

Chapter 1

From Mobility to its Ideology: when Mobility becomes an Imperative

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The springboard for this work was the observation, often repeated, that a ‘mobility turn’ has placed mobility at the heart of our social practices, both concretely and in discourses (Sheller and Urry 2006). We are said to be on the verge of a transition towards new relationships with mobility, expressed by geographic mobility behaviours as yet unseen, but also by the evolution of our collective relation with mobility. Indeed, the social constructions of what mobility is, of the meaning it should hold and the value it confers on mobile entities is undergoing considerable evolution.

Nonetheless we should not lose sight of the central concept - mobility itself - if we are to attempt to understand, on the one hand, the phenomena it embodies and, on the other, what it says about the way we relate to the world. This is our first question in this paper.

Furthermore, the articulation between description and prescription - what is and what should be - must be examined more closely. The accent is most often placed on changes in practices and less frequently on the social representations linked to mobility. Yet the social normativities that emerge from this new relationship with mobility need to be studied. Although it is true that we are developing new representations, what are their effects on social prescriptions? In short, what social norms are linked to mobility’s central role in the way we relate to the world? This will be the second focus of our discussion.

In this paper, the distinction between description and prescription will be crucial. On the one hand, description is an attempt to produce a discourse that can tell what reality is. Description, of course, is a social construction: a collectively created discourse that is collectively thought to be a “true” description of reality. Description is, thus, about social representations (Berger et Luckmann 2006). On the other hand, prescription is about telling what must be. A prescription is an imperative, telling how reality should be considered and how one should act in relation to it. A coherent set of prescriptions constitutes an ideology: a system of prescriptions, related to practices, founded on an enforced “truth” and exclusive from other systems. Description and prescription need to be conceptually distinguished, even if they are not independent one from another¹. A specific description of reality limits the scope of possible prescription. In the same way, particular prescriptions need specific descriptions of reality to be sustainable. For instance, if you describe the world as fundamentally mobile, immobility will be a non-natural pattern. Immobility could then be prescribed as a way for mankind to abstract from nature or proscribed as a counter-productive behaviour in a mobile context.

¹ As it is shown in the contribution of Marcel Endres

The work we propose here is part of a theoretical reflection that aims to distinguish the general issue of mobility from the more limited context of studying physical movements. More precisely, this involves giving serious consideration to the hypothesis of mobility as a representational and ideological paradigm that is capable of shedding new light on several aspects of our society, in particular the significant mutations we are presently undergoing.

Such an endeavour obviously implies taking the risk of advancing a particular theoretical elaboration. The reader can already note that our work refers to hypotheses that cannot demonstrate their fecundity until they are confronted in the field by empirical studies that are much broader than those undertaken up to now. This is what we are already endeavouring through studies of contemporary discourses on the prison system (Mincke and Lemonne 2013a; Mincke 2010; Mincke 2012b; Mincke and Lemonne 2013b; Mincke 2012a), on (justice) management (Mincke 2013) and on alternative dispute resolutions (Mincke 2014a).

The approach we have chosen is based on a study of social representations and the discourses and practices that illustrate them. It is thus less a question of reporting on concrete mobility practices than it is to analyse the representational relation to mobility, in other words, how it is socially constructed not only as an object (Frello 2008) but also as a collective value, conveying ideological developments. Our central question will thus be that of the universe of meaning linked to mobility.

We shall confront our theoretical construction of the discursive use of mobility to a special field: the legitimisation of the prison in the parliamentary documents of the Belgian Prison Act of 2005. Our hypothesis is that if mobility is such a value in itself that it can be successfully used to legitimise an institution that once was the symbol of immobilisation, it indicates the current thrust of these ideas.

An Approach that is Both Inductive and Deductive

The theoretical construction that we will present follows the example of Boltanski and Chiapello who theorized on the basis of a corpus of observation of (managerial) discourses (Boltanski et Chiapello 1999) and has been built by induction derived from the observation of a wide range of discourses and practices. It is thus an attempt to rationalise, in a coherent model, a series of features we could trace through various texts and contexts.

We then apply our model deductively to analyse new objects. Although each confrontation with the empiric challenge risks breaking the model, it also works to improve it, especially by refining our understanding of its limits. For as crucial as it is to understand what a model can explain, we learn more when it fails. Thus, in the same process, we induced a model from a large set of observations and then deduced from our model an analysis of specific objects, in particular contemporary discourses on prisons (Mincke and Lemonne 2014).

More specifically, we undertook the study of a discourse that was ‘serious’ in the Foucauldian sense of the term. Our tool was the preparatory work leading to the recent (Belgian) law of 12 January 2005 on principles governing the administration of prison establishments and the legal position of detainees, the so-called Prison Act. One particular text was the report of a study commission of experts to prepare draft legislation. Our aim when we studied these works was to discover the characteristics of this contemporary discourse justifying prisons, and more specifically those aspects relating to the notion of mobility.

The fact that prisons are *a priori* the epitome of an immobilising institution clearly entered into our choice of subject. Our initial idea was that if we could even find a usage we call ‘mobilitarian ideology’ in justifications for incarceration, then we could reasonably conclude that it was a particularly powerful notion.

Mobility, Space, Time

The simplest definition of mobility is a movement in space over time.² It will thus be no surprise when we affirm that mobility is intrinsically linked to these two dimensions and that, even more, the mutations that affect the space-time relation would result in corresponding changes in the relation to mobility. And vice-versa. Mobility, space and time are thus interdependent notions and we must think of all three together.

A further point is that rather than space and time, we will concern ourselves more with space-time. For as we shall see, space and time, as social constructs are intrinsically linked in particular morphologies. All notions of space do not fit well with all notions of time and vice versa. Corresponding forms of time and space are thus associated in what, together with Bertrand Montulet, we call morphologies (Montulet 1998).

We still need to define the space that will interest us (we'll come back to time a bit later). To do so we will start with something self-evident: sociologists are interested in space and time not as objective dimensions – we are not physicians³ – but as social constructions (Mincke 2014b). In all logic we are looking at the way, in today's world, our societies construct time and space.

