In the meantime or the (ab)use of online accessing during mobility

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Abstract

The recent development of ICT has created conditions for people to be constantly online. These days is common to receive an email ended by a sentence like "sent from my iPhone", meaning that the sender used his or her cell phone to send it and therefore his or her location is uncertain – could be in a restaurant, at work, at home or even moving. Social interaction, while commuting or travelling, was only possible when people were not travelling alone. Mobile telecommunications changed this scenario bringing the mobile communication to the time-space of dislocation. In recent years the spread of sales of smartphones and iphones has changed the *motion scenarios.* In what extended is this tendency connected to a leisure practice or to work continuity? Using a set of empirical data that combines the results of two mobility surveys in the Portuguese metropolitan areas, mobile interviews and visual research methods this paper debates the recent evolution of the time-space of mobility. The results allow us to discuss the role of ICT in the mediation of spaces anchor and the diversification of uses of Internet accessing while on mobility.

Growth of ict presence in daily life

According to some authors (Van Welsum, Overmeer & Van Ark, 2013) the economic crisis had the effect of locking the steam of ICT, as a driver of growth, since the mid-2000. But even if at a slower pace the penetration of ICT in individual market hasn't stop growing, allowing its user an almost permanent connection to the Internet. In western society mobile-broadband penetration reached 84% in 2014 and in 2013 the sales of smartphones overcome the sales of regular cell phones in Europe. In Portugal it reached 55% of the Portuguese cell phone market in that year (ITU, 2014).

Even more important than assessing the growth of ICT access and use is to measure it impacts. That is challenging due to constantly changing nature of technology (UN, 2011). There is a need for more impact studies but until now the general tendency is that ICT seems to bring more positive impacts than negatives in different realms. In what concerns individuals and communities ICT seems to play an important role in increasing information dissemination and communication through the use of social networking sites, email and cell phones; also ICT is making the access to services more easy and "directly changing activities such as shopping, banking and dealing with government; how people spend their income; how they spend their time; and how they communicate with family, friends and the broader community" (UN, 2011, p. 15). So we find here an

important connection between ICT and daily routines, it seems the former is changing the later in ways we don't know yet the extent.

The performance of activities while on the move depends not only of having an internet-enabled Wi-Fi device but also network available to connect. The free Wi-Fi access had a huge development in late years and increasingly co-constitutes public spaces (McQuire, 2008). In Europe, municipal Wi-Fi has had considerable success as a public alternative to the expensive rates fixed by telecom operators (Lambert, McQuire & Papastergiadoris, 2013).

Free Wi-Fi 'hotspots' exist in places of 'intersecting flows' of commerce and people (MacKenzie, 2005). This is why cafes, restaurants and hotels offer this facility. Public transports and stations are also places full people and transactions. Some local initiatives of free wireless access in public transports are grassing worldwide (Lambert, McQuire & Papastergiadoris, 2013) from taxis in South Africa to Tokyo subway which shows an awareness of the relevance given by passengers of having internet access while on the move. In Portugal the offer of free wireless access in public transports is growing: The called *internet of things* is available since 2011 in a long-distance bus company – Rede Expresso – that was pioneer in the country. In December 2014, a Portuguese start-up that manages the bus and taxis of Oporto launch the service and is covering around 70 000 passengers per month that otherwise would have to use their cellular network[1]. In June this year all the Portuguese airports started to offer free and unlimited wireless access.

(Characteristics of) The "time-space" of mobility

Ian Gately (2014) offers us a recent and very complete essay about dislocation of people with a special focus in commuting. As we know human kind was nomadic and some groups and communities still are. But travel acquired the condition of exception on the course of History – connected to specific situations like war or certain groups of people like for example the merchants – and, until more recent years, the average person was highly immobile. It was only in the nineteen century that this reality changed, much due to the development of the railway. There is no scientific register of the activities of the first travellers, just the portraits literature and cinema offer us of coach or boat travels. In fact travel behaviour only became a field of study very recently. But the willingness for travelling/moving became visible in the early nineteen century when the railway operators became surprise with a large human demand for the train, initially developed to transport freight (Gately, 2014). In this point it is important to call the attention to the fact that travel is many times associated with leisure, due to tourism. But travel can differ according to its motivation, which can be compulsory (an appointment, a family meeting) or more or less voluntary like tourism. On the other hand travel can became a routine like in the case of commuting. These different patterns of travelling bring different patterns of travel behaviour and in this paper we will overlook several types but in

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[1] For more information see http://www.technologyreview.com/news/533176/hundreds-of-portuguese-buses-and-taxis-are-also-Wi-Fi-routers/.

the empirical study we will focus more in routine trips due to the data collection area and circumstances.

