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Human mobility in a globalising world

Human mobility, global change and local development

Contribution to the Italian PRIN 2002, Research Programme on "Tourism and development: local peculiarity and territorial competitiveness"

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Migration and global phenomena

- 1 During the last decades, the ensemble of social sciences and the various related disciplines have carried out in-depth studies on the numerous characteristics of migration and its impact on social, economic and cultural change, both in the destination countries and countries of origin. The general reference to social sciences rather than to geography, economy, sociology and other sciences that belong to this category, highlights the complexity of the migratory phenomenon and the necessity of a multi-disciplinary approach. In his methodological reflection on mobility, Claval (2002), refers to studies on distance, on the economic value of places, on social networks and life courses. In their methodological evolution, these sciences have prevalently referred to the “push-pull” concept, which is based on empirical evidence on internal and international migration in industrial and rural societies. On the basis of this concept, individuals migrate when they are attracted by areas that offer better employment opportunities than those in their place of residence. For its research programme, the IGU Commission on “Global Change and Human Mobility (Globility)” considered this to be an outdated approach in the sense that these days it is too simplistic to interpret a phenomenon that no longer refers to monetary terms or its relationships with productive activities (Montanari, 2002). For the last few years, human mobility also derives from consumption and one can observe a wide variety of flows whose primary cause is recreation, tourism and new lifestyles which vary in relation to age and places of origin. Mobility is the mirror of structural change in post-industrial society in which the differences between the various activities are less well-

defined. Therefore, the differences between places of work, leisure, education and training are more vague.

- 2 Changes in the nature of human mobility occurred principally between the end of the twentieth century and the beginning of the twenty-first, sustained by the process of globalisation in progress and its political, technological and economic repercussions. In political terms, globalisation has contributed to the manifestation of material and immaterial flows of an international nature, to the reduction in customs barriers and the creation of new regional macro-economic bodies. The abolition of, or reduction in, internal and international borders enables the transit of new financial and trade flows, to which human flows can soon be added. The latter can be encouraged and “legal” insofar as presupposed and desired for the constitution and for the functioning of the larger economic regions and, at the same time, they can be permanent and long-term, or temporary and thus limited to a few hours or days, proving to be occasional or recurrent. However, there are also other flows that are neither planned nor desired, generally defined as “illegal” and originating from external, under-developed areas. Even these flows are in some way encouraged by the needs of a labour market that, precisely because of the restructuring processes, manifests significant shortages in certain production and service sectors, with a demand for manpower that, depending on the situation, can be more or less qualified. “Illegal” flows can also be temporary or permanent, although recurrent temporary flows are impractical due to the difficulties in crossing borders. The main risk and burden for the illegal, irregular or clandestine immigrant is represented by the crossing of the border, which limits in an objective way temporary flows. Those that find themselves in this situation prefer to face the precarious situation in the host country for a while, rather than return to their country of origin.
- 3 In technological terms, globalisation has had a positive effect on human mobility in the increase in fast, efficient and inexpensive means of transport. Furthermore, information and communication technology have made great progress and have enabled the creation of a widespread network of contacts both in developed and under-developed countries. This has facilitated stable and continuous contacts with the areas and communities of origin. These new possibilities to maintain social and economic contacts are, for example, equally possible both for a German retiree, who spends six months per year on the Spanish coast and who wants to maintain contact with his family, and maybe also with his own personal doctor; and for a young African labourer, who works in the Mezzogiorno countryside and who wishes to keep in touch both with his native clan and with his friends in other industrialised countries, and even to receive up-to-date information on better employment opportunities. Due to technological innovations, human mobility can today also be the result of the initiative of a single individual or an individual family or clan, but in any case it belongs to a network system in which the places of origin and arrival constitute the branches of a more complex system, a fabric made of flows of information and communication. The network system enables subsequent and more continuous forms of mobility, forms composed of a “transhumance” regulated by the flow of economic seasons and social needs. A subsequent effect of this new system of mobility is also the fact that total integration into the host society is no longer a requirement. There is no doubt that there are numerous contacts made in the use of services and infrastructures, but references to a society “network” are more consistent and longer-lasting, and therefore

one should more accurately refer to a “quasi integration” in the host society. At the same time, contact is not totally lost with the society of origin, information is fast and continuous, in short, there is not a total separation from the society of origin and therefore it would be more correct to refer to a “quasi de-integration” from it.

