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New mobilities management

Mobility Pioneers between first and second modernity[1]

Neue Formen des Mobilitätsmanagements. Mobilitätspioniere zwischen erster und zweiter Moderne

Abstract
The article presents empirical data from a research project on mobility pioneers. It shows different strategies of 'mobility management' and describes constellations of mobility and immobility, movement and motility (mobility potential). The author raises the question as to whether the reported subject-oriented strategies for coping with the modern 'mobility imperative' open up a perspective on a structural change in the modern concept of mobility and mobility practice. The theory of reflexive modernization is used to discuss this question and to help to understand the relevance of the empirical findings. In concluding, the paper focuses on further mobility research and introduces a distinction between 'transit spaces' and 'connectivity spaces' as relevant issues for research on new configurations of spatial, social and virtual mobility.

Keywords: Structural change in mobility, mobility pioneers, mobility management, reflexive modernization.

Zusammenfassung
Der Autor präsentiert Ergebnisse aus dem Projekt „Mobilitätspioniere. Zum Strukturwandel der Mobilität unter den Bedingungen reflexiver Modernisierung" im Münchner Sonderforschungsbereich 536. Er beschreibt unterschiedliche idealtypische Strategien von „Mobilitätsmanagement", wobei er den Akzent auf die Beschreibung von Konstellation von Mobilität und Immobilität, Bewegung und Bewegungspotenzialen (Motilität) legt. Er wirft die Frage auf, ob die gezeigten subjektorientierten Strategien im Umgang mit dem Mobilitätsdruck der Moderne eine veränderte Perspektive auf den strukturellen Wandel im modernen Mobilitätskonzept und der Mobilitätspraxis eröffnen. Die Relevanz dieser Frage und der empirischen Ergebnisse wird hier vor dem gesellschaftsdiagnostischen Hintergrund der Theorie reflexiver Modernisierung diskutiert. Als Fazit im Hinblick auf weiterführende Forschungen schlägt der Autor eine Unterscheidung von Transit- und Connectivity-Räumen vor. Dadurch werden die neuen Konfigurationen aus räumlicher, sozialer und virtueller Mobilität unter den Bedingungen reflexiver Modernisierung sinnvoll erforschbar.

Schlüsselworte: Strukturwandel der Mobilität, Mobilitätspioniere, Mobilitätsmanagement, Reflexive Modernisierung.

[1] This article is a revised version of a paper given at the Centre for Mobilities Research (CeMoRe) in Lancaster, UK, and at the Reflexive Modernization Research Centre in Munich. I am grateful to Weert Canzler, Bülent Diken, Bob Jessop, Vincent Kaufmann, John Law, Ruth Limmer, Norbert Schneider, Elisabeth Shove, John Urry, and Gerlinde Vogl for their stimulating and helpful critique. Special thanks to Matthias Brabetz, Bobby Langer and Thomas Minnes for their enduring and reliable support.

Introduction

There is a strong culturally driven mobility imperative and an effective increase in mobility constraints in modern society (Urry 2000). The labor market and its companies reproduce a new culture of mobility and flexibility (Schneider 2005 in this volume; Sennett 1998; Boltanski/Chiapello 1999). Mobility seems to be the key word in this discourse. But in fact the very topic is not mobility. In my understanding mobility is related to individual freedom, autonomy and self-determination. It means that actors use their competence, skills and capacity to realize specific plans and projects (Kaufmann 2002). More and more economic discourses are filled up with talks on the mobilization of labor markets. But most of the time the issue is even not mobility. It is the spatial and social flexibility of the workforce, its willingness to adapt to external constraints and expectations. The question arising from this observation is if the future society is a commuter or even a 'drifter' society as Sennett (1998) puts it. It is one of the key questions not only in modernization theory but in politics as well, if the future of modern societies consists in 'circulating mobilities' (Schneider/Limmer/Ruckdeschl 2002; Limmer in this volume) and a kind of 'raging standstill' (Paul Virilio) or in a specific constellation of mobility and stability.

This article focuses on people living in mobile worlds. It reflects upon the consequences of their coping strategies for mobility research. It presents empirical observations made in a project called the Mobility Pioneers Project.[2] And it asks if and how people experience themselves as the navigators of their own life. Do they conceive themselves as those who steer their life course, do they experience themselves as those who decide and choose? Or do they understand themselves as 'flexible men' (Sennett 1998), as drifters, running with the flows and dependent from others and external decisions.

The sample is quite specific. It consists of freelance journalists. The subject-oriented data from those freelance journalists provide empirical evidence for different strategies for dealing with the modern mobility imperative. Freelance journalists as a group are strongly confronted with the necessity for spatial and social mobility and flexibility. They need to orientate themselves in a fast-moving market characterized by profound transformations. New themes emerge continually, and economic structures and working conditions are in constant flux, not least fostered by ongoing technological change in the media and communication industry. When movement loses its attractiveness, new forms of mobility management are developed by individuals subject to the mobility imperative. This is an interesting phenomenon, and all data on physical and social mobility show not fewer, but increasing mobilities.

