

# Mobility vs. transport?

Elements to (re)building definitions<sup>[1]</sup>

¿Movilidad versus transporte?

Elementos para la (re) construcción de definiciones

¿Mobilidade versus transporte?

Elementos para a (re)construção de definições

Mobilité versus transport ?

Eléments pour la (re) construction des définitions

Author

**Andrea Gutiérrez**

PHD in Geography  
CONICET and University of Buenos Aires

angut2@gmail.com/ angut2@filo.uba.ar  
<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8124-1679>

Recibido: October 23, 2012  
Aprobado: January 15, 2013

## Cómo citar este artículo:

GUTIERREZ, A. (2020). "Mobility vs. transport? Elements to (re)building definitions". Bitácora Urbano Territorial, 21 (II): 61-77.

1 Research financed by National Council of Technical and Scientific Investigations (CoNICET) – Argentine.

## Abstract

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To reflect on the challenges of urban mobility and transport, it is useful to begin by defining the precise meaning of these concepts, to review what and how to measure them, and to conduct the resulting evaluation, decision making and action implementation process. This paper aims to provide some conceptual and methodological contributions to mobility and transport studies, regarding them as a necessary framework to understand the challenges raised in globalized cities, in both practice and academic fields. It methodologically reviews the discussion in the field from the practical and theoretical use of terms. As a result, we end up in a reconstruction of the definitions for mobility and transport, as well as unit of study: the journey. These tools set up a field of knowledge and claim for a theoretical-methodological complementary corpus to the mainstream concepts in transport studies.

### Keywords:

transport, mobility, concepts, approaches, study tools.

## Author

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### Andrea Gutiérrez

PH in Geography, University of Buenos Aires (UBA). Professor and researcher at UBA and CONICET. Director of the Transport and Territory Program, Institute of Geography, UBA. Director of the 2012-2015 UBACyT Project Mobility, territory and inequality in the Buenos Aires Metropolitan Area. Case studies associated with access to services and accessibility to employment locations, and the 2011-2013 PIP-CONICET Project Urban mobility and access to basic goods and services for social inclusion in the RMBA. New inputs to tackle integrated development and land planning policies.

## Resumen

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El objetivo de este artículo es presentar algunas contribuciones conceptuales y metodológicas para abordar el estudio de la movilidad y el transporte, como marco necesario para una reflexión sobre los retos que plantea la ciudad de la globalización, tanto a la gestión como a la academia. Para emprender esta reflexión es útil comenzar por definir qué entendemos por movilidad y transporte, revisar qué observamos y medimos y, así, pasar a la toma de decisión, a las acciones, a la evaluación. Metodológicamente se revisa la discusión en el campo a partir de la teoría y del uso práctico de los términos. Como resultado se recrean definiciones de la movilidad, el transporte y la unidad de estudio: el viaje. Se baliza el campo de conocimiento resultante y se plantea el desarrollo de un cuerpo teórico metodológico complementario al tradicional en transporte.

**Keywords:** transporte, movilidad, conceptos, enfoques, herramientas de estudio.

## Résumé

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L'objectif de cet article est d'apporter quelques contributions conceptuelles et méthodologiques pour aborder l'étude de la mobilité et du transport et de proposer un cadre nécessaire à une réflexion sur les enjeux de la ville dans la globalisation, pour sa gestion et pour la recherche. Pour débiter cette réflexion, il est utile de commencer par définir ce que nous entendons par la mobilité et le transport, par reprendre ce que nous observons et mesurons et ainsi basculer vers la prise de décision, les actions et l'évaluation. D'un point de vue méthodologique, nous revenons sur la théorie et l'usage pratique de ces termes. Comme résultat, se recréent les définitions de la mobilité, du transport et de l'unité propre de l'étude : le trajet. Le champ de connaissance qui en résulte se précise et ainsi se définit le développement d'un corps théorique et méthodologique complémentaire au traditionnel du transport.

**Keywords:** transport, mobilité, concepts, approches conceptuelles, outils d'étude.

## Resumo

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O objetivo deste artigo é trazer algumas contribuições conceituais e metodológicas para abordar o estudo da mobilidade e do transporte, como marco necessário para uma reflexão sobre os desafios que a cidade da globalização coloca para a academia e para a gestão. Para abordar essa reflexão, é útil começar por definir o que entendemos por mobilidade e transporte, reconsiderar o que observamos e medimos, e daí passar sequencialmente para a tomada de decisão, as ações e a avaliação. Metodologicamente, parte-se da teoria e do uso prático dos termos para revisar a discussão do tema. Como resultado, recriam-se as definições de mobilidade e de transporte, bem como da própria unidade de estudo: a viagem. Demarca-se o campo de conhecimento resultante e propõe-se o desenvolvimento de um corpo-teórico metodológico complementar ao tradicional de transporte.

**Palavras-chave:** transporte, mobilidade, conceitos, enfoques, ferramentas de estudo.



Mobility vs. transport?  
Elements to (re)building definitions

## The evolution of urban mobility through discourse<sup>[2]</sup>

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Regardless of conceptual hues, literature agrees in identifying a minimum set of specific characteristics of globalization cities, including their extended surface growth, low density and blurred limits. Both in the urban and the transportation fields, interpretations on these processes refer to transport networks, specifically highways, and the loss of passengers by conventional mass transport (trains, metro, buses) in favor of private cars, with a close link between changes in the morphology and the internal structure of cities, and transport and mobility. The increase in speed and proximity in the last few decades of the 20th century argued by the concept of globalization itself, also provides a framework for discussion on the redefinition of times and distances summoning the media, transport and urban mobility with a poorly differentiated use of terms.