Going back to commuting, we know that the first commuters were people with certain characteristics quite different from the nowadays commuter: wealthy, because travelling was still highly expensive, and adventurous, since disruptions and accidents were a common phenomenon. Commuting changed many British' lives in vary senses but one that interest us specially was the fact that "railways were credit with causing a surge on literacy in the UK" (Gately, 2014, p. 32). Reading and eating seem to have been early travel activities that still maintain importance today (Lyons, Jain & Atkins, 2013). One other important feature was the conviviality or spontaneous social interaction. Early commuters had already a *silence code* (Gately, 2014) but for more classist reasons at that time. The railways came to *democratise the space* putting together, in the same carriage, people from different social places and therefore the social convention of not speaking to strangers emerged. Nowadays this convention is still very important but its expression varies by culture. In Japan mobile conversations maintained in a public transport are seen as a very rude and impolite attitude (Ito, Okabe & Matsuda, 2005). In Portugal it is common to listen to private conversations between two persons travelling together or a person on his or her cell phone.

In fact one of the things mobile telecommunication brought to travel behaviour was a major proximity to private life (Sales Oliveira, 2011).

Late twenty-century mobility growth highlighted the importance of studying this phenomenon, before not conceived as a social or sociological concern rather a management and strategic variable. Authors like Urry and Sheller (2006) brought to Sociology the reflection on spatial mobility as a phenomenon that shapes and is shaped by social structure. By allowing an increasing number of long distance relationships, travel and communication technologies have changed the way we make society. Many researchers are calling this phenomenon 'the mobility turn'. People move for socially determined reasons like to get a better job or a better life quality and also move in socially determined ways: to move by private transport is valued, not only because the car is the icon of mobility and flexibility but also a sign of wealth (Sales Oliveira, 2015). In this research area the study of travel behaviour and/or travel time use is an important aspect, not much valued in social sciences literature as a source of information to understand social change. Still authors of travel behavior research call the attention to the fact that travel behavior is a part of life (De Vos et al., 2013). And it can be a very large part like in cases of extreme commuting where people travel more than 300 miles a day.

Nowadays around 500 million people commute (Gately, 2014). Many others travel on a regular basis. In the meanwhile of their trips they do several activities and have perceptions and representations of the time-space of their travel. Policy makers and transport planners keep more focused in reducing time and distance then offering pleasant trip experiences (Gately, 2014). But society changes and the new tools and practices also reached this time-space. A study about the travel time use of rail passengers in Great Britain between 2004 and 2010 "reveal a consistent dominance of reading for leisure,

window gazing/people watching and working/studying as favoured travel time activities" (Lyons, Jain, Susilo & Atkins, 2013, p.1) But the availability and use of mobile technologies has increased enormously in the late years and this reflects in travel behaviour with a growth in activities like listening to music. This growth seems to contribute strongly to the "substantial increase in the proportion of travellers overall making very worthwhile use of their time" (Lyons, Jain, Susilo & Atkins, 2013, p. 20). So the extend of the role of ICT in the time-space of travels seems to be larger than we could expect.

ICT on the move

The development of internet contents to cell phones and the existence of services of mobile internet affordable to the common citizen allowed another step on the growth of the already significant virtual social world: people are now connected in times and spaces they weren't before one being precisely while moving: walking, running, cycling, driving or being a public transport passenger. The relevance of this "time-place" for virtual communication use is considerable because not so long ago it used to be a dead time (Lyons & Kenyon, 2003) of waiting during which people could do just some individual activities like reading, sleeping or studying. Social interaction, while commuting or travelling, was only possible when people were not travelling alone since communication with other passengers has always been conditioned (Gately, 2014) Mobile telecommunications changed this scenario some years ago bringing the mobile communication via phone call or text message to the time-space of dislocation but now with easy mobile internet access the possibilities for interaction on the move are incredible larger.