- 4 The economic changes that result from globalisation and that have an effect on human mobility are above all those linked to the birth and growth of trans-national corporations and to the development of the service sector. These phenomena lead to an increase in international mobility, both within enterprises and their allied activities. The media, also globalised, plays a decisive role in the choices of those individuals that decide to change their own place of residence. Of course, the global television networks inform us about everything that goes on in the world, from and for everywhere in the world, inviting us to transcend psychological and cultural barriers. There is also the attempt to internationalise television stations for motives of commercial and economic promotion or cultural diffusion. These stations diffuse information and communication which also proves to be important in the opposite sense, in terms of activating mobility flows. The internationalisation of the media is also a fundamental instrument for sustaining the mobility network mentioned above.
- 5 Population mobility constitutes per se one of the most significant channels of existing relations between the local and global dimensions. Places that were once linked together exclusively by international migratory flows have witnessed their own relations extending and becoming more complex through diverse forms of human mobility, generated both by the changes in lifestyle and consumption and economic and political events. All these forms of mobility take place at the same time and have in their entirety substituted those population flows that were defined as economic migrations.
- 6 Globility's aim is to carry out a more in-depth analysis on the themes and studies that refer to traditional population movements and, at the same time, identify those new forms which concern new activities generated by the processes of globalisation, new lifestyles, new consumption models, and new forms of recreation and tourism. In the years to come, human mobility could subsequently be sustained by the widening of the gap in the growth rate between developed and under-developed countries. This has occurred particularly in the presence of “no limits” phenomena of globalisation and internationalisation which have created new imbalances between wealthy and under-developed countries. In addition to these old and new imbalances of wealth, demographic imbalances have emerged. In the south, there is a continuous growth in the population and therefore the presence of a labour market in which supply is significantly higher than demand. In the north, growth is seen on a reduced scale and thus the most observable phenomenon is that of the aging of the population. This results in an imbalance in the labour market in the opposite sense, demand in certain specific sectors proves to be considerably higher than supply.
- 7 Furthermore, the characteristics of mobility are conditioned by the following economic and social processes:
 - The internationalisation of economic activities determines new working practices, amongst which temporary mobility in other productive offices, even abroad, but within the same corporation. The need to develop new productive and development processes within a company requires an approach that enables employees to participate in training activities, marketing systems, conferences and seminars, in order to improve economic efficiency,

diffuse company culture and create a social environment. On the other hand, international activities contribute to the fostering of an international culture and awareness within the company;

- New forms of free-time, recreation and tourism are considered essential components of local development and the economic restructuring of industrial zones in crisis;
- The dynamism that emerges in the transformation of productive systems and the decentralisation of certain production phases in areas in which manpower is less qualified but more abundant and less costly;
- The changes in working hours with the introduction of new forms of weekly, monthly or yearly flexibility, other than the possibility of reaching retirement age at the height of one's physical and psychological condition.
- On the basis of these reflections, Globility has considered various issues such as: (i) what are the fundamental conditions that have brought about the major changes in the scale and characteristics of mobility? How has mobility contributed to the relationship between the local and global dimension and, on the other hand, in what way does this relationship determine mobility? (ii) What are the defining scales and characteristics of the new forms of mobility (iii) What are the social, economic, environmental, cultural and political implications that emerge from the new forms of mobility? (iv) How could a new methodological approach facilitate the interpretation and prediction of mobility? What impact could the new forms of mobility have on policy-making?

- 8 These issues have been addressed in two publications which contain question-marks in their titles: Human mobility in a borderless world? (Montanari, 2002), and, The new geography of human mobility. Inequality trends? (Ishikawa and Montanari, 2003), in confirmation of the problematic nature of the themes and results of their research.

