumen*’ (2004a, 152)⁴. Here, the concept of dwelling is understood as verb, not as noun. Developed by Bollnow (1963) and the phenomenological tradition in geography (Seamon & Mugerauer, 1989; Berque, 2000; Berque, 2004), it means the irreducible human condition as being on Earth. The research on meaning of nature and the environment as proximity is the contribution of geography to this problem⁵. As Seamon states for example: “*A phenomenological geography (...) directs its attention to the essential nature of man’s dwelling on earth. (...) A phenomenological geography asks the significance of people’s inescapable immersion in a geographical world*” (Seamon, 1980, p. 148).

Nevertheless, this ecological and proxemic concept of dwelling is not used here, especially because of some shortcomings of the underlying theory. We can focus on two problems⁶: first, the question of geographical mobility is not addressed, which raises the question of the conceptualisation of place. The concept of place, in Anglo-American tradition of geography, is defined as giving subjective meaning to a “country”, opposed or at least distinguished from that of space as objective. Place as meaning of attachment (Relph, 1976; Tuan, 1977) is therefore possible only for residents and the familiarity of place is rather static: a long time is necessary before a place is familiar. This concept of place as attachment for individuals is problematic when raising the question of mobility: which are the consequences on the relationship to places in a context of increased mobility, be it through migration or circulation? One thesis would be the following: even non-residents, even tourists develop a relationship to the places, a “topophilia” that is not related to the status of long residency. This raises also the question of how individuals transform strange or other places into familiar places.

Second, this model of dwelling privileges the nearness – and as such might be used to describe sedentary societies – but is useless when approaching geographical situations where mobility is implied. This is quite clear in the contribution of Heidegger, where the nearness of the “*Gegend*” is seen as central for the constitution of space and spatiality. Based on Heidegger, Moles (1972)

⁴ “*the ways the mortals are on the Earth*” (2004a, 142), as “*fundamental treat of the human Dasein*” (2004b, 183), as “*relationship of the humans to places and through places to spaces*” (2004a, 152) (transl. M. Stock).

⁵ We cannot give an account of this research here, this would go beyond the limits of this article, but see Tuan (1977), Seamon & Mugerauer (1989, Berque (2000; 2004) and also the proxemic researches of Hall (1966) and Moles & Rohmer (1972).

⁶ There might be others, such as the conception of the individual as subject, which does not allow to see the social aspects of individuals. As Elias (1970) would have it, it is a tradition that approaches the individual as « *homo clausus* », and not as « *homo apertus* », as interdependent, intersubjective, and socialised.

develops a widely used model of the “*coquilles du Moi*” – the envelopes of the self – and conceptualises the individual space as one of concentric circles. This way of conceptualising the relationship of human beings to place is based on a visual paradigm of perception, in which space is grasped as concentric circles. The immediate environment is seen as secure, familiar whereas the “wide world” is seen as dangerous, strange.

To go beyond this conception, dwelling is defined here as the irreducible coping with geographical space through practice, and not as the Earth from a subject’s point of view. We can find several contributions that sustain such a view. Entrikin (1991) and Casey (1997) develop the idea, based on Plato’s *Timaios*, of the irreducible being at places for human beings, although the sole question of place is too narrow a conception⁷. Furthermore, Werlen (1996) opens a new research field for studies of ‘*Weltbindung* as praxis’, where the question is the coping with space through the day-to-day practices. Finally, Lévy & Lussault (2003) define dwelling as spatiality of human actors, where the individual is at the centre. That leads to a perspective, where the practices of residing or sheltering do not summarize the question of dwelling, but are rather one aspect of it. For example, touristic practices contribute also to the dwelling of individuals through the creation of place-relations, an experience of places and movements, the coping with specific places, etc.. Touristic practice is a specific mode of dwelling, where the place is practiced through a recreational impetus/intentionality, and where the place is a ‘other place’ (*lieu autre*)⁸. Dwelling as coping with space through place practices constitutes an approach where the individual is in the centre.