But there isn't yet much information of about how concretely is this technology turn impacting the daily life of people and especially their commuting and travelling experiences. Media online accessing can contribute to an improve in the mobility experience (Lyons & Chaterlee, 2008) by diversifying the activities people can engage in while travelling but it can be also be creating the conditions for the strength of unwanted tendencies, such as longer distances commuting, longer working periods and a poorer work/private life balance. Working and studying were activities performed during commuting (Sales Oliveira, 2011) but with the ownership of devices like iPad, iPods, tablets and smartphones the capacity for working while travelling becomes much larger. At the same time, demands of proactivity and accurate problem solution, common in highly qualified jobs much benefit from a permanently online presence of their workers. Therefore several companies are offering to their employees' internet packages and even mobile communications equipment as business tools in order to improve productivity and more efficient ways to operate (Deloitte, 2014). What are the impacts of these policies in the lifestyles? Due to the pervasiveness of internet that tends to interpenetrate private and public realms it is difficult to determine in what extend are these new social practices of being online while travelling representing overwork and additional pressure or being mainly a time-space for leisure and sociability.

Methodology

The main objective of this research was to explore the role of ICT in the mediation of spaces anchor and the diversification of uses of internet accessing while on mobility. Using a qualitative and exploratory methodological approach we combined very different techniques in this research due to the fact that some data were collected previously (2004, 2007 and 2008), in the context of broader research, and other set of data is more recent and was collected expressly for the purpose of this reflection. The older data consists in two mobility surveys applied in 2004 and 2007. The surveys were online and are non-representative samples of Lisbon Metropolitan Area (2004) and Lisbon and Oporto Metropolitan Area. We will also use 31 mobile interviews (collected in 2008 in the same areas) which explore the commuter's activities, perceptions of the travel and relation with technology. The data from the surveys was treated with IBM SPSS statistics 19. The data from the mobile interviews was treated with content analysis.

In what concerns visual research in this research, we "proceed methodologically by making visual representations (studying society by producing images), by examining pre-existing visual representations (studying images for information about society." (Banks, 1995, p. 1) We used already existent visual material on mobility and also explored visual data collected for this research. The already existent material is the *Stainless* series of the artist Adam Magyar who works urban flow and mobility images as a photographer.[2]

The visual material collected for this research consists of photographs taken in Lisbon metropolitan area in the spring and summer of 2015. It was registered the environment of some public transports specially the train but also the bus.

To treat the visual data we have chosen a dialectical approach (Weber, 2008) analysing the data set as a whole, as groups and each piece individually.

Results

Starting with the statistical data from the first mobility survey, it was asked to people what were the three main activities they usually do while commuting.

In table 1 we can see that *Listen to music* was the main activity, with 21% of the choices. *Reading* is the second activity more practiced but from the third to the sixth activities the profile is quite different —all activities are connected to stillness: wondering, observing, nothing and sleeping. Remain activities are more active with two of them meaning interaction with others. The use of the cell phone is low, but still more present than to work/study.

Activities	First activity	Second activity	Third activity	Total	Weight of the activity
Listening to music (in a personal device)	108	49	13	170	21%
Reading (newspapers, magazines, books)	105	40	10	155	19%

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2 For more information on the work of Adam Magyar see http://www.magyaradam.com/.

Wondering	41	49	33	123	15%
Observing the surrounding	30	43	37	110	14%
Nothing	38	13	27	78	10%
Sleeping	14	8	17	39	5%
Speaking on the cell phone	7	15	20	42	5%
Chatting with neighbours	23	11	6	40	5%
Working or studying	9	11	4	24	3%
Other (driving)	18	1		19	2%
Doing puzzles or other games		1	4	5	1%
Total	393	240	171	804	
Missing values	7%	43%	60%		

N= 423 respondents
Table 1: Activities while commuting in Lisbon Metropolitan Area (2004)

The bivariate analysis of this variable with the variable transportation mode showed that the activities are segmented according to the transport used. Listening to music, chatting, doing nothing and wondering are car activities. Speaking on the cell phone it is also a car activity. Reading, sleeping, observing and working/studying are public transport activities. The relation with gender is also significant (low association but highly significant) because the transportation mode is gender sensitive, with women using more the public transport and men using more the personal transport.

The 2007 survey had a different set of answers due to belonging to another project.