Our understanding of space will be based on a sociology approach, in other words one that considers space as a dimension that structures realities.⁴ In this perspective, spatiality is the result of a spatialising process. Regardless of the reality to which this spatialisation applies, it leads to spaces being created. Nothing forces sociologists to restrict their understanding to processes that only spatialise physical realities.

This is why we see as spaces all the results of social spatialisation processes, whether they apply to material reality or not. As sociologists, we do not consider space to be a dimension solely of the physical world. Social, conceptual, religious, family and relational spaces are, in our minds, just as much spaces as their geographical counterpart. They are not metaphors, but the product of a bonafide process of spatialisation.⁵

Sociology is familiar with the notion of non-physical space and has used it for years to describe a number of phenomena. Social space (and the related social mobility), field (Bourdieu), uncertainty zone (Crozier) and experience framework (Goffman) are notions that clearly imply a spatialisation. Our proposal thus seems to be directly in line with a long tradition in sociology.

In a very classical way, we shall also consider time as a social construction and not as an objective measure of the fourth dimension in which objects develop their interactions.

It follows that, for the sociologist, mobility concerns more than mere physical spaces and objective time. In the following pages we will thus often refer to the notions of space and mobility and apply them to non-physical realities. We will defend the idea that our contemporary situation can be explained by a tip of the balance between two spatial-temporal morphologies (the limit-form and the flow-form) which has modified our social representations of space-time and thus influenced our conceptions of mobility.

² We prefer this open-ended definition to others that refer explicitly to geographic space or to an intention by a social actor, for instance as in Kaufman's definition: "In a broad perspective, mobility can be defined as the intention, then realisation of crossing a geographic space which implies a social change." (Kaufmann 2012).

³ Even though there are serious doubts as to whether physics is concerned about the relation to an "objective" space, considering how relations between physics and reality evolved over the 20th century.

⁴ We shall consider as "realities" entities socially constructed as effectively existing, whether they are material (cities, landscapes, national territories, etc.) or not (law, ideas, political ideologies, etc.).

⁵ For a development of this thesis, see our working paper (Mincke 2014b) on a presentation recently made at a colloquium called "Thinking space in sociology" (Mincke 2014c).

Limit-Form

The limit-form is grounded in a representation of space as an indistinct stretch that is structured by its circumscription (Montulet 1998). The borders traced are what make it possible to define an inside and an outside and thereby order the space. Borders are determined by applying a distinguishing criterion that renders uniform what it encloses and distinguishes it from what is stranger to the circumscription thus constituted. A border is obviously not easy to cross and, with a few exceptions, must remain closed.⁶ Everything inside State borders thus equally belongs to the national territory. The border itself is one-dimensional and has no “thickness”, as a razor’s edge. On the other side is the stranger, uniformly foreign. Multiple circumscriptions can, of course, exist side by side, structuring the space ‘horizontally’ in a collection of territories at the same hierarchical level, for example other Nation States. Each circumscription in turn can be divided into lower level circumscriptions. Provinces, regions, *départements*, towns are territories that fit into other territories, producing a vertical structuring of sorts broken into different hierarchical levels. The nation states of the late 19th century, in their interrelations and internal structures, are perfect examples of how space is structured in a limit-form. The interplay of physical borders which we have just described corresponds, trait by trait, with other non-physical borders: the national territory reflects the delimitation of a national community formed by inclusion of some members in the State’s political community, by the attribution of certain rights and obligations (military service, diplomatic protection, tax obligations, etc.) or also by inclusion in a collective national narrative. Likewise, the structuring of a national territory corresponds to an equivalent legal spatialisation that delimits the competences of various authorities through *ratione loci* (i.e. depending on administrative circumscriptions, legal districts, etc.), but also through *ratione materiae* (in reference to specific jurisdictions: federal, regional, provincial or local, the attributes of various districts, and so on).

Nonetheless, the border, the key element of this spatial-temporal morphology can only be fathomed in a context of relative stability allowing it to continue over time. This corresponds to a particular construction of time in a cadence of stases and ruptures. Time is socially constructed through a strict periodisation: periods clearly distinct and follow from one to another, separated by sudden ruptures which Michon has called ‘[Foucault’s] time in blocks of archaeology’ (Michon 2002). Although obviously time does not stop, socially it is perceived as if it were made of periods of stability dotted by moments of revolution that spark the brutal entry into a new era. Conquests, revolutions, federations and reconstitution of the national territory are all pivotal elements leading into new eras through changes to a border. A large part of a national state’s energy is thus devoted to protecting its borders, and to stabilising them through lines of defence, territorial treaties, boundary markers, customs offices, anti-smuggling measures, controlling entry to and exit from the country, and so on. Several power technologies - in the Foucauldian sense of the term - are thus mobilised in order to stabilise the territorial construction.

Areas and eras are the foundation for this spatial-temporal morphology that we call the limit-form. In this context, mobility is conceived in a special way. As space is structured by a system of borders that enclose standardized spaces, spatial anchoring is thus primary. One must first belong to a set of territories before considering any movement. We are born in the territory of a state, are citizens of a state, male or female, member of one or another social class, etc. Mobility occurs when one is taken from a space of belonging to cross a border and attain a new anchoring. Crossing borders and substituted anchorings are thus two essential characteristics of mobility in the context of the limit-form. Mobility is experienced brutally when the border is crossed, inaugurating a new era of belonging. Rather than gradual movement, it is primarily a switch ‘to the other side’. Mobility thus requires an effort, an investment in the means -

⁶ On this subject we can cite “heavy capitalism”, as described by Bauman, which endeavours to keep tightly closed the borders that structured the world of solid modernity (Bauman 2000, 58)

symbolic, practical, financial, etc - that make it possible to cross over.⁷ There are, for sure, borders harder to cross than others: the one between blue and white collars is much more closed than the one between unqualified and qualified worker, for instance. Some borders have also long been considered as impossible to cross, like the one that separates the sexes.

The limit-form is typical of Western modernity. One striking example of this is the evolution of the State, its territory, corresponding population, culture, language and legal organisation. The modern nation-state is the perfect incarnation of limit-form as it is largely built on a set of strict borders defining internally uniform territory, national population and culture, language practices and legal order. Although, even if this model may seem natural it could not remain eternally unchallenged.