There are opposing references to mobility. A view analyzes “hypermobility”, or its explosion, as time and space barriers decrease in a context of a profound redefinition of lifestyles, availability and use of time which involves forms of working, housing, leisure, education, family relationships, etc. Another analyzes “immobility”, or its blockage, based on the uneven impact of this redefinition in lifestyles, which reinforces segregation processes. Among these topics, socio-spatial segregation processes based on private car availability applied to residential and professional mobilities of different social groups (women, young people, unemployed population, etc.) and their association with access to employment, housing, consumption, education or health, are of special consideration (Galvez, Orfeuil and Annarita, 1997; Le Breton, 2002; 2008; Grant, 2002; Social Exclusion Unit, 2003; Alsnith and Hensher, 2003; Jirón, 2007; Díaz Olvera, Pascal and Pochet, 2008; Cebollada and Miralles-Guasch, 2008; Rodríguez Vignoli, 2008; Cebollada, 2009; Gutiérrez, 2009b; Palma Arce and Soldano, 2010; Avellaneda and Lazo, 2011; among others). Thus, a part of the literature contends a growing mobility associated with the problem of congestion, and another, the stagnation or loss of mobility associated with isolation or inaccessibility issues (Dupuy, 1995; Ascher, 1995; Henry, 2002; Cox, 2003; Le Breton, 2005; García Palomares, 2008; Gutiérrez, 2009b; Maat, 1998; Cebollada, 2006). Furthermore, it can be hinted that urban mobility refers to all mobilities of different time and space scale made within an urban system, since there are references to everyday mobility associated with the pendular migration between home and work or other activities; with the residential migration, associated with the real estate market; and the professional migration, linked to the work environment (Fulong, 2005; Korsu, 2010; Massot and Proulhac, 2010; Contreras Gatica, 2011).

So, what do we mean by mobility? Even though there is some recent, and in large part of significant quality literature on urban mobility, the insufficient explanation of the concept, added to the wide variety of uses,

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[2] This state of the issue is limited to the field of urban mobility, but conceptual and methodological thoughts contributed by this article apply to mobility and transport in their different territorial scales of analysis (urban, interurban, rural, national or international).

makes it difficult to articulate a methodological theoretical body applied to reflection. Thus, progresses are scattered, and the discussion loses consistency and depth.

Transport is a field of knowledge with a weak tradition in the production of own theory. This characteristic, combined with not too explicit thinking on transport in the new production on urban mobility, adds to the widespread and accelerated dissemination of ideas with little discussion and/or low theoretical and methodological soundness in the evaluation of progresses. This is the case of the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) systems, promoted by the experience in Latin American cities, which definition is blurred, as well as the concept of mobility, even though both terms are at the heart of the current practice and discourse.

How to develop new operational and technical network designs for urban transport in the globalized city? The scale of this challenge, the speed of changes and the slowness of answers suggest that, in order to answer this question, it is useful to start by being able to define mobility, and what differentiates it from transport. Recreating these concepts allows for a review of measures and, consequently, evaluations and decision-making. With this goal in mind, this work starts with the first steps of that sequence.

## The evolution of urban mobility through theory

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Mobility was a core part of Urban Sociology and Critical Geography in the 1970s; in both cases, thinking was focused on socio-territorial inequality in transport. In the 1990s, concerns were focused on the economic aspects of neoliberal state reforms, and the term “mobility” scarcely visited the transport and urban fields. In line with the increasing concern on social aspects in the early 2000s, mobility is progressively seen as a paradigm associated with the advent of new technologies and the end of the industrial society, connected with changes in urban morphology and structure. In prospective terms, it becomes established in association with the urban development model, one integrating the goals of economic efficiency, social equity and environmental sustainability. In general, literature shows a transition towards wider approaches more focused on people than on means of transport, and even a change in the paradigm of thinking from transport to mobility is registered (Miralles-Guasch, 2002).

Urban Sociology is a key source of theoretical production on mobility, and classic works such as those by Manuel Castells (1974), Topalov (1979) or Lefebvre (1968) remain cornerstones of the available conceptual framework. Currently, analyses are updated and advance from a study focused on working relationships to other social production and reproduction social relationships; and from social classes to specific social groups (Allemand, Ascher and Lévy, 2004; Kaufmann, 2002; Le Breton, 2002; Urry, 2005, among others). The literature on mobility coming from Human Geography is also updated and advances towards a reappraisal of cultural studies. Within the context of the “shortening of distances” and the resulting cultural homogenization, they stress the particular, the multiple and the diverse, against the traditional emphasis placed on the structural, the general and the totality (issues such as the economic logic of capitalism or Government, for example). It is about recovering what has been subsumed under or neglected by “great narratives”, disclosing its social and cognitive importance, to improve understanding of the mechanisms through which structural issues are made and specified (Zusman, et al., 2011).

Even though both disciplines meet in recovering the cultural dimension and the subjective vision in the analyses, some gaps still remain in the conceptual framework for urban mobility. One of them is the predominance of a material over a subjective view of the territory (Gutiérrez, 2013). Studies in the area of Human Geography reflect the subjective view of the territory but focus on the mobility of globalization in a more generic way - which is more directed at an interurban, regional and worldwide scale- or on longer mobility in terms of permanence or distance (residential or touristic, for example). Studies coming from Sociology are focused on urban and everyday mobility and reflect a subjective view of movement, but hold a material view of the territory (Zusman, et al., 2011; Silveira, 2006; Haesbaert, 2004; Lévy, 2001; Allemand, Ascher and Lévy, 2004; Orfeu, 2004; Kaufmann, 2002).