Nevertheless, that does not mean that the social dimensions are absent, that the individual is “free” in his decisions and effectuation when practising places. Indeed, the values of place as “paradise” (Switzerland in the 19th century or the South Sea in the 20th century), of Nature as “beautiful landscape” or “resource”, manners of conceiving space as building cities for automobiles or for manufacturing industries or tourism, are socially and culturally defined, in a community of

⁷ It would lead too far in this article to develop the question of the conceptualisation of space, which occurs when making judgements about the concept of place. Two elements may be helpful: *Primo*, « space » is a concept of high degree of synthesis that encompasses many others and permits to synthesize the question of distance, quality of place, landscape, location, orientation, accessibility and so on. *Secundo*, space, for human societies, takes a specific quality: is inhabited, that is co-constituted by practice, and not only a question of arrangement of « things », be it « earthy things ». See Werlen (1995 ; 1997) for the idea of space as a formal and classificatory concept and Elias (1996) for the idea of space and time as concepts of higher order synthesis.

⁸ This concept of ‘other place’ is crucial for an understanding of contemporary place practices. Indeed, it expresses the fact that the quality of place, for the tourist, is informed by alterity/otherness and that it is elsewhere. Most interestingly, Michel Foucault (1967/1984) speaks about heterotopias – places of the other – and Orvar Löfgren (1999) of « elsewhereland », two important aspects of contemporary coping with space.

individuals, where responsibility and credit are given to others, constituted⁹. Those multiple ordered and ordering elements of space can be termed “dwelling regime”. It is constituted by spatiality (image, discourse, “disciplines of space” (Harley, 1995), spatial arrangement, practices of places and styles of dwelling (more or less informed by mobility), technologies (accessibility, telecommunication, cottage, *Club Méditerranée*, airports, station), situations (as tourist, as worker, as shopper, as resident and so on). It varies historically, that is following different moments of development of societies¹⁰. Practicing places is thus more or less an expression and is conditioned through regimes of dwelling. It leads to different “styles of dwelling”, where mobility is more or less implied: styles with few places co-exist with styles with many places tied together by circulations based on numerous metrics¹¹.

To sum up, practice of places is one way in deal with the dwelling issue. They are “situated actions” that make sense by individuals “equipped” with certain capacities, dispositions and competences taking place *in situ*. That is why, geographically, those place practices are embedded into a broader set of relationships, a dominant way of producing images, discourses, values of space, and also accessibilities and qualities of space. The dominant way of inhabiting space in contemporary societies is based on mobility: practising multiple places, relatively farer away than in industrial societies. The “regime of dwelling” is informed and creates the positive value of mobility¹².

2. Mobility as arts of dwelling

The arts of dwelling are more and more mobility-laden. That means here that practice is more and more informed by various forms of displacement. Yet, it is not easy to carry out a working definition of mobility. The attempts have been quite varied, focussing each on different aspects of the question. There are many ways of defining mobility (see Zelinsky, 1971; Bassand et al. 1985; Kaufmann, 2002; Lussault & Stock, 2003; Stock & Duhamel, 2005), and it appears that there is a process of complexification at work: the migration issue decreases in importance, the circulation issue increases in importance. This thesis can be sustained by the observation of a new vocabulary, where the different “migrations” – as commuting, tourism, shopping – are replaced by the terms of circulations,

⁹ To speak sociologically, every practice is embedded and constituted through the reference to broader elements of social “structure” (Bourdieu, 2000) or “systems” (Luhmann) or “values” and “norms” (Elias) or “objects” (Latour).

¹⁰ This is finally close to Lefevbre’s (1974) idea of different manners of figuration of perceived, conceived and lived space in the Roman Empire, in the Middle Ages and in the industrial society.

¹¹ “Metrics” is used here in order to grasp the different ways of coping with distance by the use of different means of displacement, such as pedestrian, automobile, train, plane metrics. See Lévy (1999) for the development of defining different metrics by means of “transport”.

¹² This is more and more acknowledged by the literature: in this respect, an interesting formula is Thrift’s (1996) one of the « structure of feeling termed mobility » which gives an account of the change of individuals from « sedentary » ones into « mobile » ones.

for example in the case of the “*circulations migratoires*”¹³. The classical migration is not, indeed, the only or the most important issue of mobility. There are many forms of mobility, from the simple tourist movement or commuting, to the very complex chains of circulations, at different spatio-temporal scales and for multiple purposes. For example, the phenomenon of “transmigration” or “migratory circulations” between several residences (Mexico-USA, Poland-Bruxelles, Germany-Mallorca) or even the chaining of practices in the day-to-day life (home-kindergarden-work-shopping-work-shopping-kindergarden-home) are important here.