ACTIVITIES WHILE COMMUTING	VALUE	WEIGHT OF THE ACTIVITY
Listening to music (in a personal device)	939	49%
Reading (newspapers, magazines, books)	332	18%
Nothing/resting	304	16%
Chatting with neighbours	112	6%
Driving	80	4%
Speaking on the cell phone	48	3%
Working or studying	58	3%
Gaming (cell phone/computer)	12	0,6%
Wondering/observing the surrounding	7	0,4%
Accessing internet	7	0,4%
Total	1899	100%
Missing values	4%	

N= 1971 respondents
Table 2: Activities while commuting in Lisbon and Oporto Metropolitan Areas (2007)

In this survey, we can see that the main activity is listening to music, with an expressive distance from the other activities. Reading is in second place and stillness is also present in the third option "nothing". Speaking on the phone maintains low and even more residual are activities like gaming and accessing the internet, with only 1% of answers, but already included in the set of answers due to the technology already available at that time.

The association tests with transport mode and gender show exactly the same tendencies that the 2004 survey: listening to music, chatting and speaking on the cell phone are car activities. Doing nothing/resting, reading and gaming and accessing the internet are more public tranport activities and more women activities which is somehow unexpected for the gaming. But the low values do not allow any kind of major considerations.

It were made thirty one in deep interviews to commuters in order to understand their overall perception and experience of commuting. The interviews were mobile, meaning that it were undertaken while the person was commuting. The interviewer followed the persons interviewed in their usual trip using a phenomenological approach or becoming *la sombra* (Jirón, 2012). In this context it was not possible to observe the usual activities people do while travelling, because the presence of the reseracher conditionates radically the availability of the interviewer.

Commuting is referred as "a time that is mandatory" but can be an "opportunity to relax, read and recharge before arriving home and meeting my child" (woman, 32). A young woman told us that she is already tired of moving daily and commuting is "a lost time" that she tries to mitigate by making things like listening to music or reading; to her commuting is as a sacrifice of time to space: she have chosen to travel in order to have a better house but far from the job (woman, 34). Another young woman told us that previously she commuted by bus and, despite being more unconfortable "that noise and awfull smell!", she was able to sleep. She considers that to go by car (which she used to go in a certain period of her life) was good to spend time with dear ones (she used to go with her father). But the train has allowed her to go back to the reading habit (woman, 31). An older woman (woman, 54) likes to watch the people in the train. She thinks that the free newspapers have an important role because due to it "everyone now reads".

A middle age woman explains that prefers to come by train "quietly and reading". There was a time when she came with her husband by car and she was sorry because she no longer read in the trip. "Time in train feels good, it is a rest time.It is very important to have that time, even to sleep, rebalances" (woman, 45); "I like the free newspapers concept. I read them and then leave in my place for the next passenger" (man, 57).

A young man explains that:

> Waiting at the train station, I'm always moving, I can't stand still. The free newspapers are a good thing because before people sleep and now they read. The problem is there are no places to put them at the end and the train and stations are full of garbage. I never eat at the boat but since I remember that there is a cafe inside the boat and that's good thing, a lot of people take there their breakfast. (Man, 34)

Other say:

> I like to go by train, it is time to reflect on life and on things to do. I play a game: trying to read the thoughts of others by their faces! I also like to read the free newspapers and I purchase two a generalist and a sportive. Sometimes I take a book. (Man, 27)

> I read the free newspapers which I found very useful, I get informed. Lately I'm behaving well: I bring a book with me! I try always to stay in the same carriage because it is closer to the station exit. (Woman, 41)

> Often read and listen to music in my mp3. I always bring my book but not always read. When I first came to work in Lisbon I was surprised because in the metro nobody reads." (She received five calls during the commute.) (Woman, 24)

> In the train I aparently do nothing because I don't read or so. But that is because I like to seat and prepare myself for the day that is starting. (Woman, 35)

When the commuting is by personal transport the speech is quite different and people do other activities while in the car:

> Commuting is my living! Because my business is to scort children from school to activities or home. And in the morning and evening I also do my own commuting to the place of my first passenger who lives far from my house. On the move I'm always speaking on the phone because there are always things happening: a new client, schedule changes in my regular ones, a kid that is sick and needs to be picked up earlier from school. I receive and make calls and also organize my day and the next one while moving. To entertain my passengers I have a DVD in the car. (Woman, 47)

> Different activities in different transport modes: usually I go by car and then I use the time to speak on the phone, with the micro, to organize things and contact people by the morning; but traffic is tiring and when I have to do larger trips I go by train or plane I prefer because I rest of driving and can work in the trip (with the computer and internet). Generally the time of stillness of the trips it is always used to work and it is sometimes when I do more things! (Man, 38)