Observing and measuring human mobility examined on a local scale

- 9 From the seventies onwards, since the end of the migratory phenomenon based on bilateral agreements between States, it has been increasingly difficult to quantify and therefore evaluate the phenomenon in quantitative terms. For the past few years, international migrations, although attributable to easily-identifiable economic, political and social events, have become spontaneous phenomena. In using the instruments of traditional data gathering, it is possible only to gather information on how many defined immigrants decide to reside in a country other than that of origin, and are "legally" able to do so, for a period longer than one year. In this way, however, data is gathered solely on managers, executives and perhaps also on workers, of a multinational, who have moved, together with their families, to a country other than that of their usual residence for a period superior to one year, and who have obviously been regularly registered with the authorities. On the other hand, it is also possible to collect data on tourist presence, that is today, the number of individuals residing in a country which is not their usual country of residence for a period of one day to one year and who reside in officially acknowledged accommodation. In both cases, there is limited information on the motivations and characteristics of those who move. For example, if the employees of such a multinational defined as above remain for only a few days or a week and stay in a hotel or apartment hotel, they will at any rate be considered tourists. Migratory and tourist flows are differentiated and therefore

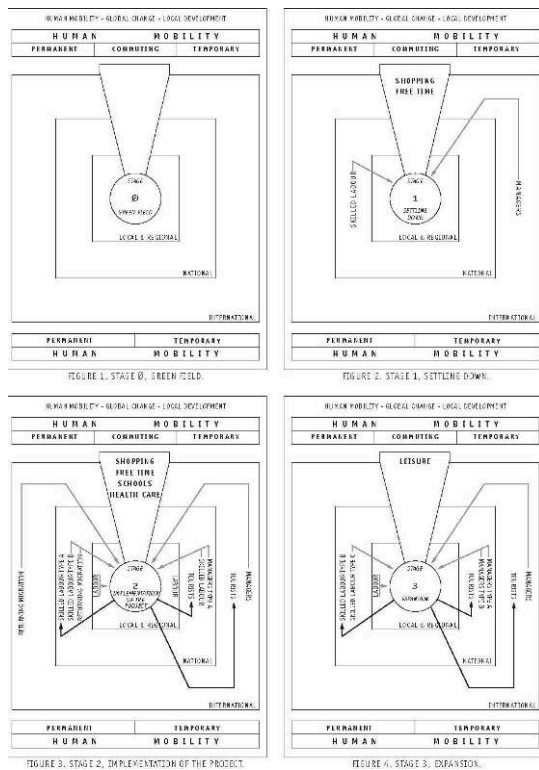
recorded on the basis of certain arbitrary parameters which concern the crossing of borders, the length of stay in the new place of residence and the motivation which is linked to the earning of a salary and thus the payment of taxes. Several decades ago, these parameters were capable of identifying the overwhelming majority of human mobility flows; today, however, they are totally inadequate for evaluating the phenomenon. Bell and Ward (2000), affirm that there are functional links between tourist flows and migrations in the sense that both belong to the same mobility process in time and space. On these two variables, they propose a model upon which they position various forms of mobility of different intensities and spatial extensions which overlap each other, either completely or partly. Williams and Hall (2000), follow the same procedure of the linking and overlapping between migrations and tourism. Not a new phenomenon, but one that has recently assumed greater intensity and extension in relation to the structural changes that have taken place in the models of production and consumption. The majority of studies and analyses are carried out using statistical data that due to its very nature is no longer able to illustrate the phenomenon of human mobility. Williams and Hall (2002), examine the reciprocal relationships between tourism and migrations and highlight the lack of studies on this subject which are based on arbitrary parameters. In order to remedy this problem, they propose a model which refers to economic and cultural mechanisms in relation to demand, investments and spaces and which develops in four stages and illustrates how tourism leads to migration and that, in turn, migrations generate tourism via a network system based on friendships, ethnic groups and nationality.