“Mobility” means what can be moved¹⁴. It is defined in the literature as flows of people, goods, information. Here, mobility is understood less a flux than a practice, or more precisely, a system of practices of places, where movement is associated, at all scales. In this way, we can grasp mobility as one way of practising places, and as one way of approaching the arts of dwelling. It permits also to see the space between two places not as empty, but as component of the practice. An important aspect, from the individual’s point of view, is the displacement that can be defined as a certain manner of associating practices and places (Stock & Duhamel, 2005). That is: associated with a *movement*, with a physical movement of the body to another place, where the place is experienced *in situ*. This movement is important because it conveys a certain meaning, it changes the meaning of the practice: For example, the distinction between leisure and tourism is based on the necessary “displacement” associated with the latter, in difference to the first, where mobility is not necessary (Knafou et al., 1997; Stock & Duhamel, 2005). If displacement is a practice of place, “mobility” can be defined as a “system”, where values, firms, accessibility, infrastructures etc. play together in order to allow displacements.

We will try to show here how mobility can be seen as important aspect of dwelling in the contemporary late-modern societies, and in particular, how displacement contributes to give meaning to practice and place. The interesting point of displacement is that it gives a certain meaning to practice: roughly spoken, it is not the same thing to play at home or in a tourist place; to work at home or at the office; to eat at home or at the restaurant; to stroll in the city where one lives or in another city. But, how can we scientifically describe and explain the modulation of meaning of a practice, when associated with other places? This is a difficult question because we have not yet discovered and invented, in geography, a way of describing the effects of practice/place associations or practice of places on the very meaning of the practice. Indeed, the effects of place – the kind of place, the quality of place – only have been seen either as deterministic in spatial analysis or as a total problem of experience of place, not differentiated by different situations individuals experience. It seems that the

¹³ This might be the case of the French and German geography and sociology only, where merely all kinds of spatial movements by humans were termed “migration” and might not apply to British geography and sociology. I ignore the history of mobility studies in those scientific communities.

¹⁴ It is interesting to see that Kaufmann (2002) uses the term of “motility” in order to grasp the dimension of the potential of moving as different from that of “mobility” that stands for the effective spatial movements.

spatial dimensions of practice as enacted experience, directed by intentionality, modulating the meaning of place needs theoretical investigation¹⁵.

That leads to the following question of displacement as a physical movement, corporeally effectuated and experienced, in order to practice a place elsewhere, *in situ*. More precisely, “displacement” is defined here as associated with a non-familiar and strange place: an ‘other place’ (*lieu autre*)¹⁶. For example, leisure as expression of practices of recreation in the day-to-day place, whereas tourism as expression of recreational practices in non-quotidian places, accessible through displacements. The hypothesis is that the displacement, the experience of a place as other place modulates the meaning of that place. That raises the question of the adequate place for practices, and also of the autonomy for individuals of associating specific places to their practices.

Practising a place is a rather mundane phenomenon. It is associated, in some cases, with a displacement, implying mobility; sometimes without displacement/circulation, implying immobility¹⁷. In the contemporary context, we can observe a tendency of searching to associate each practice to an appropriate place, a distinctive and well defined place, with specific qualities: residences, shopping, work, leisure, etc. are practices effectuated in more and more separated places. The examples are numerous: commuting, business travel, incentive travel, working as a salesman, going to a congress; going to cinema, on holiday, visit a town, going to a “*base régionale de loisir*” in France, going to a cottage in the countryside, do a “spring break” as a US-American or Canadian student; learning French in Paris or English in Brighton or Malta for foreign students; purchasing gasoline in Austria or Luxemburg for Germans, purchasing cigarettes in Luxemburg for Lothringians; get surgery in Northern France or Spain for English, going shopping in London – the sales for Europeans or Israeli – or Paris – for Japanese; going to see his/her family or friends; training in altitude of elite sportsmen in Boulder (Colorado) or Val d’Isère (France) and so on. Therefore, we can risk the thesis that mobility creates a new kind of dwelling called “poly-topical dwelling” (Stock, 2005), where a great number of places is practiced, where mobility is becoming a *habitus* and where exotic and strange places can be transformed into familiar places. This raises also the question of the geographical referents of identity. Simultaneously or successively, different places can be chosen as “home place”, as place where one says “this is my place”.