Flow-Form

We sustain that although the limit-form prevailed for years and years, it is being challenged, since the sixties, and in Western countries at least, by an emerging model: the flow-form. This morphology is based on time being represented, not as a dimension in which humans can impose pauses, but as a constant flow that erodes everything. There is no longer question of brutal ruptures, but of continual changes, of an ever-present past, a future already with us, and a present enriched by what came before and what is to come. There are no more sudden ruptures, but this does not necessarily bring more stability. In this context, the history of revolutions and conquests gives way to that of mentalities, ideas and social practices. It is no longer a question of pinpointing exactly when the Roman Empire fell, but rather to understand the phenomenon throughout its duration: what led to the fall and then what survived it. It is no longer a question of determining which great man left his imprint on the world of knowledge, but rather understanding the genesis of ideas and how, progressively and collectively, they reached the formalisation that assumed a person's name and entered into history. Not at all like Archimedes's 'Eureka'. The vision of time is no longer made of cadences but of progressive sliding.

We can find this feature in an interpretation of the ages of life, which are no longer clearly defined periods, separated by ruptures marked by special rituals and conferring a specific status. The passage from childhood to adulthood no longer entails being hired at the factory, doing one's military service or getting married. It is a continual evolution which, through an ever expanding adolescence leads from one period to another via a considerable zone of interpenetration that also allows some childhood traits to survive into adulthood.⁸

One can imagine that this vision of time may pose a problem when it comes to borders. Without duration, a border cannot claim to have the fixed nature consubstantial to its very idea. Space subject to this temporal regime can no longer be perceived in terms of limits, even if these limits were never tangible, but merely lasting. As a result, the border loses its credibility. In a world in movement, it is either itself moving or is constantly transgressed. In any case it can no longer stand as the structuring reference it was in the limit-form context. It now appears as a counterfeit, like an artifice imposed on what is real or else an illusion. National borders in the Schengen Area are a perfect example: on one side border controls are no longer allowed yet on the other they no longer bar police forces from legally entering the territory

⁷ On this subject see Vincent Kaufman's notion of motility (Kaufmann 2004).

⁸ For example, in fondness for playing games, once considered as inappropriate, but now perfectly acceptable to the extent that the phenomenon has been coined "kidults": adults who are nostalgic for the TV series, computer games, comic strips or cartoons of their childhood and practice activities in relation to this universe.

of the neighbouring country for pursuits or surveillance.⁹ Although the border has not exactly disappeared, it no longer gives a univocal meaning to the area.

Yet this does not mean that space has become an unstructured area. For new ways to organise space are emerging, conferring meaning through relational systems organised around points of attraction. No longer partitioned, space becomes punctuated: it is dotted with points of attraction that appear irregularly. And location in space is no longer determined by borders and whether one is on the inside or out, but by the relations maintained with the various points. It is no longer a question of being on the territory of one State *or* another, but to determine the relations between one *and* another, from one moment or subject to the next. Cities, for example, are seen less as coherent (administrative, topographical, morphological, etc.) circumscriptions in relation to the suburb or outskirts, or from the vantage of inside or beyond city walls. They are now perceived through the category of hinterland, zones of economic, cultural, logistic and professional influence, creating a manifold extension of the city. In this representation of space, we move gradually from one point to draw closer to another, without jumping from one area into another. The areas of attraction are thus combinable.

In the context of the flow-form, a particular representation of mobility develops.¹⁰ Indeed, if the spatially situated elements no longer belong to a closed space surrounded by borders and uniform on the inside, mobility can no longer be seen as transgressing a border. In a punctuated space, mobility is rather seen as a change in locality in relation to a set of points that structure the spatial area. In this view, mobility can affect the relation with some elements and not others, just like it depends on the movements of the two nodes in relation: the entity under consideration and also the point with which it is in relation. For instance, professional mobility is not about climbing the ladder of functions, through promotions, exams and formal changes of function, but about the ability to take on (increasingly) various types of tasks, being multifunctional, multitask, in a word: flexible. Similarly, in this particular way of conceiving mobility, the prototype for international mobility will not be migration – leaving for good one's country and settling somewhere else – but rather, the Erasmus way of travelling: accumulating experiences and contacts through travels, becoming a “citizen of the world”, mixing identities and always being on the move. It is more about the abolition of borders than about authorizations to cross them.

At the same time, when time is experienced as a continuous, constantly eroding, flow, mobility can no longer be conceived as characterised by a stability occasionally broken by clearly identified movements. Rather than being something infrequent and brutal, mobility is permanent. The definition of one situation in relation to a set of reference points can thus be modified at each instant, on the one hand because of the constant adjustment of the entity considered, but also because the positions of the points themselves have evolved. For they are also capable of continuous movement. Their position is not set by a perfectly stable spatial background, but arises solely from their own relations with other reference elements. Thus a relationship with the prison, for instance, is also capable of evolving, not only because of a prisoner's individual prison career, but also through the constant reform of the prison system both in and outside the penitentiary. It is no longer possible to clearly distinguish the inside from the out, nor can someone be considered to pass from prison to freedom simply by crossing the threshold of the prison gate.

The mobility is irrepressible in the flow-form. The very principle of relational localization and the constant evolution of the position of each point¹¹ along this spatialisation system renders it impossible to maintain a fixed

⁹ Art. 40 and 41, Convention implementing the Schengen agreement (Valynseele 2007).

¹⁰ We stress the fact that, what we are discussing here, is not the way mobility concretely occurs, but the characteristics of the social representations surrounding mobility.

¹¹ What Bauman calls “a world that refuses to stand still” (Bauman 2000, 58).

position or even have a representation of what a fixed position might be. The idea of position thus loses all connotation of fixedness, just like space has lost the limit-form's notion of border.

Space-Time in Prison

We now have two ideal types – in the Weberian sense – offering two different ways to consider space-time and mobility. We definitely do not think that sociologists can choose between them or say which one could be the most accurate to describe “reality”. They are ways to shape discourses and social representations, and we think that they can help us to analyse fields where the relation to space-time and mobility is crucial. Moreover, the transition from one spatial-temporal morphology to another and the non-physical meaning of space makes it possible to understand phenomena which would normally not be discussed through the prism of spatial-temporality. This is especially the case for a discourse to legitimize prison, such as the one adopted in the framework of works to prepare the Prison Act mentioned earlier, which, in the coming pages, will be our main example. We shall try, through its analysis, to show how a broad conception of mobility opens new perspectives to understand recent social, political or penal reforms. This confrontation with a precise empirical material will also be the occasion to test the interest of our specific theoretical construction.