There is a gap between the ideas of the new paradigm in urban mobility and its methodological landing, which is expressed by the restrictions of the data it works with. Unlike what happened in the 1990s, at present there are updated databases and indicators for transport and urban mobility; however, it is still difficult to broaden the range of measures in an innovative way. Origin and destination surveys - also called home or everyday mobility surveys- are reval-

ued as a basal tool for planning, and their conduction, continuity and improvement are encouraged aiming to balance the emphases in the data capture from the means of transport to the people using them, how, how much and why, seeking to account for all movements, and expand the journey reasons and the set of means of transport (Miralles-Guasch, 2012; Hernández and Witter, 2011). Even though significant progress has been made, there are still information gaps. For example, there is data on the number, length and cost of work-related journeys, but they are not broken down by socio-professional level or associated with the distribution of employment by district. Furthermore, surveys do not overcome the “spatialist” bias consisting of capturing mobility “as from” places (Gutiérrez, 2010; 2013).

## The evolution of urban mobility with reference to the territory

Transport Geography, as a specific field for the observation of the relationship between transport and territory, registers the change of paradigm towards the subject and towards everyday mobility, but fails to overcome a “spatialist” bias or clarify the bond between transport and mobility.

Following an extensive review of the relationship between transport and city, Miralles-Guasch (2002) holds that Transport Geography can be defined as the study of transport systems and their territorial impacts. It also defines everyday mobility as the sum of all movements made by the population on a recurring basis to access goods and services in a specific territory. The former’s interest is focused on the means allowing for the movement, whereas the second’s is focused on the people using them. Furthermore, Estevan and Sanz (1996) have conducted a quite thorough review of transport terminology, and have summarized a definition of mobility as distinguished from accessibility, where mobility is a quantitative variable or parameter which measures the number of movements of people or goods in a certain socio-economic system; and accessibility is a qualitative variable or parameter which indicates the ease with which people bridge the distance separating them from the places where their needs or desires are satisfied. Miralles and Cebollada (cited in Hernández, 2012: 119) agree in asserting that accessibility refers to the ease with which people overcome the distance between two places and, in doing so, exercise their citizen rights.

Both reviews highlight that mobility and transport are tribute to the meeting of the needs and desires of people, and not values *per se*.

Even though there is a shift in the emphasis towards the subject, a materialistic bias remains when approaching its encounter with its territory: the meeting of needs consists of arriving at places, and mobility or accessibility or routes are explained by the localization, whether of the activities, the residence and the urban functions articulating them. The territorial movement and its link with urban space is read from the material configuration of the territory (Gutiérrez, 2010).

The basic thesis of Transport Geography is that there is a deterministic (either causal or reciprocal) association between the urbanization model and the mobility model around a locational logic. The fundamental link between city and transport refers to the distribution of activities and people within the territory. The territorial distribution -of the population, activities, transport systems and other supports for urban functions- is the explanatory variable for the territorial movement, and all of them are understood as places or “points” within the territory. There is a logic of territorial movement associated with a locational logic which “reduces” activities, the residence, etc. to places, which is commonly known as “land uses”.

Even among the most innovative reviews, there is a recurring identification between mobility and movement between places in a “cartographic” territory. This applies to the concept of motility and accessibility. According to Kaufmann (2002), motility is a potential mobility which constitutes a social capital, a personal capacity to move in the space the subject has access to, and which it appropriates according to the circumstances. On the basis of this contribution, Hernández (2012) defines accessibility as the level of adjustment between the mobility opportunity structures and the resources and assets households have to leverage them. In his definition, he highlights the notion of potentiality, indicating that the study of accessibility requires going beyond known or observable movements. Furthermore, he used the definition by Miralles and Cebollada (cited in Hernández, 2012: 119) and stresses that accessibility (and mobility) is a capital associated with the capacity to reach places.

Thus, the cited definitions focus the reflection on the capacity of people to reach places where the needed (or desired) services and opportunities are provided.

ed, whether as a result of an improvement in the ease of movement (a place becomes more accessible if the transport system improves), or an improvement in proximity (the lower the movement required to meet the need or desire, the more accessible it becomes) (Estevan and Sanz, 1996; Hernández, 2012).

However, taking into consideration the satisfaction of needs or desires motivating the territorial movement of people aiming to take a “humanized” look at mobility and transport, and later studying it as if such satisfaction could be resolved with the arrival at places where activities or services are localized, raises a contradiction. Void of sense, the sense of focusing on the subject and his or her needs or desires.

The recent turn in Human Geography towards cultural aspects places under observation a materialistic bias in the different positions on space, even those which understand it as historically and socially produced. The emphasis is laid on the produced materiality. This bias holds a simplified conception of social aspects, which neglects the role of the intangible within people which is integrated in all their practices. The meeting of the social subject with its space compromises both the tangible (objects, places) and interpersonal and intangible issues (action guidelines, codes, values, intentions, etc.) and also actions, which bring along both: an outwardness to the corporeality of the acting subject, and an inwardness animating them (Lindón, 2011). Thus, these practices have a double condition —tangible and intangible— accompanying the social construction of space, its endowment of meaning and its appropriation. This contribution is an aim for the conceptual and methodological development proposed for this work, which is described below.

## Signaling a field of knowledge: mobility vs. Transport<sup>[3]</sup>

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What is the difference between transport and mobility? Why are there two different terms? Are they synonymous? If they are, what distinguishes them? These questions, although simple, are not always easy to answer.

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[3] Throughout the text, the term “mobility” refers to a territorial rather and a social mobility (change in social status).

The new literature referred above, which recreates the concept of mobility and emphasizes cultural and subjective aspects, makes a distinction between transport and mobility. Even though there is a strong interpenetration between both concepts —since there is no mobility without transport (except on foot) or transport without mobility— mobility and transport are not synonymous. In a first rough sketch of a definition, the distinction aims at understanding urban mobility as a performance in the territory, and transport as the means or vector realizing the movement.

According to Lévy (cited in Haesbaert, 2004: 285) the Euclidean concept of space, as an absolute environment measurable in conventional metric-system distances (meters, kilometers), limits mobility to movement. This phrase expresses the distinction between a wider conception (associated with mobility) and a more restricted one (associated with transport), and also an inherent or underlying ambiguity surrounding the concept of movement itself.