- 10 In order to better identify this phenomenon, we propose a change from an approach concerning flows, very suited to the “push and pull” principle, to one involving the analysis of mobility considered at a territorial level. At this level, it is possible to record any kind of incoming or outgoing mobility, both from a qualitative and quantitative point of view.
- 11 In this paper, we propose to analyse mobility in relation to the diverse phases of local development. During the last decade, numerous scholars in the social sciences have highlighted the central position held by territory in the process of economic development and have thus re-emphasised the need to add the variables of “space” and “time” to the explanatory models (Garofoli, 1999). In reflecting on the evolution of the concept of local development on the basis of the results of ten years of seminars on the subject, Becattini and Sforzi (2002), refer to a productive process which is capable of reproducing, other than the product, all the conditions of its continuation, respecting the principles of sustainable development. On the other hand, some of the studies elaborated in the context of the Globility Project attribute a central role to the local dimension in human mobility, insofar as branches of the global networks, that is to say, a part of the process of local development referred to by Dematteis (1994). Particularly evident from this point of view is the case of the Balearic Islands for which Salvà Tomàs (2002), explains the complex nature of the evolution of the global/local relationship and indicates how the intensity of their interaction is a function of their respective constitutive properties
- 12 The main two variables proposed for consideration are mobility and commuting; it is still deemed of importance for the territory to determine whether it is possible for individuals to return to their own place of residence within the day or whether an overnight stay is necessary, and the same applies for the evolution in means of

transport, regardless of the distance between the territory studied and the place of origin. An overnight stay is considered a strong element in the relationship with the territory; indeed, it presupposes the availability and use of accommodation and thus the activation of diverse types of roles concerning living and use of time. The second level of variables refers to temporary and permanent mobility, where the difference is based on the minimum stay which could be considered in the order of weeks, months or years. In actual fact, more than minimum or maximum timeframes, it is important to refer to the type of life programme considered by the individual who decides to move from one place to another. Therefore, the meaning of temporary can assume a very different value. Temporary indicates that no “taking root” in the territory is intended, but instead a return to the place of “usual residence” is envisaged, even if decisions are taken that seem to contradict this hypothesis, such as the purchase of housing, the transfer of the family, etc., that is to say, a lower rank of relationship with the territory. On the other hand, if one is to analyse the case of Australia where, on average, individuals change residence a dozen times throughout their lifetime, one realises that in this case it would be difficult to determine the place of “usual residence” and, at the same time, each example of mobility would be by definition “temporary” if the point of reference were exclusively the duration of stay. In referring to the case of Australia, Taylor and Bell (1996), highlight a growing number of individuals emigrating on a temporary basis who refer to a “network of places” rather than a usual residence. Further variables proposed for examination are local and regional flows, national and international flows, and these in relation to the wish to consider local development within a network system. Within this context, it is important to consider international flow as an expression of crossing a border, both in terms of who brings in capital and on behalf of who subsequently participates in the realisation of the project or who benefits from the ultimate development achieved.

- 13 In “Stage 0” there is no development, neither endogenous nor exogenous; the territory exists in a state of self-sufficient equilibrium. One must assume that the territory is not involved in any form of dynamic mobility, but that through the years it has continually lost its population through various forms of emigration, both to the rest of the country and at an international level (figure 1).

Figure 1. Analysis of mobility at a territorial level, stages 0-3.