The classical prison (Mincke and Lemonne 2014) reflects the limit-form: a building whose overriding feature is its outer walls, but also partitioned on the inside. It is a social space fragmented by rules that prohibit the inmates from communicating among themselves or with the prison staff.¹² The prison population itself is partitioned into different categories of inmates at the same time as they are physically and symbolically isolated from ordinary citizens, and so on. The whole institution is thus dependent on an interplay of borders. The prison is also a legally exceptional territory where some of its occupants have been deprived of most of their basic rights. So we can see that physically, socially and legally, the classical prison space is founded on the notion of borders.

The above view is quite contrary to the one developed by the experts who drafted the Prison Act. They present prison as ideally open, both socially and physically. It is seen in a continuity with space beyond the prison.

[F]ulfilling the basic principles for the ‘limitation of the adverse affects of confinement, reparation, rehabilitation and reintegration’ implies that the implementation modes other than confinement in a prison environment must be made possible, that the transition between confinement and life in society occur earlier, gradually, and that contacts with the outside world be a key component to the normal regime the penitentiary administration offers each prisoner. (*Final report of the Commission on the "law of principles concerning penitentiary administration and the legal status of prisoners". Final report on behalf of the Justice Commission by Vincent Decroly and Tony Van Parys 2001, 376*)¹³ (hereafter ‘*Final Report*’)

Similar remarks are found on several instances, which is logical, because one of the law's main objectives is to normalise prison and limit the harmful effects of confinement, which are clearly related to the very characteristics of the prison, as a social and physical space.

The adverse affects of confinement are primarily imputable to the fact that the penalty of deprivation of liberty is carried out in a prison, the prototype of what E. GOFFMAN described as a ‘total’ institution, that is, an institution that manages all the aspects of peoples’ lives (*Final Report* 2001, 66).

¹² The rule of silence remained applicable in France until the 1970s. (Demonchy 2004, 280 & 290).

¹³ *Rapport final de la commission ‘loi de principes concernant l’administration pénitentiaire et le statut juridique des détenus’*. *Rapport fait au nom de la commission de la Justice par Vincent Decroly et Tony Van Parys*. Translations of extracts are the author's own.

When the prison is deprived of a wall that serves as an uncrossable border, it loses a significant part of its specificities in relation to free society, in which a penalty depriving one of liberty may also be carried out, clearly indicating a dilution of the prison throughout the rest of society.

The detention phase must be placed in the context of a gradual extension in the freedom to come and go. In this perspective, the prison may no longer be considered as the sole place to serve a sentence of deprivation of liberty. (*Final Report* 2001, 121)

In this context 'prisoners' are not necessarily confined in the strict sense of the term, but they maintain a particular - and variable - relationship with the prison institution, including services outside the prison like parole surveillance, electronic monitoring, automatic localisation devices, and so on.

This concept of physical and social prison space clearly reflects the flow-form. Does this mean, then that time itself is seen as a continual flow? In the classical view of the prison, as a limit-form, time is extremely cadenced and repetitive. Not only does the internal compartmentalisation lend itself to a certain type of mobility, and only through strict respect of daily rhythms (exercise time, office hours, visitors schedule, etc.), but furthermore the impermeability of the wall is also tied to a clear distinction between time in prison and time out of it, articulated by the lock-up (entering) and the release (exit). The classical prison is not familiar with the notion of organizing the time of confinement, so it relies on a particularly strong cadencing of time (Mincke and Lemonne 2014). Lastly the time sliced from the life of a prisoner during detention was an empty, useless time, as the sentence was served perfectly simply by being deprived of this time.

Quite the contrary, in the preparatory work for the Prison Act, confinement was seen as a time of preparation and progressive restoring of liberty. The extreme modulation of confinement gave way to the notion of a continuum between total liberty and confinement, passing through several measures of freedom, conditional or not, using geolocation devices or not, short or long term. Much more, confinement is placed in the direct prospect of being freed, and its meaning is largely derived from leading to this end.

Preventing or limiting the adverse affects of confinement ... implies the suppression as far as possible of the prison as a 'total institution', the maximal normalisation of daily life in the prison, an opening as broad as possible to the outside world and the definition of a carceral trajectory placed in the perspective of early release. (*Final Report* 2001, 69)

Furthermore, in general release from prison no longer signals the end of the sentence but rather the entry into a new period of control - parole - which is both a time of confinement (parole is one way to serve a liberty depriving sentence) and a time of freedom. This is even more striking when parole is coupled with an electronic monitoring measure, whose main effect is to partially extend to the outside world the prison's temporal regulation by imposing periods when the person must be at home. We can see here that prison time is no longer seen as a period completely distinct from liberty time, but as part of a time continuum that organizes progressive transitions and temporal interpenetrations.

Likewise, time in confinement is no longer seen as unchangeable, but as a period to be adapted to the prisoner's personal career.

Considering, in particular, the importance given in the draft law to the individual sentence plan, which can be considered as a means to individualise the way the liberty deprivation penalty is served, as a necessary condition to render it more human, there must be possibilities for differentiation in the programming and in the form to be given to the prison career, where organizing confinement in phases must reflect aims to gradually increase the freedom to come and go. (*Final Report* 2001, 418)

Obviously the preparatory work for the Prison Act still contains elements entrenched in the limit-form. Nonetheless

there emerges a sharply drawn vision of a liberty depriving penalty served both inside and beyond prison walls, a view of a prison that is open socially and physically, of a period of confinement seen in continuity with the before and after prison and of a penalty intended to lead individuals to change their personal life path (see the 'prison career' mentioned in the above extract). The prison is thus conceived as a space-time that flows and the prison project as a mobility effort. We are far from the limit-form prison, the site of immobilisation (Mincke and Lemonne 2014).