The present distinction between transport and mobility does not clarify what both have in common. As a starting point, it may be assumed that both refer to the same subject of study: the movement of people and their goods within the territory. Under these terms, both concepts actually get “reduced” to the territorial movement. Both mobility and transport refer to a field of knowledge the subject-matter of which is territorial movement.

Now, resuming this distinction, understanding mobility as a performance within the territory requires deepening on the notions of performance and territory. The concept of space is complex and has its own path in social sciences, but, briefly, two basic thinking approaches may be distinguished: a physical and a social one. The first one prioritizes the natural order, the measurable and support setting for humanity referred to by Lévy *ut supra*, whereas the second one prioritizes historicity and conflict (Santos, 1996). Urban mobility as a performance within the territory refers to a social space concept, one actually produced and organized by a specific society and in a specific time and space situation.

Now, how to land the notion of performance? The proposal consists of understanding mobility as the social practice of movement within the territory. This definition emphasizes two aspects:

1. That a practice involves the frequent repetition of behaviors.

2. That a social practice involves group behaviors defining a pattern, guideline or model pursuant to the average conditions of a specific social, space and time context.

Defining mobility as a social practice aims at gathering a subjective, but not individual, view of movement. Even though the study focuses on the specific and diverse through empirical research, it may result in generalizable explanations beyond the mere description of specific situations. The study of social practices, then, allows for the construction of a body of theoretical evidence.

Thus, a field of knowledge for urban mobility begins to be signaled, which involves the study of territorial movement as the geography of the journey's places of origin and destination (which is conventional in transport), and as a social practice.

The definition of mobility as a social practice of territorial movement marks a field of knowledge that also covers:

- The social movement practices of everyday mobility, and residential and professional mobility.
- The social practices of movement of people and their goods.
- The social practices of movement of natural or legal persons (companies, organizations, etc.).

## Signaling a field of knowledge: what is mobility's unity of study?

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Delimiting the movement of people and their goods in the territory as the subject-matter of urban mobility and transport does not involve narrowing its study. Delimiting its subject matter is a necessary step to broaden the "borders" of the field of knowledge, and identifying and measuring it.

In line with the above-mentioned distinction between a more restricted conception, (associated with transport) and a broader conception (associated with mobility) Lévy (2001), Kaufmann (2002) and Orfeuill (2004) agree on expanding the scope of mobility, going from the tangible (identified with the movement vector, the "supply" of transport means, services and infrastructures) towards the field of potentiality and subjectiveness. Following different paths and nam-

ings, they converge in tackling "virtual" dimensions of mobility. Lévy (2001) distinguishes three: mobility as a possibility, as a competence and as a capital. The first one refers to accessibility, as the mobility offered through transport. The second one refers to the arbitration mediating between mobility as a possibility and actual mobility, a passage which includes mobilities and non-mobilities. The third one refers to the individuals' social capital which allows them to better deploy their strategies within the society. Orfeuill (2004) distinguishes a potential mobility, mediated by the knowledge of space and social bonds, from actual mobility, a realization of the former, which is in turn mediated by physical abilities, competences and resources. Kauffmann (2002) highlights mobility as a social capital. Therefore, the three authors go from the space of a realized mobility to that of a potential or virtual mobility mediated by subjective competences.

These advances in the process of recreating mobility amplify ambiguities on the subject-matter of study itself. For example, the potential or virtual mobility leads to the concept of non-mobilities, and to consider the co-presence through telecommunication as such. But telecommunication eliminates territorial movement, not mobility. So, this would be a non-materialized journey, or "non-journey", rather than a "non-mobility". Delimiting the subject-matter of study helps avoid ambiguities in the use of the term "mobility".

Actually, mobility is explained based on material and subjective spaces. Now, how to translate this idea into methodological definitions for the field? How to express it in study tools?

A field of knowledge is incomplete if it defines its subject-matter, but not its unit of study. It can be assumed that the unit of study of the movement of goods and people in the territory is the journey. Mobility is explained based on material and subjective spaces, but it is realized in the material space. The material space is inherent in the ontological condition of the subject-matter of study: movement in the territory is material. Therefore, in a first sketch of a definition, in the fields of mobility and transport a journey is a material movement of people and their goods between places which requires covering a physical distance within the territory. This definition refers to what a journey is, that is, it is an ontological definition.

The thinking about the territory, however, makes a distinction between a material or perceived space, a mental or conceived space, and an experienced or



lived space (Soja, 1996). Likewise, the movement of persons and goods in the territory may be thought from both its material dimension, and its symbolic and subjective dimension. Therefore, regarding the unit of study, as well as there is a distinction between real, thought and possible territories, it is also feasible to make a distinction between real, thought and possible journeys.

The fact that the journey takes place in the material territory leads us to focus on the material dimension of the territory and the journey. This has at least two consequences: it leads to restricting the study of the material territory to the Euclidean space, and to restricting the study of journeys to materialized ones.

The vague delimitation of the subject-matter and the unit of study contributes to the fact that even in new contributions incorporating subjectivity and potentiality to the study of mobility, an "Euclidean" way of treating the material space persists. Material spatiality of virtual mobility is "Euclidean". It is a graphic "as from" places. The journey (whether or not materialized) always describes a graphic of locations in the material territory, but describing it "as from" places leaves itineraries subsumed under or excluded from the analysis. The material graphic of the subjective, experienced space requires starting from "non-Euclidean" definitions of journey.

Furthermore, mobility is materialized in journeys and studied through them, but its understanding and interpretation does not end in materialized ones, but also includes materializable and/or non-materialized ones. These "other journeys" are usually subsumed with no analytical clarity or excluded from the analyses in transport, but they delimit the analytical universe where the social practice of movement within the territory takes place. We will hereinafter refer to the subject-matter of study as a "journey practice".