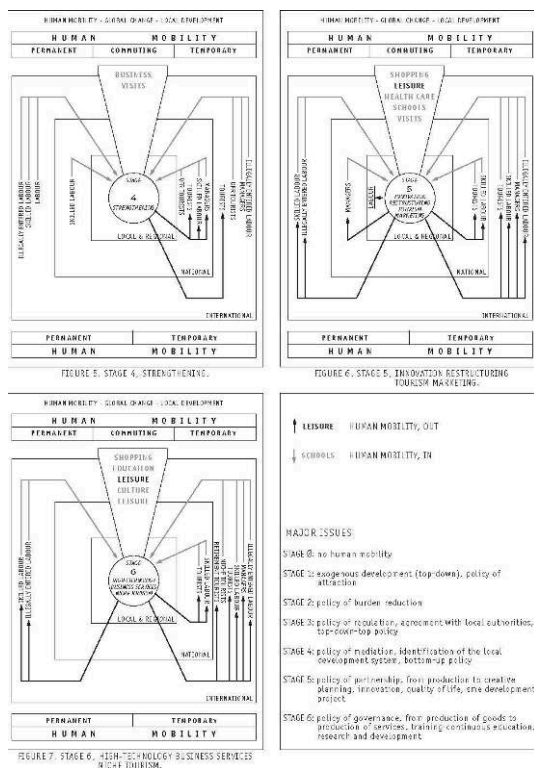
- 14 “Stage 1” considers the planning of an exogenous development initiative conceived by an international entity. In order to carry out the first phases of the project, international managers are sent out to the territory, for brief periods and thus on a temporary basis, as are specialised technicians, who are sent out for longer periods, that is to say, on a permanent basis. There is not yet a market for accommodation facilities and therefore the personnel must find accommodation, perhaps even temporary, within and outside the area concerned. However, during these phases, the conditions are created for the development of a higher-quality supply. One assumes that the area is also inadequately-equipped in terms of services and facilities compared to the surrounding areas, and therefore outgoing commuter flows are created (figure 1).
- 15 In “Stage 2”, the project begins to enter the implementation phase and therefore there is a request for manpower, both for the production of manufactured articles and facilities and for the activation of manufacturing processes. Generally, although reference is made here to development of an exogenous nature, in this phase, the public entity which has enabled the settlement asserts its rights in the search for manpower, with priority given to local workers, ultimately also after a period of training and updating. These are often workers from the farming sector, with no previous experience, hardly suitable and often also unwilling to work as company employees, who end up working in sectors that offer prevalently manual work. Added to this is the manpower coming from a wider area within the national territory. The availability of specialised jobs generates the return of workers who had previously emigrated abroad or to other areas in the country. In the meantime, another process is activated which leads to the substitution of manpower sent to the zone for the first phases of the project. Together with these forms of permanent mobility, various forms

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of temporary mobility are activated. For example, seasonal workers are employed to meet the requirements of particular activities within or outside the company. Furthermore, a flow is initiated of executives and managers from other branches of the group, situated both in the national territory and abroad. In order to satisfy these new demands, new hotel or apartment accommodation is created or the existing facilities are adapted. A higher salary guaranteed for both those who work for the company and those in allied sectors, and the introduction of new habits and lifestyles, create, amongst others, the presuppositions for a recreational use of free-time and for holiday periods to be taken both in the national territory and abroad. The area is still not sufficiently equipped and therefore there is the possibility of commuter flows being produced towards the peripheral areas, which ultimately have better schools, medical and business services (figure 1).

- 16 “Stage 3” examines a period of expansion in which new productive phases are present and thus the substitution of specialised manpower and managers, who had moved to the zone for both long and brief periods. In the meantime, the first cases emerge of regulation by the local communities which require a higher level of involvement in those decisions which imply a significant impact on the territory. There is an increase in the requests for employment by the local workforce which is now unemployed since, at an increasingly accelerated rate, it had abandoned the sectors of traditional activities for the restructuring of the job market linked to the previous development phases. In the meantime, the area has seen the initiation of a process of adaptation of its services and facilities and therefore there is an expanding decline in the need to use those of peripheral areas (figure 1).
- 17 “Stage 4” considers the strengthening of the productive sector and the simultaneous initiation of a mediation policy with the local authorities for an agreed-upon development. An exogenous development of certain productive situations is followed by a social, cultural and economic development of the entire territory with strategies and instruments typical of the “bottom-up” approach. It is no longer possible to find the required manpower in the area and therefore it is necessary to turn to specialised personnel recruited both at a national and international level. Furthermore, the first flows begin of workers coming from under-developed countries, both “regular” immigrants, to be employed in the main companies, and “irregular” immigrants, to be used prevalently in allied activities, services and off-the-book. The latter can also be of a permanent nature – transfers for work activities which are extended in time – who presumably hope for a subsequent “regularisation” and ultimately a family regrouping. However, they can also be of a temporary nature – transfer for brief periods of time in prevalently seasonal activities – whose aim is to return home once they have saved up enough or, more frequently, a further mobility to other areas or countries. The area has now evolved, reaching quality levels in its accommodation facilities, apartment hotels and services. It becomes a point of reference for the residents of nearby localities and a reversal begins to manifest itself in the prevalently outgoing commuting phenomenon that was seen in the previous phase. However, the zone per se also becomes a tourist attraction, especially if it has natural and cultural assets to offer. Even without these, however, an initial tourist flow is activated linked to the “Visiting friends and relatives” (VFR) typology (figure 2).