This phenomenon gives rise to a number of questions. What does it mean when people react to the mobility imperative of modern society by refusing movement? Is the future of mobility a culture of immobility, of non-movement? Or is there

[2] The Mobility Pioneers Project is part of the Reflexive Modernization Research Centre (SFB 536). For more information visit: www.sfb536.mwn.de and www.cosmobilities.net.

only social differentiation in an emerging network society (Castells 1996) where people realize different constellations of mobility and immobility? Or are we observing a significant social change and the rise of new socio-spatial constellations, as a number of authors writing from the perspective of the theory of reflexive modernization (Beck 1992; Beck/Giddens/Lash 1994; Beck/Bonss/Lau 2003) assume? I also will discuss these questions using the theory of reflexive modernization, which is useful to understand and to contextualize empirical findings in a wider sense of social theory.

For the illustration of my argument, I use three paradigmatic cases of mobility management on the part of freelance journalists. These are taken from a sample of about a hundred interviews from different fields of research.[3] Each case exemplifies one ideal type of mobility management. The first is characterized by a strong relation between physical and social mobility. Movement in space, travel, is a means to deal with the mobility imperative and to realize individual plans and projects. The first case describes centred mobility management with a clear focus on family, residence and local belonging. The second type, decentred mobility management, demonstrates how social and physical mobility can be gradually uncoupled. This type is technology-driven. Information and communication technologies enable people to decentre themselves spatially and socially in complex networks of mediated and face-to-face interactions. The third type shows virtual mobility management where spatial movement is not an essential part of mobility practice and complex virtual networks substitute for physical presence and spatial mobility.

2 Mobility strategies

One of the primary aims of the Mobility Pioneers Project (Bonss/Kesselring 2001, 2004; Kesselring/Vogl 2004) is to investigate how mobile people orientate themselves under conditions of uncertainty, insecurity and the ongoing shrinkage of time and space and the globalization of Western societies. Mobility strategies show how mobility pioneers navigate through social, material and virtual worlds. The term mobility strategy refers to the *inner logic of mobility practice*. This inner logic can be analytically reconstructed on the basis of empirical data from in-depth interviews. Interpretative methods like computer-based analysis and data-based group discussions enable the researcher to condense mobility strategies into ideal types of mobility concepts and practices. I use the term *management* to describe these concepts and practices because it emphasizes the goal-oriented nature of activity and the sub-optimum character of solutions.[4] I am aware of the fact that mo-

[3] The whole sample includes interviews with journalists, IT professionals, cleaning women from Poland and members of the German armed forces.

[4] In an earlier publication (Kesselring 2003) I used the term mobility politics to illustrate the active role of individuals in the shaping of their own mobility and career practices and their efforts to find individual but optimum solutions to problems arising from the mobility imperative.

bility practice is structured by contextual situations, economic and social conditions and power relations in general. But I underline the individual share in mobility because I want to illuminate the actors' ability to influence their movement through time and space. Mobility is often conceived of as a form of freedom, but in fact mobility results from the dichotomies of autonomy and heteronomy, production and adaptation. This is the very reason why mobility must be conceptualized in relation to flexibility as the ability of actors to adapt to the direction of flows.

Mobility is not a clear-cut and homogeneous phenomenon. It is a general principle of modernity (Kesselring 2001; Bonss/Kesselring/Weiss 2004: 258) and as such there is a set of discourses, institutions and practices which bring it into materiality and social reality. Social mobility is not an isolated dimension, nor is it spatial or geographical mobility as such. Instead, it makes greater sense to talk about 'mobilities' (Urry 2000) or, as I propose, different social, geographical and virtual elements of mobility.

The work presented here contextualizes individuals in complex social, economic and technological networks and in space. The individual subject remains the actor and reference point in my observations and understanding. This is the reason why mobility is defined as an actor's competence to realize specific projects and plans while 'on the move' (see Bonss/Kesselring 2001). But at the same time this definition of mobility demands critical reflection on the autonomy of modern subjects and their capacity to use physical movement as a tool for creativity and self-fulfilment. My interpretation of the involvement of subjects in powerful networks is a kind of 'decentering of the subject'. This means the concept of autonomous mobility politics for the way people influence the directions of their social as well as spatial movements is insufficient to understand the relation between subjects and the mobility imperative in modern society. Individuals are always 'subjects in context'. They are embedded and dependant from structures and their decision making and acting is not free from external pressure and constraints. The duality of structure and action is always powerfully effective and restricts the individual's optional spaces. The realm to move and to be mobile results from the ongoing negotiation process between structural restrictions and individual needs and goals. As a consequence the term mobility management seems to be more appropriate than the term mobility politics. It reflects the permanent juggling and struggling with mobility constraints. To establish mobility strategies, subjects need to be related to external structures and forces such as working context, powerful actors, the restrictions and dynamics of technological systems and so on. The research on mobility pioneers shows how they try to decouple themselves from the compulsion of spatial movement by logging in to technological systems and networks. This strategy called 'virtual mobility management' is a successful way to undermine the prevailing mobility imperative and to find an individual coping strategy.