## Signaling a field of knowledge: what is the analytical universe of study?

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A journey practice results from the representations, options and elections of movements of a social group. That is, there are certain instances of mediation between the perfected journey and the subjective universe of representations and options where it is framed and from which the journey practice results. Thus, the field of study of mobility acknowledges an

analytical universe of journeys which comprises those that a social group knows, those it considers possible, and those it finally makes. Gathering the previously mentioned contributions, a journey practice comes within the context of three analytical universes:

3. The universe of conceived mobility journeys: journey options conceived by the person in a social context (set of representations of the subject, which involve the known world).
4. The universe of actual mobility journeys: journey options that the person considers possible for him or her in a social context.
5. The universe of perfected mobility journeys: journey options that the person selects and makes in a social context.

These three analytical universes jointly signal the setting where the mobility of people and their goods takes place. Perfected journeys, like an iceberg, are the visible or emerging part of a broader universe the scope of which results from what the own subject conceives in a social context (spatially and temporarily situated). The perfected journey shows an election of a social group according to a spectrum of known options.

Distinguishing these universes allows for the emergence of a subjective vision of the territory and transport beyond its material vision. It also enables a multiple-scale standpoint in the analysis of perfected journeys. It also allows to see, through them, what travelers do and don't do, what they can and what they know, what they choose and prefer. Furthermore, within the framework of this distinction, the researcher's view deems perfected journeys as a manifestation of movements made based on what is available (with the available transport networks and services, with the available organization and soil use, etc.), and not as a "revelation" of the movements themselves. This is a strong bias among transport specialists (technicians or scholars), and even though this is an aspect of a more theoretical-conceptual nature, it has pragmatic effects: the reality of the journey is only partially known. As it was said, the way in which it is conceptualized intervenes on the data gathered to know the reality and through which it is later acted on.

To sum up, mobility and transport share their unit of study, but do not study the same universe of journeys. Mobility "broadens the borders" of the traditional study of transport. Transport is necessary but insufficient to know mobility, since it does not comprise the mediation between society and territory.

## Recreating definitions: journey practices and the use of the territory

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Conceived, actual and perfected mobility refer to subjective journey universes. The passage from one to another is mediated by subjective conditions, which are endogenous to the corporeality of the subject or the private sphere, as well as by objective (or public sphere) conditions. Objective conditions include the location of the activities and the population in the territory, that is, the journeys' places of origin and destination.

As it has been seen, changes in urban structure, economy and lifestyles change the localization of the journeys' origin and destination. But itineraries within the territory change even if the localization of activities and the population does not.

Journey social practices express the use of the territory and define the way in which it is appropriated. They operate under conditions, and these involve aspects of transport, and of the activities or services targeted by the journey, as well as personal aspects. Furthermore, the journey social practice is a field of disputes between personal aspects and those of the transport and the target activity or service from which the realization of a journey (and not others) results.

Mobility varies according to objective conditions involving the amount and distribution within the territory of transport services and infrastructure, as well as health and education services, employment, etc. as a whole. The conditions in which they are offered impact on mobility, as well as the transport conditions. Furthermore, mobility varies according to the distribution within the territory of the quality of the services. The way an activity or service is provided affects the journey practice, whether it is associated with the transport, or the targeted activity or service. This is a subtle, less noticeable change than that involving observing the (in)existence of services and infrastructures in the territory, but a relevant one, since even with the same transport service, the mobility of a social group varies according to the quality of the health or education service, employment, etc.

In short, journey social practices express different requirements and capacities going beyond the direction of the journeys (based on the localization of origins and destinations) and the transport offer (individual or collective, networks or services). Broadly

speaking, it may be said that the passage from conceived mobility to realized mobility is mediated by the conjugation of the journey's desires, needs, capacities and efforts.

Pursuant to what has been defined so far, mobility is a journey social practice within the territory which conjugates movement desires and needs (which may be defined, as a whole, as mobility requirements) and the capacity to meet them. This definition refers to what mobility is, that is, it is an ontological definition.

## Recreating definitions: study's ontological and teleological approach

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Mobility does not have a value in itself. Moving between places within the territory without a pre-defined purpose (such as that, for example, of a vagrant) is a possible but exceptional situation. The material movement of goods and persons in the territory pursues an end: the essence of mobility is, as such, teleological. It is closely linked to the sense of movement in the territory, which is in turn linked to subjectiveness.

As it has been previously said, going from a material to a subjective space is a challenge that broadens analysis alternatives in mobility, but which needs to be methodologically translated to the field study's concepts and tools.

According to Bonnemaïson (cited in Haesbaert, 2004: 280), territorialization encompasses a set of hierarchized places connected through a network of itineraries. Journey social practices express the use and appropriation of the territory through itineraries and places.

On recreating the concept of distance, Lévy (2001) distinguishes two approaches or methods of treatment: a topographic (Euclidean) one, which prioritizes an absolute conception of space, and a topological (non-Euclidean) one, which prioritizes a relative, relational conception. The concept of the "network" space, consisting of dots, lines and surfaces, prioritizes the topographic approach. This is the way the conventional transport "network" is conceived, as a Euclidean metrics of space. But even when a relative and relational conception of space is used, the "network" described by the journey practices remains a graphic of places which responds to a Euclidean metrics of the

material space. There is an underlying “cartographic”, subsocialized registry of the territory.

Mobility, as a movement in the territory, always refers to a graphic of places. Even trajectories and itineraries which express a subjective, thought and/or experimented space, through a subjective sense of mobility, describe a graphic of places in the material space. Therefore, studying the sense or meaning of mobility is not enough. It is necessary to add sense or meaning to the graphic of the material space of mobility.