Figure 2. Analysis of mobility at a territorial level, stages 4-6.



- 18 “Stage 5” entails the overcoming of a period of stagnation and crisis due both to local factors and a phase of international recession. The recurring objectives of this phase are the partnership policy, productive decentralisation, the transition from production to creative planning, the implementation of processes and innovative policies, the reduction in the impact on the environment, the policies of environmental recovery, the retrieval of cultural resources, the improvement in the quality of life, and development policies for small and medium-sized enterprises (SME). In order to reach these goals, innovative policies are put into action for the restructuring of production which take into account the characteristics of the society and the territory. Furthermore, pride in the territory is also promoted through a narrow collaboration between the public authorities and private players (Cooke and Morgan, 1998). On the basis of a new relationship founded on prevalently endogenous development, as defined by Garofoli (1992), the territory is promoted not only as production capital but also as an asset of consumption through tourism. In the restructuring phase it is probable that there will be a loss in jobs that will, however, affect above all less specialised manpower. Personnel of this type will presumably be driven out to the peripheral areas. For the remainder, there will be a vast substitution of executives and managers thus generating both incoming and outgoing flows. As a result of specific sectoral policies, such as the improvement of facilities and of the territory’s image, there are now both international and national tourist flows being generated, not to be confused with those already registered in previous phases but above all linked to short-term work and consulting activities. The area also establishes itself at a local level and thus attracts flows of commuters which come to the area to carry out numerous varied activities. It is considered that widespread well-being enables the formation of a consistent tourist flow towards both national and international locations. Such a flow can also be of a local nature, as an element of commuting to less equipped and less

inhabited surrounding areas, but precisely for this motive sought-after for their recreational activities (figure 2).

- 19 “Stage 6” refers to an area that has by now consolidated its productive maturity, and where high technology and business services dominate. Much has been invested in the research and development sectors, but in order to reach these levels it was necessary to aim for an extensive process of involvement by the main players and social groups through governance policies sustained by an intense activity of information, training and continuing education. Quality is therefore not exclusively applied to businesses but also to the territory, according to the synthesis elaborated by Hunt (1995). In these conditions, the area per se becomes a point of interest and attraction for new businesses, new activities and new flows of goods and services. One should draw attention to the introduction of particular cultural proposals and other forms of attraction which determine the creation of niche tourist flows. During this phase, flows appear increasingly jumbled, their direction is not easily predictable or justifiable and their motivations are apparently irrational. Taylor (1997), indicates the principles of this phenomenon in the Americanization, modernization and globalization of society, that is, part of a phenomenon which should contribute to forming a totally homogenized world. In actual fact, this homogenized and sometimes uninteresting process at a global level, assumes variations and specificities at a local level. In this sense, global and local levels do not contradict each other but form part of the same system within which the local dimension aims to recuperate its own dialectic identity. In this context, Urry (2000), refers to a sociology of fluids which clash with networks to form a “heterogeneous, uneven and unpredictable mobility” (figure 2).