Description and prescription

The passage from the limit-form to the flow-form provides the opportunity to characterize the nature of the mutations in our descriptive relation to space-time: the way we conceive and conceptualise it. It would nevertheless be quite strange for this evolution to relate solely to our description of the world around us. Indeed, if the notion of border becomes a powerless basis for a system to structure space, if it appears as counterfeit. If collectively it seems to be permanently eroded by the constant flow of time, then it is logical to reject it. It is hard to justify founding a relationship to the world on a category perceived as inappropriate. Attempting to trace borders, maintain strict time cadences, and promoting anchoring to mobility are options that will seem absurd, unacceptable, in a world that adheres to the flow-form representation of space-time. As we have seen, it is a mere step from description to prescription, and this is what we shall discuss below.

It is therefore perfectly logical for this new description of the world, as a flow-form, to give rise to a new prescription for the social realm. We also seem to detect, in the discourses around us, the emergence of a new ideology, a so-called 'mobilitarian ideology' that turns mobility itself into a value. Regardless of the space, one has to keep moving, and immobility in turn is presented as inevitably problematic.¹⁴ Affirming the obligatory nature of mobility is not enough, however. The form it takes remains to be defined. This is what we will attempt to do through four imperatives that we see as vectors to impose a generalised mobility. These are activity, activation, participation and adaptation. They are a theoretical attempts to qualify the characteristics of the mobility that is required today, without focussing on physical mobility.

Activity

The first imperative concerns activity. It is important in our days to be constantly in motion, like those organisations and individuals held up as role models whose normal operational mode is overdrive. One must be super busy, not have a moment free, never leave a stone unturned, appear to be overwhelmed, overbooked, on the verge of total exhaustion. Obviously in this scenario, the inactive person is stigmatised as lazy and the person who can't keep up the pace as delicate, incapable, inadequate. In this context it is not legitimate to find the easier solution, be content with the minimum required, or to hide behind a safe routine to limit ones activity. The optimum is not to do what has to be done and with the least amount of energy, but to expend as much energy as possible and strive for maximum yield.

Any kind of activity goes, as long as it is non-stop.¹⁵ And it is no longer, as before, a question of alternating periods of action when activity is required with periods of rest, leaving things be. For example, when people retire they are no longer urged to slow down and go fishing or do some gardening, they are urged to become active senior citizens, constantly on the ball, taking up new challenges to ward off the pitfall of inactivity, much more dangerous than old age. For inactivity, not time, is the source of decline and dependency. In the same way, workers are invited to be proactive,

¹⁴ And this, even though it had been demonstrated that immobilities were necessary for the development of mobilities.

¹⁵ For Boltanski and Chiapello, activity is the common superior principle of the projective (Boltanski and Chiapello 1999, 165). Translation: *The New Spirit of Capitalism*, Verso 2005-London, NY

to not settle for doing the work assigned to them but to continually search for new tasks, which will become new accomplishments. It is no longer enough to simply do one's 'nine to five'. Our world praises constant activity and the acceleration of rhythms, not in the name of progress, but for the sake of stabilisation. We should constantly be struggling to do more, in order to prevent a crisis (Rosa 2012).

This constant activity can of course lead to exhaustion when individuals are incited use their last drop of energy in pursuit of self-realization, that indefinite and infinite imperative (Ehrenberg 1998; Bauman 2000, 32; Rosa 2012, 10-13).

The preparatory work for the Prison Act is clearly marked by this activity imperative. For instance, when restorative approaches are discussed, they are promoted in reference to activity.

The draft law highlights the fact that reparation is not something the prison administration can accomplish itself, or by itself, but it is par excellence the field of action for the perpetrator and the victim. (*Final Report* 2001, 78)

Likewise, although the report recalls that the prisoner has the right to conserve the benefits of a respectable social position, it is not solely in virtue of their basic rights.

the prisoner, both in relation to himself and to others, must be considered ... as someone who deserves to enjoy the basic rights inherent to active citizenship. (*Final Report* 2001, 82)

And neither do the prison staff escape this call to action:

Extending and enriching their tasks, maximising human potential thanks to training... these are the elements considered as essential in all the literature on [work] organisation which the prison administration cannot neglect. (*Final Report* 2001, 125)

Activation

The second mobility imperative expects individuals to be the ones launching their own movement. No longer question of waiting for instructions, an order or signs. No one else is in the same exact position, no one else can know the most appropriate action. As we no longer belong to a large uniform group, we alone can discover what is relevant to the situation. It is thus useless to wait for someone else. Here again we see the injunction to be oneself described by Alain Ehrenberg (1998). This is the obligation to start off spontaneously in search of oneself, even if this 'oneself' is not described nor is there any explanation for the way to define it (Bauman 2000, 62).

If the activity imperative imposed movement, that of activation defines its modes: it must be 'spontaneous'. This is obligatory. The entity concerned must be the one to start this movement. We are now oceans away from the heteronomy of heavy capitalism, the subject so dear to Bauman (2000,63), this world of individuals instructed by others to pursue objectives set by others.

It is thus impossible to receive close guidance. At the most we may be coached, advised in the exercise of our self-determination (thus at the process level).¹⁶ And there is less certainty as to whether one is doing enough and on the right tract. There are no general norms to reassure social actors that they are not mistaken.

The framework for individual action can thus become unsettling because it is unpredictable. In a context of strict norms, where people are asked to conform with a pre-established script, it is easy to determine the right thing to do. If needed, they can cite scrupulous respect of the norms to indicate that they are irreproachable. This is harder to do, however, in a mobility context. How can an employee know if she is sufficiently motivated, proactive or flexible? How can a spouse be certain he can measure up to his partner's expectations for their relationship? How can welfare

¹⁶ Bauman distinguishes advisors from leaders (Bauman 2000, 64).

recipients sufficiently prove their search for a job or social integration? How to know if one is a good prisoner when it's no longer a matter of sitting quietly in one's cell, but defining a sentence plan whose contents and outline are anything but clear-cut (Mincke and Lemonne 2014)?

In the framework of the Prison Act, the virtues of reparation are stressed. It must come from the prisoner's initiative, in particular by drawing up a sentence plan.