Movement in the territory is made between places, but its end is not the places, but the activities, services, goods situated there. Studying mobility as a journey social practice consists of studying a performance in the territory “as from” the satisfaction of movement needs and/or desires. Thus, it is possible to make a distinction between an ontological and a teleological definition of mobility. It is also possible to apply this distinction to the unit of study, and to define the journey as a material movement of persons and goods which requires bridging a physical distance and satisfying a need or desire.

Therefore, the teleological approach to mobility reveals personal trajectories within the territory involved in the satisfaction of needs or desires of ordinary life. Not in reaching places. It reveals a territory “designed” by the ultimate sense of the movement in the territory, which is not an “abstract” reason for the journey, or a place. It is something concrete: fixing the car, applying for a loan.

Finally, mobility is a social practice consisting in moving between places with the purpose of perfecting everyday activities. It involves the movement of people and goods, and brings together journey needs and/or desires (or mobility requirements), and objective and subjective capabilities to satisfy them, from which interaction the access conditions to everyday life by social groups result.

Why should we talk about access rather than accessibility? To differentiate approaches: the accessibility, as an ontological approach, weighs the ease to “reach” places; and access, as a teleological approach, weighs the ease to “perform services” or activities.

According to the proposal of this work, “access” means meeting the needs and/or desires targeted by the journey. Applying the teleological approach favors the integration of mobility into the management

and assessment of different sectoral public policies, as it reveals the trajectories involved behind the realization of the respective performances, activities or services (attending classes, having a check-up, collecting a pension) (Gutiérrez, 2010).<sup>[4]</sup>

## Recreating methods: how to study journeys?

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Now, how to study the satisfaction of movement needs and/or desires? Studying mobility as from the satisfaction of the end sought by the traveler requires adjusting the methodological definition of the unit of study. As it has been previously said, the satisfaction of a journey need or desire requires more than “reaching the place” of the sought activity or service (school, hospital, factory, etc.). It also involves realizing, performing such activity or service (having classes or a check-up, completing a job, etc.). However, both transport and mobility studies focus on the journey between objects or places (the home and the hospital, school, factory, etc.). This leaves immersed or subsumed journeys with no analytical clarity and/or journeys excluded from the analysis.

The journey is a unit of study which may be methodologically defined as a path between a place of departure and a place of arrival, or a path between a goal and its satisfaction. Studying the journey “as from” the nexus between an aim and its satisfaction allows for the emergence of the sequence of journeys involved in the performance of an activity or service, which are analytically “hidden” in the study of the “arrival at places”.

Satisfying a journey’s need or desire consists of performing activities or services. And performing an activity does not equal making a journey. It may involve a functional sequence of “broken”, temporarily and territorially distributed journeys. Each “abstract” reason for a journey (education, health, work) involves different activities and services which are realized through performances. The journey for health reasons, for instance, involves a “linear” journey to the health institution (hospital, doctor’s office, etc.). But receiving health care involves a connected sequence of

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[4] In Gutiérrez (2010), the concepts of accessibility and access are differentiated and, with them, the geography of access and accessibility.

journeys: requesting appointments, attending the visit, performing complementary medical examinations (for instance, blood tests, x-rays), retrieving and delivering results. The journey for educational purposes involves a “linear” journey to school. But receiving education entails a connected sequence of journeys: attending classes, performing complementary curricular activities (physical education, languages, music), group assignments, making research at the library, applying for the student travel pass, having health check-ups, etc.

To sum up, studying mobility as from the journey’s places of origin and destination “hides” trajectories within the territory. After arriving at the place, that is, the school, the hospital, the office, there are concrete and diverse activities which may involve more than a journey, and even different places. These journeys are functionally linked but operationally “fragmented”, distributed through different days and places.

From a teleological approach, the journey (whether or not materialized) describes a graphic of places in the material territory “as from” a subjective, experienced space, of the space of senses: meeting a journey need (and/or desire) finally describes a network space within the territory. The study of journey practices from a teleological approach discloses itineraries subsumed under or excluded from the conventional analysis, itineraries which capture the sense of mobility and which assign specific meaning to the graphic of the material space of mobility.

The proposal of this work is that the journey of people and goods in the territory may be complementarily studied from different perspectives. In the ontological approach, a cartographic vision prevails. The journey’s morphology in the territory is linear (it links two places, for example, home and hospital) and its length, although variable, involves a continuous time (the time for completing the linear path). In the teleological approach, a biographic vision prevails. The morphology of the journey is reticular or network-based (it links two or more places: home, hospital and lab; home, school and travel pass office, etc.), and discontinuous in time (distributed over one or more days). The emphasis laid on each one may vary, whether or not on an alternated basis, according to the observer’s interest and judgment.

## Recreating methods: how to study traveling social practices?

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The journey social practice, understood as a repetition of behaviors which define a pattern of territorial movement in a specific time and place, needs to be studied through cases. That is, knowledge on the journey practices depends on the definition of the case itself. And on this last issue, no significant methodological advances have been made. Case studies substantiate themselves, that is, substantiate the validity of their samples and conclusions, but do not usually explicit which elements constitute the journey practice studied in a case.

Methodologically, the study of cases calls for the construction of analytical models allowing to obtain results susceptible to certain generalization or inferences, something more than specific and particular images. How to construct analytical cases or models to study journey practices? In Gutiérrez and Minuto (2007), a method based on the crossing of three dimensions is proposed:

- Type of journey based on the aim of the movement (health, education, employment, usual journeys for a household or person, etc.),
- Type of social group (young, women, unemployed people, etc.),
- Type of territory (rural, urban, central, peripheral, borderline, etc.).

The election of the case studies thus responds to a (theoretical) model of journey practice based on the combined selection of a “type” aim, group and territory, the result of which is the approach to “model” mobility experiences.