Conclusions

- 20 During its three years of activity, the Globility project, to which colleagues from the South and North of the globe have contributed, has organised numerous seminars in order to discuss how human mobility has changed in relation to the globalisation processes taking place. The premise of the project is that in the technological, economic and social transformations that have determined globalisation there exists the basis for a great transformation in the type, quality and quantity of population flows. Unfortunately, the bulk of the research, reference parameters, and gathering and availability of statistical data remains linked to an interpretative dimension that refers to a situation that has already been surpassed. Until now, Globility has published some fifty contributions and plans on publishing, directly or indirectly, just as many upon completion of the first phase of its work.
- 21 With the new forms of mobility, it is not possible to identify a single point of departure or arrival; for the most part they concern routes throughout which there are multiple points of departure and arrival; in these conditions it is of little consequence to reflect on the definitions and differences of those types of mobility which until now have been the most recurrent. The direction and intensity of mobility are certainly identifiable, but this is not necessarily so in the case of its final destination. This mobility increasingly assumes the form of a fluid which flows more or less rapidly in relation to the degree of economic, social and cultural “viscosity” of the territories it crosses.
- 22 The territory establishes relationships on a global scale through a network of material and immaterial flows which it forms part of. Human mobility is simultaneously the

object and subject of these flows and contributes significantly, with its multiple specificities and characteristics, to local development. Considered from this point of view, the local scale becomes a crucial aspect of human mobility and can constitute an important element of observation and analysis. Indeed, the local scale enables the isolation, analysis and study of the various forms of mobility as well as the definition of suitable intervention policies where necessary. Using these principles, a tentative analysis has been carried out of human mobility in relation to the various phases of local development in order to identify how a migration route is transformed into a multiplicity of flows, justified at least in part by production and consumption processes, and finally becomes a chaotic mass whose characteristics are of little scientific importance and which do not facilitate a deeper understanding of the phenomenon. If the local scale is the most appropriate for defining the characteristics of new forms of mobility and for identifying the necessary intervention policies, what could be its social, economic, environmental and cultural implications? Moreover, if this is the most appropriate observation point, what could be the consequences of new methods of analysis for development? And the political implications?

- 23 Globility is a project that tackles complex issues and it is inevitable that empirical evidence should lead to the definition of new issues and uncertainties. However, these in turn stimulate the realisation of new in-depth empirical analyses, and the cycle continues and starts again.

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ABSTRACTS

Human mobility is one of the main themes of study in geography, especially during a transformation phase in the relationships between global change and local development. These themes were the basis of the constitution in the year 2000 of the IGU Commission on Global Change and Human Mobility (Globility). Generally, human mobility studies make reference to movements rather than the groups that made them and the places where they occurred. During its first years of research, Globility has gathered together the various aspects of mobility adopting an approach in research that was able to go beyond the "push-pull" concept. This paper considers the process of local development in relation to the forms of mobility, both permanent and temporary, which are caused by it, and vice versa. The difficulty encountered in registering, analysing and quantifying the various forms of mobility in relation to movements led to the adoption of a methodological approach which places the local dimension at the centre of a process which appears to be of exclusively global significance. This analysis raises new questions on the consequences that such an approach could also have on political aspects, which should consider the local dimension as their point of reference, side by side with the global dimension or completely taking its place.

La mobilité humaine est un des principaux thèmes d'étude en géographie, en particulier pendant la phase de transformation dans les rapports entre le changement global et le développement local que nous connaissons. Ces thèmes ont été le point de départ de la constitution en 2000 de la Commission de l'UGI sur le Changement Global et la Mobilité Humaine (Globility). En général, les études sur la mobilité humaine traitent des mouvements plutôt que des groupes qui les ont réalisés et des lieux dans lesquels ils se sont produits. Pendant ses premières années de recherche, Globility a examiné les différents aspects de la mobilité, adoptant une approche de recherche dépassant le concept "push-pull". Ce texte considère les interactions entre les processus du développement local et les formes de mobilité, à la fois permanentes et temporaires. La difficulté rencontrée en analysant et quantifiant les différentes formes de la mobilité a conduit à adopter une approche méthodologique qui place la dimension locale au centre d'un processus qui semblerait avoir une importance exclusivement globale. Cette analyse soulève de nouvelles questions sur les conséquences qu'une telle approche pourrait également

avoir pour les aspects politiques, qui devraient considérer la dimension locale comme point de repère, tout autant que la dimension globale, voire la remplacer.

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Mots-clés: mobilité humaine, changement global, développement local, étapes, mobilité temporaire, mobilité permanente, migrations quotidiennes

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