[A]ll effort must be expended during the time in prison time in order to ... make available [to the inmate] an offer – with no imperative nature – of activities and services as varied as possible, corresponding as closely as possible to his necessities and needs, particularly in view of his future reintegration into free society. More concretely, the draft law on [prison] principles calls for an individual sentence plan drawn up together with the inmate. This plan identifies the obstacles to reintegration and elaborates strategies to overcome them. In agreement with the inmate, it also includes a programme of activities of which he can take advantage in the prospect of his release. (*Final Report* 2001, 74)

Along similar lines, assistance to the inmates is redefined, according to the Minister of Justice himself, as reflecting a logic of activation rather than assistance.

In the framework of the sentence being served, the task of the social workers and the social activation they attempt to achieve is highly important. It is not that easy to shift from an assistance point of view to implementing a principle of action. (*Final Report* 2001, 13)

Likewise, problems specific to the prison system, like exclusion from social security benefits, are defined as barriers to assuming responsibility, meaning that they keep the inmates from active efforts towards their reintegration or making amends for damage caused.

the (partial) exclusion from the social security system, in a way, is an (unintentional) additional penalty; it is the source of an evitable adverse effect of incarceration; it is contrary to the principle of normalisation and limits an inmate's right to assume personal and social responsibilities. (*Final Report* 2001, 148-149)

Participation

The perpetual and spontaneous movement imposed on individuals takes place in a special social context. In the punctuated flow-form space, localisation requires establishing relationships with the entities that punctuate the space. This implies both the idea that the activity is developed through the social relationship rather than attachment to predefined territories and also the idea that relations thus forged are in constant evolution. As a result the projective logic prevails, founded on successive and simultaneous contributions to temporary collective projects (Boltanski and Chiapello 1999, 141-142). There is no longer question of a lasting membership to collectivities or to an area, nor of subordination to categories or incorporation in productive structures (regardless of the nature of the production),¹⁷ nor even of a stable assignment to a task or role (Bauman 2000, 7). On the contrary it is a question of establishing relationships that are limited in time, at the service of a temporary activity, in other words a question of participating in projects.

This projective logic is omnipresent. For example it is the base of integration policies that do not attempt to turn an unemployed into a worker, but the restore to the unemployable the potentials to attract the interest of the working world, especially by installing a *habitus* focused on the projective logic of individual life paths (Mauger 2001, 13). Thus finding employment evolves from providing a job for someone who is 'jobless', to become a collective reintegration

¹⁷ On this question see the importance of identifying and constituting populations to which individuals are incorporated in Foucault's bio-power (Andrieu 2004, 12; Blanchette 2006, 7). We have discussed the question of incorporating populations in the prison system in other works (Mincke and Lemonne 2014) (Deleuze 1992, 5).

project focussing on a 'job seeker' and instilling the participation logic. Social assistance, for example increasingly comes with the question 'what is your plan, your project?' (Lacourt 2007). In a similar manner, contemporary management tends to present the situation of working, not as the employer hiring a worker, but as a personal involvement in a collective project in which each actor is merely a participant among others, regardless of the hierarchical level.

A large number of human activities can thus be analysed through the lens of participation in projects. The result of promoting a constant mobility, makes any action the occasion for forming relationships, but also turns any relationship into a temporary bond whose purpose is to undertake a project, with its continuation afterwards having no justification. Life itself is a series of participations in temporary projects.

The opposite of participation is dependency, an attitude which, rather than helping to start or continue a project, consists in being led along, a deadweight that holds the others back (and hampers their mobility). This dependency is stigmatised through criticism of being assisted, fear of dependency among the elderly or handicapped, or even denunciation of inmates who allow themselves to be infantilised rather than take responsibility for their lives via a 'sentence plan'. Thus the preparatory work for the Prison Act redefines the 'prison problem'¹⁸ as relating to the loss of autonomy, being assisted, as the incapability - learned in prison - to assume responsibility, in other words accomplish projects that each one must accomplish. Respect for human dignity, becoming responsible and participation are clearly associated.

The principle of becoming responsible covers responsibility for one's own life, for those who are close, for harm caused to victims and suffering inflicted on the victims' families. If we wish people to become responsible, they must be respected and associated with the decisions that concern them. (*Final Report* 2001, 8)

Similarly, when work in prison is discussed, the issue of employability is cited, in other words the individual's ability to attract and potential to become integrated in a professional project (Boltanski and Chiapello 1999, 145).

It is a question of finding or fostering ... a job that enables -... the inmate to maintain the ability to make a living for himself after he is released. (*Final Report* 2001, 158)

Prison itself must cease to be the institution that seized individuals to govern every aspect of their life. It must become a collective and participative project.

All these elements make up the 'dialectic of control': the inmates are not purely passive beings who merely undergo control, but rather they are 'actors' who react to situations and attitudes. 'Order' is thus not a static given element but rather a dynamic that arises from social interactions in the [prison]establishment. (*Final Report* 2001, 177)

This evolution concerns inmates and prison staff alike.

Participation by the staff, concertation and work in teams - have these methods been sufficiently developed? Are the staff able to work to the best of their capacity? It is not simply a question of adapting administrative measures, but rather one of acknowledging that the staff is a key element in truly applying a prison policy. (*Final Report* 2001, 125)

Adaptation

The fourth mobility imperative concerns adaptation. An entity expected to become integrated in a multitude of projects, to link them up or accumulate them must have excellent faculties of adaptation. In the same way, life in a constantly changing environment requires constant adaptation. As such in today's world, terms like adaptability, flexibility or even

¹⁸ This is the term we use for the questioning which, from its very origins, the prison system has always posed for democracies: that of its legitimate nature.

reconversion hold positive connotations, indicating a healthy capacity to seize each opportunity without bias, constraints or prerequisites.¹⁹ This adaptation is a form of mobility that enables a person, by working on oneself, to see an evolution in relations to the environment and thus establish relations with it more easily. It is both a response to a movement and a movement to re-form the entity itself.