## Recreating study tools: the history of journey

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The study of journey practices requires the use of tools different from those conventionally used in transport, seeking to complement quantitative and qualitative information coming from secondary sources (such as transport statistics on the number of vehicles or passengers, kilometers covered, average

tariff, etc.) and from primary sources. The information from primary sources also requires the use of tools allowing for capturing the interchange between the subjective or private sphere and the objective or public sphere of the journey contained in the practices.

Methodologically, the study of a journey may be approached as a sequence of origin and destination places, as well as a sequence of moments. Following this last perspective, and based on the model applied by Thaddeus and Maine (1994), it is possible to recognize three moments in a journey:

1. The “pre-journey” moment, associated with decision, planning and organization.
2. The “journey” moment, associated with the route between the places of origin and destination.
3. The “post-journey” moment, associated with the performance of the activity which was the purpose of the journey.

Defining the unit of study from a chronological perspective facilitates the study of the journey’s biographic dimension as a personal experience, and including the performance of the target activity as a part of the journey practice itself. It also allows to support the methodological design of a tool for collecting field data: the “journey’s history” (Gutiérrez, 2010).

The journey’s history captures qualitative and quantitative data on mobility and transport by means of semi-structured interviews. Its design is directed at studying the social practices of movement based on the satisfaction of the journey’s needs or desires, and not the arrival at places. Addressing the journey –that is, the unit of study– as a sequence of moments between a need or desire and its realization allows for the implementation of a simultaneous, transversal and linking study involving personal aspects (at an individual, family and neighborhood scale), as well as aspects of transport, and of the activity or service targeted by the journey.

It is possible to organize the dimensions of the analysis considering that in the first moment (or pre-journey) the prevailing aspects are those associated with the personal, family and neighborhood sphere; in the second moment (“during” the journey) those associated with the transport’s infrastructure, means and services, and in the third one, those linked to the infrastructure and services of the activity targeted by the journey (for example, health, education, job). The

first moment emphasizes the journey’s subjective or private sphere. The second and third ones, the journey’s objective or public sphere.

The gathered information allows to identify the factors which come into play in mobility as well as to weigh their role in the journey practice and in the end result: access the meeting of the journey’s goal. For example, a long waiting time or the need to attend several visits, may affect the decision to travel for health reasons, how much and how. In this way, the journey’s history, through the journey practice, reveals the interaction between subjective aspects and objective conditions regarding both transport and the target activity resulting in the realization of a journey (and the non-realization of others).

The journey’s history enables the capture of data on mobility by cohorts, through small samples realizable at the micro or local scale, within large agglomerations or other territorial units.

There is still a lot to inquire on the understanding of journey practices. Journey practices vary based on a multiplicity of combined factors, including age, socioeconomic level, gender and physical abilities, the relative weight of which is variable and not accurately known. This conjunction varies among historically and territorially situated social groups, but it is not static for the same social group either (Gutiérrez, 2009b). It may vary throughout time, and also based on the different reasons for the journey (work, health, education, shopping). Finally, the journey practice of a social group depends on the definition of the social group itself (Gutiérrez and Minuto, 2007). And there have been little methodological advances in this respect.

## Recreating metrics and indicators: ontological approach

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Although the delimitation of the purpose and the unit of study (the journey) may not be obvious, metrics and indicators on mobility and transport are actually associated with the journey, both in the conventional approaches on transport and in new approaches on mobility. The number of journeys, their distance (whether metric, temporal or mental), length, the means of transport used and the expenditure (whether in terms of money or energy) are typical measurements.

However, measurements associated with the journey are not always cohesive with the characterizations of mobility made based on them. For example, let's take a look at the measurement of immobility or hypermobility. Between the absence of movement (immobility) and the absence of setting or permanence (hypermobility), it is possible to draw a mobility gradient measured in terms of journeys. But mobility may improve by extending or reducing the number of journeys (for example, by replacing journeys by telecommunication). The vague delimitation of the purpose and the unit of study also bring ambiguities to the way in which mobility is measured or scaled.

The mobility of a social group may be characterized based on different aspects associated with the journey. Conceived, actual and realized mobility signal the subjective journeys that the person in a social context conceives, deems possible and performs. These journeys may be confronted with objective or public-sphere conditions in order to characterize "types" or classes of mobility helping to dimension it based on new and different aspects. The following "types" of mobility may be distinguished:

- Potential mobility: existing transport alternatives, irrespective of whether or not they are an option for a social group. That is, the journeys a group may make, including non-conceived and non-perfected but potentially realizable movement alternatives.
- Latent mobility: movement needs which are not realized in journeys. It is the "non-journey", which suggests a transport "vacancy".
- Vulnerable mobility: movement needs realized in journeys but which realization may be at risk, or which may be reduced or deteriorated, on account of the intervention of obstacles conditioning their continuity, or turning it fragile or weakened.
- Hidden mobility: journeys perfected but not recorded by statistics.

Potential mobility provides a view based on the network (the offer of infrastructure and services). Latent and vulnerable mobility provide it based on the traveler. Vulnerable mobility has a perspective of descending social mobility, of regression in the insertion of a person or group into society (in terms of the quantity and quality of the insertion). Potential and latent mobilities offer a perspective of ascending social mobility, of progression in the insertion of a per-

son or group into society. In the first case, the (sub) utilization of the infrastructure and services supply is dimensioned. In the second one, the (sub)realization of the demand for journeys is dimensioned. The hidden mobility dimensions the (sub)visualization of the demand for journeys (Gutiérrez, 2009a).

## Recreating mobility metrics and indicators: teleological approach

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As it has been previously said, between immobility and hypermobility, it is possible to draw a mobility gradient measured in terms of movements or journeys, but not to assign a value to this gradient. Immobility or hypermobility are neither good nor bad in themselves, but with reference to the purpose sought by the traveler. Both, in turn, are relative to each social group and, moreover, to each journey reason within a social group.