> My job is mobile so dislocations are my daily base. Usually I just drive but sometimes I answer the phone because I have the micro. I hope in the future to have a job were I have to move less, this is tiring. But for now is ok. (Man, 40)

I receive a lot of calls when I'm driving, mainly professional. Besides the commuting I also move a lot during day because as a businessman I have to do a lot of different tasks and meetings. That's ok, I don't mind driving in the surroundings. But if it is to go far away I don't like, I prefer to go in public transports and there I take my computer and work. (Man, 61)

As a salesman I keep moving all day long, from on client to another. I like that because for me driving is a pleasure and I entertain myself trying to find new paths or to avoid traffic. What I do more in the trips is to attend phone calls from my chief, colleagues or clients. I speak on the phone every day because I'm not at the office except for a few minutes in the morning and end of the day so it is the way to solve problems and do administrative work. In fact my cell phone and my computer are my mobile office in the car! (Man, 32). (He received and had to make 4 calls during the trip.)

Visual research

Stainless consists of six videos of people in the subway in different parts of the world but all metropolis: Berlin, New York, Beijing, Tokyo, Seoul and São Paulo. The videos were made between the year of 2011 (Alexanderpaltz, in Berlin) and 2015 (Republica, in Sao Paulo) and are available at Adam Magyar website and in Vimeo[3]. Adam Magyar is a passionate for urban environment. He explains the aim of his Stainless project by his love of the "unimportant, ignored moments" and his interest in "the area that sits between the still and motion". For making this videos Magyar needed special equipments with a technological new approach that in part was developed by him for this purpose

The camera I used for the Stainless project was an industrial one, normally used at assembly lines for mass production, so it was not a portable photographic device. This camera in itself is not capable of making images, there are additional devices required for it to make it function. I put a portable system together. As I needed a computer for streaming the huge quantity of data - the use of which was problematic in the subway - I had no other choice but to create an iPhone application that made it possible for me to control the system easily. (Magyar, 2011-2015)

Stainless shows us mobility in the underground in six different big cities. Among the six videos, similarities emerge like the presence of headphones and mobile devices, the passivity of the face expressions but also very interesting distinctive characteristics that show the differences of the contexts. The space between people is different in all stations, with Shinjuku, Tokyo being the more crowded and Alexanderplatz, Berlin the less. Tokyo is where more people are engaged in activities with their mobile devices while in

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[3] http://www.magyaradam.com/ and https://vimeo.com/adammagyar/.

Beijing is almost inexistent. Ethnic diversity is higher in the western videos. In Sao Paulo we see a police officer in the station. He can be working in the station security but can also be just travelling.

Figure 1: Printscreen of Adam Magyar Stainless videos
Source: https://vimeo.com/adammagyar/

Magyar wanted to catch the small movements but what is also relevant in this videos is the continuity and the contradictory between the presence of the body and the absence of the look that when boosted by the presence of elements like books or cell phones underline more the abstraction from the place and immersion in their inner world.

The analysis of our own material was organized according to a conceptual framework that kept some of the variables present in the two surveys – time and space but now organized in a different manner and added the concept of body. Time means the duration of the commuting but also of the moment of capture of the image. It can be too late or too soon. A waiting, a meanwhile or an arrival. Space is the place, inside or out the transport, but also the meaningful spaces, the space-anchors and the virtual space. In what concerns the body, the variable was introduced because we agree with Munoz that "though understudied as a relevant variable in research on mobility, the body is an element that is as demanded as few at a when traveling" (2013, p.5). The body is the base of mobility, is the body that moves. The body has positions and expressions.

The conceptual framework used can be seen in next image:

TIME ———————— **SPACE** ———————— **BODY**

Figure 2: Conceptual framework used in the visual analysis

This framework was used to interpret each image and the whole using a dialectic approach (Weber, 2008) which meant an exchange between the individual and collective perspectives and a cross cutting look for the similarities and the differences based on a questioning process operationalized in the following questions: How do the images "speak" to each other or relate to each other? How are they the same and how do they differ? What collective messages are they conveying? How the collection and how each image or scene or metaphor addresses the research question?

Waiting

Figure 3: Photograph of Lisbon subway, Entrecampos station.

People show calm and awareness of what's going to happen in their body attitude. They seem relaxed and serene. There is a strong presence of stillness much like in Magyar work. So it highlights a first paradox: people on the move seem strongly still. The bodies are disciplined in Foucault sense, to play the waiting role. TICs are present as an object, a company. An important element, so important that is carried in the hand despite women having a purse.