The model-individual (just like the model-organisation) is able to move from one project to another, one register to another, one field of activity to another or one type of relationship to another, quickly and without hesitating. It is no longer possible to establish oneself socially; individuals are summoned to be in constant movement, without ever finding a stable state they can consider as acquired (Bauman 2000, 33-34). What we call 'the posture' is the concrete result of this requirement, replacing the social role as the expression of a stable status (Goffman 1973). If in the framework of the limit-form, people were given a social status, that is, a fixed social position expressed by a particular role one had to play consistently, the flow-form imposes new requirements. The individual must now assume, temporarily yet effectively, an attitude that corresponds to the needs of the moment, to be able to combine this with other ways of behaving and be able to slough them off as quickly and thoroughly as they were adopted. This is what we mean by the posture of the role.

In this context, any geographical, philosophical, religious, material or intellectual anchoring can become a barrier. A person must renounce all rigidity in order to freely develop one's actions.²⁰ Henceforth, it is no longer a question of leaving one anchor to move on to another (what Bauman (2000, 33), after Giddens, calls re-embedding), but rather of pulling all anchors, regardless of their form. The person valorised by mobilitarian ideology – the ideology that values mobility for itself – is free of all chains and perfectly ready for any adaptation.

This relation to adaptation leads to a view of individual relations to space arising from the trajectory - always personal and never finished. Mobility is thus at the very heart of the way one's relation to the social realm is conceived. Rather than individuals being stabilized in the place they 'deserve', they now must claim rights to the mobile dimension of life. 'Each one in his place' is now replaced by 'to each his own path'. Adaptation is a cardinal virtue that makes it possible to maintain a harmonious relationship to the context. Assigned places gave way to implementation of a personal ecology, constantly evolving, where stability comes from moving around rather than remaining fixed in place.

Thus time and again incarceration is presented neither as a state nor as a period of immobility, but instead as a moment along a career and also, in itself, a career within a prison system that stretches beyond the penitentiary walls. The inmate's readaptation to a free life in view of his reintegration - where prison is seen as a place aiming to change a personal trajectory marked by deviation - corresponds to the prison trajectory's adaptation to his personal characteristics. Being a prisoner is no longer a state but a path.

there must be broad possibilities to establish differentiations in the programming and models of the prison career, where the detention phase must be considered as a gradual progress towards the freedom to come and go (*Final Report* 2001, 121)

The principle of equivalence is closely related to the principle of continuity set down in article 87, according to which the inmate has the right during his prison career to continue health care treatments equivalent to those before he entered prison. (*Final Report* 2001, 167)

At the start [of the sentence plan] the detention career is summarised Consequently, establishing the detention

¹⁹ It is along these lines, we think, that Gérard Mauger speaks of installing a flexible *habitus* corresponding to expectations of the business world (Mauger 2001).

²⁰ This is what Boltanski and Chiapello describe as rejection of attachments in the projective city (Boltanski and Chiapello 1999, 179).

career largely takes into account the legal possibilities for individualisation and progressive reintegration of the convict in free society. (*Final Report* 2001, 221)

All things considered, it is the overall system, the prison and its actors, who are invited to invest in a process of permanent mutual adaptation.

Different principles found in the draft law, such as the principles of respect, normalisation and participation, by analogy are applicable to the staff. In principle the draft law not only recommends investing in the adaptation of structures, but also in strategies for change, especially as concerns the penitentiary culture. (*Final Report* 2001, 125)

Mobilitarian Ideology

The four imperatives we have just described give shape to an imperative relationship with a particular mobility. The question is indeed that of shaping a specific mobility, as the notion of mobility is not a given but a social construct that reflects a particular representation of space-time and the ways we may relate to it. The mobility in question is not episodic or punctuated by occasional border crossings. It is constant and must remain so. The activity imperative thus requires abandoning all rest, all security. There is no longer question of choosing not to move. In the social, family, conceptual or physical space, the actor cannot afford to rest. Furthermore, this constant mobility must arise from the actor's own initiative (activation). There is no longer question of being acted on, nor of faithfully following instructions. The mobilitarian subject is self-referenced (Rosa 2012, 12-13). Deciding individually to revise family or professional ambitions, individuals tally up their own successes or failures in terms of professional mobility or set out alone to discover the world. The projects initiated are for the most part collective and the actor's mobility thus reflects a participatory logic. Even personal development, setting oneself in motion, which Vranken calls 'work on oneself' (Vranken and Macquet 2006; Vranken 2006) stems from a growing potential for participation, the ability to respond favourably to solicitations from one's environment and ignoring any obstacles or blocks. Participation is thus an extra quality of mobility as consecrated by mobilitarian ideology. This leads to the imperative for adaptation, so that the various participants will be able to adjust to a project and the context of an action. Mobility cannot be constant if people are willing to sit and wait for predefined conditions to converge. Examining all options means turning each situation into an opportunity, thus being adaptable.

The mobilitarian ideology, therefore, is not just about placing value on mobility in itself. It is about imposing a specific relationship to a specific mobility. Other social practices, previously considered as forms of mobility - such as patiently advancing along a pre-traced career path - are henceforth seen as belonging to a logic of immobility. The mobilitarian ideology thus constructs a certain type of mobility at the same time as it makes it mandatory, thereby constructing a universe that is coherent with the representations of space-time that underpin it.

Should we understand from the above that we are on the verge of a world entirely devoted to mobility, one that would attempt to banish all immobility? Certainly not. What we are interested in here is highlighting different universes of meaning, models of discourses relating to space, time and mobility. Yet we are all aware that the relation between directly discursive and non discursive practices is quite complex, and that the emergence of a discourse, even if it is the dominant one - does not necessarily - not to say never - accompany the installation of concrete practices that would be the perfect application of this discourse.

In the first place, our approach does not aim at sustaining the idea of an undivided reign for mobilitarian ideology. Indeed, the typical ideological dispositifs of the limit-form, which for lack of a better term we call the anchoring ideology - still persist in many areas.

The parliamentary works we analysed still contain numerous elements grounded in this anchoring ideology. The project itself was to establish a strict legal framework, seen as drawing a clear line between legal and illegal, between admissible and inadmissible, to end the legal vagueness and arbitrary nature of Belgian prison administration. The heart of the draft law was based on the will to trace borders; nothing could be closer to the limit-form. This said, the fact that a legislative project can be colonised to such extent by a discourse reflecting the flow-form and mobilitarian ideology clearly indicates the current thrust of these ideas. From there to affirming that it has the field to itself is a step we do not take.