The mobility of a social group may be characterized and dimensioned based on different aspects associated with the journey: according to the number of journeys (large or small), the journeys' area of coverage (whether broad or restricted), the journey's effort (difficult or easy), the threats to the realization of the journey (if it is more or less vulnerable), the satisfaction of the journey's needs or desires (if it is satisfied to a higher or lower extent). This last aspect expresses the teleological approach, which is the only one which may dimension the value of the mobility of a social group in the gradient from immobility to hypermobility.

Based on this distinction, the following metrics are recreated in Gutiérrez (2010):

- Unsatisfied mobility: perfected journeys in which the need motivating them has not been satisfied (for example, receiving health care). That is, they are "useless" journeys.
- Unsatisfactory mobility: perfected journeys in unfavorable conditions.
- Insufficient mobility: non-perfected, suspended, postponed journeys, or journeys realized to an extent lesser than that necessary or desired.
- Associated mobility: journeys made to achieve purposes subordinated to the main purpose (for example, journeys to perform formalities to access benefits, appointments, etc.)

These measures allow for the delimitation of vulnerability situations and, in turn, the supply of an input for action through policymaking on transport or other sectors (health, education, employment, etc.). In this case, non-perfected mobility is a complement for transport policies considering it an inductor for demand.

## Conclusions

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The beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century has seen a change in the paradigm of thinking: from transport to mobility. This change involves breaks, and also continuities. A basic continuity is its referral to the same field of study: the territorial movement of people and their goods. A change is that now mobility and transport converge as alternative and complementary thoughts around a common subject of knowledge, and that the conventional borders of study are expanding.

The conceptual and methodological development proposed by this work aims at establishing the field of study of the territorial movement of people and their goods as one converging for both mobility and transport, and to parallelly discern the approach of mobility and that of transport as associated but conceptually different subjects, which are not mutually exclusive or hierarchically chained as one being tributary to the other.

Mobility and movement are not the same. Mobility is a social practice or action consisting of moving within the territory. The movement is the act of displacement itself. Transport is the means used to realize it. Mobility is a wide concept, and contains a way of interpreting the act of displacement.

Mobility and transport share a subject-matter of study: the territorial movement of people and their goods in a social context, which is specifically determined in time and space. They also share the unit of study, the journey. But they do not study the same universe of journeys. In mobility, thinking is focused on the journey social practice, which expresses and contains subjective and objective, material and immaterial, materializable and materialized aspects. Therefore, its universe of study refers to perfected, realizable and conceived journeys. In transport, thinking focuses on the means of movement which perfects or realizes mobility. Ergo, its universe of study refers to realized journeys. Mobility expands the conventional borders for the study of transport.

Furthermore, the unit of study or journey may be methodologically defined in several ways. The conventional mode, and the prevailing one in the different approaches to transport and current urban mobility, even in the most innovative ones, is ontological. That is, there is a “spatialist” or cartographic definition as a link between places. This definition “subsocializes” the essence of territorial movement, which is teleological: it seeks the satisfaction of people’s needs or desires. This work suggests an alternative and complementary way of defining the journey, a teleological approach as a link between needs (or desires) and services (or activities). In both cases, the journey describes a path within the territory, that is, a material track between places, but the second one captures a different itinerary. The itinerary which involves performing a single activity draws networks within the territory: networks of journeys and places.

Considering the satisfaction of needs or desires motivating the territorial movement of people aiming to take a “humanized” look at mobility and transport, and later studying it as if such satisfaction could be resolved with the arrival at places where activities or services are localized, raises a contradiction. Void of sense, the sense of focusing on the subject and his or her needs or desires.

Meeting these needs or desires of everyday life involves perfecting activities or services, not only arriving at places. And perfecting activities or services does not necessary imply a linear journey between an origin and a destination. Perfecting activities entails journey networks which may include more than one place, more than one journey, journeys distributed at different moments and on different dates, repeated, chained, unsuccessful journeys. A chain linked by the functional sense of perfecting the activity or service.

The field of territorial movement is dominated by a “spatialist” vision of the nexus among mobility, transport and territory. The logic of territorial movement is undoubtedly associated with a locational logic. This is true, but partial. The localization of activities is insufficient to explain the logic of movements. The residential localization is not fully explained by it either. The proximity to activities does not necessarily satisfy accessibility, and the proximity to transport systems either. There are signals of explanatory frontiers in the “spatialist” bias, or the materialist conception of the territory.

Each urban model involves a territorial configuration of localizations, and also a lifestyle. Lifestyles “functionalize” the territorial configuration, and this involves interactions between material and immaterial aspects inherent in the universe which is internal and external to the corporeality of the social subject. The journey is the result of material conditions, and also subjective universes internalizing these conditions.

Delimiting the subject-matter and the unit of study of the mobility and transport fields helps to methodologically operationalize advances in thinking on mobility and territory. Making a distinction between an ontological and a teleological approach to the study contributes to capturing the expanded journeys’ universe of mobility, as well as to capturing non-recorded mobility, non-perfected mobility (the non-journey) and ineffective mobility (the “futile” journey). The mobility of a social group comprises what has been conceived, deemed possible and realized, and what happens before, during and after a journey. It also helps to capture itineraries which are subsumed un-

der or excluded from the analysis, even of the new ones incorporating subjectiveness and potentiality to mobility. The journey (whether or not materialized) always describes a graphic of locations in the material territory. But plotting a journey “as from” locations “subsocializes” the study of the paths described by the journey practices. The material graphic of the subjective, experienced space requires starting from “non-Euclidean” definitions of journey capturing the sense of mobility and giving specific meaning to the graphic of the places in the territory.

The challenge of the globalization’s urban mobility and city transport is a technical and locational one, but it does not end there. Designing options for urban transport management outside the conventional models calls for a more effective, and also more human, definition of mobility. Contributing to the development of a theoretical, conceptual, methodological and indicators’ body will help to supplement the traditional study tools and extend the scope of analyses.

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