Figure 4: Photograph of Entrecampos railway station in Lisbon

Are they waiting for a call? Some people speak on the phone and others touch the screen. We can't know what are they doing but the time is scarce, just a few minutes before the train arrive. A quick check on the email or at Facebbok page?

During

Figure 5: Photograph of a Fertagus carriage in Lisbon Metropolitan Area

Inside the carriage we can see other details. People staring at the window. An introspective and absent look. A relaxed position but at the same time a strong awareness of the presence of others. A time and space for themselves.

Figure 6: Photograph of a Fertagus carriage in Lisbon Metropolitan Area

There are no smiles and, like Gately says, people keep their distance from the others and don't talk to strangers (2014). Personal conversations in the cell phone happened in every trip we followed. Always women voices. Arrangements and rescheduling or chatting with friends.

Figure 7: Photograph of Expressos Bus leaving Lisbon

At the bus a girl chatting with her father on the cell phone says uses the expression "to do that you need that I can't say now" with the clear intention of preserving their intimacy/privacy.

Arriving

Figure 8: Photograph of Pinhal Novo station, Lisbon Metropolitan Area

Now moving. Away and home? With calm but decision. And also the cell phone making strong presence despite of the movement.

Walking and looking.

Mixing the moments we notice that women are more present than men. People of different age but mostly adults, we don't see anyone very old or young. Transports and stations as places of grown up people. Working people? People dressing mostly causal and as we know that in Portugal of nowadays an important part of the jobs don't have a strict dress code, it is difficult to be sure whose of these people has been working and whose are involved in other activities. In late years the reasons for traveling to and from Lisbon has won further more significance than just work or study (INE, 2003; 2012).

Technology emerges as presence across all the commuting. The presence of the ICT: cell phone used to talk, to listen to music and to do things.
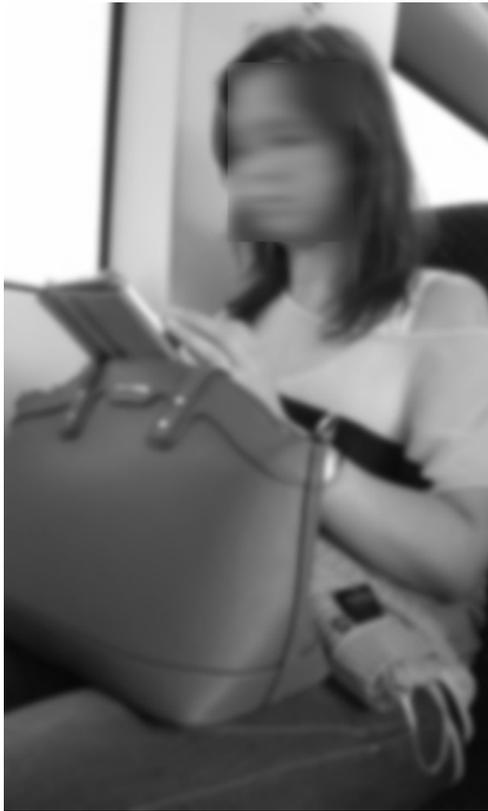
Figure 9: Photograph of Fertagus carriage in Lisbon Metropolitan Area

Carrying the cell phone on the hand was an expected result. Out of the bag, in the hand. To be at hand.

Figure 10: Photograph of Rede Expressos Bus leaving Lisbon

It makes part of a body set shaped by the serenity and calm of an exchange, a passage where people remain curiously still, conducted by the time of wait and the transport. Magyar words could have been written for these photographs, less beautiful than his but with great resemblance. "They are scrutinizing the uncertain future. Similarly to all my images, their main motivation is arrival" (Risch, 2012).

Putting the protagonists of the commuting interviewed to speak with the photographs of other commuters we can connect the words with the images creating cross cutting subtitles "a time that is mandatory" but can be an "opportunity to relax, read and recharge" but also "a time lost".

Figure 11: Photograph of Fertagus carriage in Lisbon Metropolitan Area

Figure 12: Photograph of Fertagus carriage in Lisbon Metropolitan Area

Lately I'm behaving well; I bring a book with me.

Figure 13: Photograph of Fertagus carriage in Lisbon Metropolitan Area

(...)I like to seat and prepare myself for the day that is starting.