There is nothing surprising in this. No system of thought has ever been able to rule without rivals, just like, as Foucault reminds us, social evolution is made less of replacements than of shifts in balance and parallel existence of different mechanisms (Foucault 2004, 10).

Another important element is the fact that an ideology is not a direct relation to the world, but a set of concepts and normative categories to be mobilised in the context of social relations. This means that beyond the ideological discourse specific uses of the normative resources are developed. These will or will not be mobilised to govern highly diverse situations.

As such, certain mobilities will be recognised while others will not. The non-contractual worker who accepts a long bus commute or sets aside her qualifications to adapt to the market and accept any work available is showing perfect respect for the mobility imperative yet no one will congratulate her. She has merely done the least that can be expected: she has avoided dependence on welfare and the social demotion it implies.

On the other hand, the young manager on an upward professional path, who travels abroad in agreeable and comfortable conditions or who changes positions in his company to take on a more interesting and motivating job will be praised, held up as an example of the joy of being mobile.²¹ People like him are models even though nothing indicates that they made a greater sacrifice in what Boltanski and Thévenot call the 'investment formula' (Boltanski and Thévenot 1991), this sacrifice to obtain social recognition and which in our days consists of abandoning all anchoring (Boltanski and Chiapello 1999). The present value placed on mobility thus does not imply that all mobilities are recognised as equal, independently of their intensity and the cost for those who practice them.

In the same way, at the very time a discourse on the prison is formulated by those who promote opening, normalisation, temporal continuity and mobility for prisoners - to the point that one may well wonder whether the perfect realisation of this programme would be abolishing prisons altogether, Belgium is in the midst of building new penitentiaries, largely oriented towards an objective of security and maximum confinement, where it is hard to find traces of mobility discourses. In parallel to a mobility discourse attempting to justify the prison system, looms a heady rival who preaches confinement without any adjustments, intensive use of prison, the strictest regime in applying the prison constraint, impermeability of prison walls, and so on.

It thus clearly emerges that mobilitarian ideology does not permit affirmation that mobility is systematically prized, no more than it denounces immobility. The construction of social practices in mobilities and immobilities, collectively seen as such (Frello 2008) is a condition for mobilising the this ideology. Social practices thus cannot be automatically classified as either mobility or immobility but are formed by facets of one and the other.

Therefore, in our view one issue at stake in the research to come must be to understand the cases where mobilitarian ideology is mobilised and how this comes about. Other cases for study are those where behaviours may be seen as

²¹ Unless the fact that, frequently, the positive depiction of their experience of mobility belies the reality of the way they actually live it. living it.

mobilities even if they aren't, and conversely, immobilities that go unnoticed or are legitimatised, and so on. The issue, indeed, is to use mobilitarian ideology as an instrument to understand uses of the theme of mobility in order to establish relations of power (Frello 2008, 47).

Conclusion

In this brief *tour d'horizon* our objective was to trace the perspective for one development in mobility studies whereby mobility is no longer considered as mere physical movement and became a tool to analyse contemporary social mutations and power relationships.

What seems to foster this evolution is linking up studies on mutations in relationships to (physical) space with a set of phenomena traditionally described by various means: responsabilisation, de-institutionalisation, contractualisation, flexibilisation, activation and so on. Phenomena which are too rarely linked together. The advantage of this approach appears obvious not only for social practices that are now described as non-physical mobilities and finding a common interpretation, but also for mobilities based on physical movement which find new potentials as explanations grounded in the social context, in collective representations or cross-cutting social imperatives which avoid seeing the relationship to physical space as arising solely from a relation with its materiality.

We see no need to stretch any points to achieve this approach. It is enough to accept that space is a dimension that structures more than just our relation to the physical world. It's a small step, but one that goes a long way. It implies that sociologists acknowledge the wealth of approaches to the human geography of physical movements, but also that geographers accept to see their prized concept - space - used and partially redefined by sociologists. And then it will be possible to examine mobilities in a broader manner and to elicit a whole set of practices and discourses, traces of an ideology which we see as deeply structuring the social realm.

This may lead us to see in a new light subjects that have already been extensively studied in the social sciences. This was our own experience, for example, with the perspective we were able to give to the 'prison problem'. For so long this question was built around the idea that prisoners were submitted to a regime that derogated from common *rights* (deprived of liberty, inroads on privacy, restrictions to therapeutic freedom, exceptions to the right to work, etc). Today a radical reformulation is coming about: prison poses a problem because it deprives the inmate of autonomy. By submitting the individual to a regime that takes away responsibility, by frustrating any attempt at initiative or the ability to make one's own plans, it diminishes this autonomy and self-determination that are intrinsic to human dignity.

This observation may lead to conclude that prison management has turned a corner, evoking responsabilisation for inmates or holding the individual up as the entrepreneur of the self. As rich as they may seem, these approaches nonetheless limit understanding of the phenomena to relations with sectors working in roughly the same terrain. For example, although it may indeed be true that a managerial logic has been imported, this says nothing about the reasons that led a commission of renowned experts to use this discourse as a basis for defining society's relation to the prison institution.

Our proposal seems to open a new innovating perspective which, obviously, does not claim to shed light on the whole phenomenon, but bring a new way of seeing this object already the subject of so many studies. In the discursive framework of mobilitarian ideology, being deprived of autonomy is the worst thing that could happen. A heteronomous being cannot be submitted to injunctions regarding activity, activation, participation and adaptation as they have been defined above. It is therefore important for the prison to make the conditions for its legitimation by becoming compliant with mobility imperatives. The first step is to create a context where it is possible to claim the widest possible application of the four above-cited principles, as they open the way towards tests for legitimation or de-legitimation. In

a way, the possibility of maintaining a discourse on preserving the capacity for autonomy among people in prison is the first mobility test imposed on the system. And it will or will not emerge legitimized. In the first case, the mobility legitimate prison can claim to be an instrument that imposes mobility criteria on inmates, and more general, in all its stakeholders. In such a context, questions of management, responsabilisation or self-entrepreneurship are no more than paths through which mobilitarian ideology can enter the prison. And this illustrates our view of how mobility issues can be summoned to lend us a new way of looking at particularly diverse social phenomena.

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