¹⁵ We can find within British geography the ongoing work on non-representational and performative approaches of practice that permit to focus on the fact that space is constituted by practice, with impulse given by Thrift (1996). It seems, none the less, that this bulk of work neglects the effects of modulating meaning following different situations.

¹⁶ See Knafou et al. (1997), Equipe MIT (2002) and Stock & Duhamel (2005) for the development of this idea,

¹⁷ It is important not to overstress the importance of mobility as resource for individuals: immobility as long-term presence in a place is also a resource that can be mobilized.

Those practices of places are, that is the hypothesis, not taken one by one, but linked together and form individual systems of mobility or individual “systems of places”¹⁸. Those practices of places and itineraries, taken together, define a mode of dwelling, more or less informed by mobility. Those styles of dwelling – as associated to lifestyles – are embedded in a particular “geographicity regime” or “dwelling regime”, which can be defined as a system where mobility is valued. This meets Thrift’s (1996, 304) expression of a “structure of feeling [...] termed mobility”.

3. Problem-solving through mobility: arts of dwelling as learning how to cope with space

In those systems of dwelling, the movement itself is an interesting part to analyse. What does it mean being corporeally in movement? How skills are used to give sense to the movement? That are not new questions, but they permit to go further into the issue of dwelling, as itineraries not only place are analysed. For example, Relph (1976) is interested in the existential space, which is organized in districts of particular significance for individuals:

“These are organised and opened up by *paths* or routes which reflect the directions and intensities of intentions and experiences, and which serves as the structural axes of existential space. They radiate from and lead towards nodes or centres of special importance and meaning, which are distinguished by their quality of insideness. These are *places*. This pattern of places, paths and districts is repeated in some form at all the levels of existential space” (p. 20-21, italics in original).

This interpretation can be drawn back to the notion of “hodological space” of Lewin (1941, cited by Bollnow, 1999), developed towards a phenomenologically informed philosophy of space¹⁹. The itinerary implies a certain relationship to the movement and to the places, which is meaningful. For example, we could distinguish the importance of a routine travel from that of a travel to a non-quotidian destination as a “displacement” (Knafou et al. 1997; Equipe MIT, 2002; Stock & Duhamel, 2005). Another aspect of the ways for a person to find his/her way is to learn how to cope with space, to memorize how to do in different situations. Arts of dwelling imply therefore a learning of “competences”. Indeed, the movement is seen as a process of learning – which is corollary of the practice of space, not (always) a purpose – an *understanding* of a multiplicity of places, which leads to a “geographical competence”. This geographical competence is informed by the practice and the experience of places. Few theoretical and empirical studies in geography have been carried out on this

¹⁸ See Bassand et al., (1985) and Knafou (1998) for the term of “system of mobility”; Stock (2001 ; 2005) and Stock & Duhamel (2005) for the term of “individual systems of mobility” and Flamm (2004) for the term of “systems of places”.

¹⁹ See Bollnow (1999) for the very careful and profound analysis of space as dimension of the life-world, in which he evokes the question of Lewin’s and Sartre’s « hodological space ».

issue, exception made of behaviouristic studies on “spatial skills” as means of performing orientation in space (for example Golledge et al., 1995). Yet, there is one concept that has been used to describe the degree of the capacity of individuals to cope with places: that of “spatial capital” (Lévy, 1993; Lévy, 1994; Lévy, 2003). It means “*ensemble des ressources, accumulées par un acteur, lui permettant de tirer avantage en fonction de sa stratégie, de l’usage de la dimension spatiale de la société*” (Lévy, 2003, 124)²⁰. This definition is developed with reference to Bourdieu’s theory of the social differentiation through different positions in the “social space”, more precisely: of a specific “social field”, for example the university, art and so on²¹. The main point is that the capital determines the dispositions and access to resources²². Bourdieu uses different species of capital (*espèces de capital*): the social capital as network of relations (family, colleagues, friends) an agent is able to mobilise; the cultural capital, the juridical capital, the symbolic capital: “*c’est n’importe quelle propriété (n’importe quelle espèce de capital, physique, économique, culturel, social) lorsqu’elle est perçue par des agents sociaux dont les catégories de perception sont telles qu’ils sont en mesure de la connaître (de l’apercevoir) et de la reconnaître, de lui accorder valeur*” (Bourdieu, 1994, 116)²³. Those characteristics lead to a specific spatial capital.