Discussion

Going back to our research question – what is the role of ICT in the commuting namely in the mediation of spaces anchor? - we can notice a change in these 10 years. We can't prove it as our data are from very different sources and not comparable. But the strong presence of ICT today is unquestionable. Changes in *commuting scenario* probably reflect Portuguese society evolution. The early 2000 were the time of free newspapers. In our photographic study we haven't captured any of these newspapers so maybe they have lost their relevance due to Internet accessing. But the truth is we can't say this for sure because we don't actually know what people are doing when we capture their image looking and touching their mobile device. That's why we can't answer yet one of your major concerns for this research: is ICT creating the conditions for the strength of unwanted tendencies such as longer distances commuting, longer working periods and a poorer work/private life balance.

In the nineteen century the railway was responsible for the growth of the literacy of the British. What is the role of mobility in people's lives today? From our research we can see that is highly present and we know from the literature that people seem to be getting more satisfied with their trips as they can personalize their experience (Lyons, Jain, Susilo & Atkins, 2013).

The confrontation of the different materials of our set and of the visual material with the works of Magyar allows us to find similarities or a continuum. The cadence of the time-space of commuting seems to underline. Gately (2014) believe that commuting is here to stay and to follow Humanity course. Some of the activities performed in mobility continue to be present: wondering, gazing, sleeping: all representing the need of rest and relax. Compulsion to take profit of the free time still finds answer in reading but audio is a mark of contemporary society as we see in Magyar videos and also in our

survey and photographs. Mobile devices are a source of different activities and so the perfect companion for a trip, allowing social interaction hidden from the other passenger eyes. And therefore, in a carriage where no one interacts with each other are happening several interactions with commuters as protagonists.

The "time-space" of commuting is unique. Because it joins together routine and stillness at the very essence of motion, a mobility turned routine and that way touching stillness as the bodies flow from starting point to arrival, abstracting from their solidity, wondering and staring at their "uncertain future":

> Between the forced ubiquity of displacement and the sudden awareness of last man, we go down, we go up, we arrived. We have already moved (…) in fact, displacements are never the same: while out above, the city of palaces gives way to dawn, something has already changed down here. We have already changed. (Campos, 2004, p. 1).

It is precisely in terms of change that Daniel Munoz speaks of the travel experience. The different tasks performed by the commuters are roles they assume in the traveling context and therefore metamorphoses of the body (2013). These apparently highly personal moments at the same time are "moving moments where the audience emerges, crystallized in a fleeting encounter" (Iturra, 2013, p. 1).

But in this crossing of the personal with the public when is social research starting to be pervasive?

According to Mitchell, "working with the visual is (…) a mode of inquiry (a type of data elicitation). But there are two other aspects of the visual that are also critical. One relates to epistemology and how it is that we come to know what we know (and how to account for subjectivity)." This problem is especially meaningful "where it is the researcher herself who is the producer and interpreter" (Mitchell, 2011, pp. 4-5). And that happened in this research: the researcher was the producer of the images and had the power to chosen and that choice is subjective and addressed the research question. We were looking for the ICT presence and use. Maybe there could have been taken many other photographs without ICT. Also there are ethical issues involved and it is difficult to know whether you shall ask permission to photograph this kind of images to individuals or not. Besides that, the focus is the public beneath the individual. It is very difficult to operationalize an informed consent for this sort of data collection.

On the other hand the experience of joining together so different empirical materials is methodologically risky. We know the limits of the experience and don't have the pretension of being able to build up a solid argument based in such a patchwork data. Our intention was to share some information on commuting in Portuguese metropolis and to give data the space to speak for themselves. At a final weighing we consider that the tiny and ignored moments of commuting say much about greater things like our culture, our values, our identity. The question underlying this research was if there was somehow an abuse, meaning excessive use of online accessing in the meanwhile of the commuting trips. Our data and the confrontation with other researches and visions

makes us believe that is early to speak of one abuse. Other (traditional?) activities still remain important. People resemble relaxed. But from our point of view the meaningful presence of the handed cell phone is significant and demands a though. Like in the past the personal clock emerged due to the railway (Gately, 2014), nowadays mobility clearly interacts with the mobile devices that concentrate so many activities in it not allowing us to know what people are doing without asking them. But in our opinion the fact of its presence as a sort body extension of the hand of travellers speaks for its social value. ✎

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