The question of competences is important and one hypothesis of the arts of dwelling in a context of mobility is therefore that the differentiation of the mobility of individuals is dependent on the spatial competences they are able to perform during a displacement. Those spatial competences can be learned and transposed from one context of mobility to another, and thus link together different kind of practices. For example, learning to be a tourist is not at all taken-for-granted, but a process of practising places, norms, ways of doing and so on (see Löfgren, 1999). It is rooted in the touristic

²⁰ “ensemble of resources accumulated by an actor, allowing him to get advantage following his strategy, the use of the spatial dimension of society” (trad. MS).

²¹ Bourdieu’s theory of the social differentiation is nevertheless problematic regarding its conceptualisation of space. Indeed, Bourdieu’s „social space“ is a metaphor, not a concept, for he carries out factor analysis, that is visually represented as two-dimensional space or „*extensia*“ on a paper sheet, but what he interprets as positions of individuals in a „social space“. But, there are contrary opinions on this issue, some „defending“ Bourdieu against those kinds of attacks (see Painter, 2000 or Löw, 2001), some developing criticisms on this way of doing (Lippuner, 2005).

²² Bourdieu shows that the strategies and interests in one „field“ define itself in a specific way and thinks them as „*coup dans une partie de cartes*“, in which the quality of the game and of the player is important (1972, p.1109). The rules of the “game” have to be mastered, which is subsumed under the concept of „*capital culturel*“. The use of the analogon with the game raises the issue of the use of the game concept or metaphor in social sciences. It is indeed striking to observe the extent to which the notion of “game” is used in order to describe the way social relations take place and are maintained, for example in the works of Elias, Bourdieu and, more explicitly, the “game theory” in economics.

²³ “It is any characteristics (any species of capital, physical, economic, cultural, social) when perceived by social agents whose categories of perception are as such they are capable to know (to grasp) and to recognize, to assign value to it”.

experiences themselves, but also in the practising of places for other purposes, for example as conference delegate. The transfer of competences from one situation to another is nevertheless a theoretical problem as the situations are relatively more multi-fold than in other “regimes of dwelling”.

Conclusion

In this article, I tried to displace several ways of conceptualising dwelling: first, by going beyond the question of Earth and environment, I focus the attention on the individual’s coping with space, which means to take into account a broader line of arguments. Second, by focussing on the question of practice, the arts of dwelling are grasped as doing with space in situation. Third, by putting the question of mobility in the centre, the issue is not longer that of sheltering, but that of inhabiting a multiplicity of places. I tried then to make this argument clear by raising the importance of displacement as practising ‘other’ places. This displacement, where the question of alterity is raised, implies the deployment of competences, especially geographical ones. That allows to grasp the arts of dwelling not only as performing of practices in a non-representational way, but implies the memorization and performing of spatial skills, and, thus the use of language, images, preparation or “training” etc.

The question of the arts of dwelling therefore opens up new issues for empirical research in geography. From space, place and spatiality as now classical issues in geography, it shifts towards the coping with space in situation. This “pragmatics of space” does not mean to ignore that there are other elements than practice, that practice is conditioned through a multifaceted, especially a “regime of dwelling”. It is this societal and spatial ordering of things, norms, values, representations, accessibilities, infrastructures, places that constitutes the condition and the context for the arts of dwelling. Geographies of friendship, of love, of sexuality, of care, of being-together, of sociability, of consumption, of recreation, of learning, of working, of growing up, and so on, can be constituted through this perspective of arts of dwelling. Therefore, this approach allows also aiming at the consequences of this geographical ordering of society for individuals. The individual of the contemporary regime of dwelling is changing: it is a geographically plural individual, coping with a great number of very differentiated places and metrics, connected electronically and digitally to other individuals, aware of images of places through various channels and experiencing new ways of disciplines and technologies of space. New arts of dwelling are arising, “awaiting” for scientific observation.

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