3 Centred mobility management

The case of the freelance journalist Achim R. exemplifies the specific centred mobility management type. Achim R. is 35, married, and has three children. His wife is from Israel. He is a trained social scientist. A member of a journalists' cooperative, he is self-employed. He lives with his family in his own house in his small hometown. His office is an hour away in a larger city that is one of the centres of the German media industry. He is a commuter and maintains many strong and weak ties to his hometown and people living there. Most of his extended family live there. He participates in local political activities and is interested personally as well as professionally in local history, especially the Nazi period.

His career as a journalist has developed over the last fifteen years. Currently he is a valued contributor to important German newspapers, magazines and radio stations. From time to time he produces for television. He is an active member of various professional and private networks. He was the co-founder of an international federation of journalists. He is active as a volunteer adviser to a large German trade union. He is actively engaged in a German-Israeli exchange program.

Achim R. uses public transport for his daily commute to his office and for many of his professional appointments and meetings, totalling approximately 15,000 km per year. He drives approximately 8,000 km per year in his own car (including family trips) and flies approximately 8,000 km per year (including travel to Israel). His preferred mode of travel is public transport. Most of his travel is not long-distance but local and regional. This points to one of his characteristic competences: the ability to manage complex activity chains by public transport. He is familiar with timetables and able to exploit waiting and travel time as creative phases of professional activity. Often he finishes the first draft for an article on the way home from a meeting, press conference or interview. Even when he must travel longer distances, he tries to be home at night.

Thus all of Achim R.'s movements circulate around a clearly defined centre of life: his family, house, friends and local belonging. His social networks are dense, interactive, and multiplex. They are dynamic and actively structured. Many are local and regional networks, but none are given or traditional. After leaving home for his university studies, he returned to his hometown and resumed his contacts and forms of social integration. The strong compulsions of proximity in his work, requiring him to be on the spot, do not hinder his concentration on his home place and on local social networks. His relation to virtual networks is professional and selective. He uses the Internet as an additional information source but avoids chat rooms and does not engage in extensive e-mail communication. He combines worldwide professional networking with local integration as a rooted citizen.

In the case of Achim R. we observe a strong, socially deeply-rooted potential for the shaping and controlling of mobilities. Achim R. possesses a mobility potential which enables him on the one hand to cope with the mobility imperative inherent in his work. On the other hand, he has the potential to manage complex situations and demands arising from family and private obligations.

This case shows a specific concept of mobility, *centred mobility*, representing a specific constellation of mobility and immobility. *Centred mobility management* requires a high level of competence, discipline, organization and maintenance. The centred structure is a mobility resource. Immobility in the sense of social stability and reliability, local belonging and embeddedness is the essential element in mobility potential, i.e., motility.[5] It enables individuals such as Achim R. to control all the many demands and activities and to navigate social and geographical spaces. Data generated from cases such as Achim R. reinforce the modern notion of mobility as a vehicle to realize individual projects and plans. Achim R. sees himself as the 'navigator' of his own movement and as the controller and producer of his life conditions.

4 De-centred mobility management

The case of Wolfgang S. illustrates a much more relativistic understanding of mobility practice and shows much more disembedding, contingency and openness. It is a de-centred pattern of mobility management. In cases such as this, individuals put themselves and their mobility performance much more into perspective.

Wolfgang S. was a successful editor and department manager in the business-news section of a major radio and TV station before becoming a freelance journalist. His theme was 'How to become a successful entrepreneur'. He was responsible for a popular TV magazine for young business people. He was an Internet specialist with a nationwide reputation. His father's death brought about a rupture in his life and professional self-concept. Unmarried and with no children, he quit his job and began looking for alternatives, ultimately settling into a new life as freelancer and trainer in Internet research and data management. He established residence on one of the Balearic Islands but retained his small flat in Germany as a 'base camp'. Today it is his starting point for expeditions into his new life as a self-employed person.

Wolfgang S. spends his time moving between the Balearic Islands, Germany, Italy and, more and more, the United States and Russia. From his base in a middle-sized German city, he manages his seminars and makes journalistic investigations; an Italian enclave is his favourite location for recreation and Buddhist exercises. During the last years he has become acquainted with places and people all over the world. Wolfgang S.'s experience represents a multiplex network of places, people, ideas and cultures.

Wolfgang S. is a 'hypermobile' (Bonss/Kesselring/Weiss 2004), i.e., a person who is socially and physically in constant motion and transformation. He is a frequent flyer and does not possess a car. He maintains a widespread social network. His professional activities are mostly connected with private visits and contacts.

[5] The term 'motility' refers to the system of mobility potential. At the individual level, it can be defined as the way in which an actor appropriates the field of possible action in the area of mobility, and uses it to develop individual projects' (Kaufmann 2002: 1).

Boundaries between the professional and the private have largely vanished. He is subject to many compulsions of proximity which he wants to control. He continuously changes priorities among contacts he wishes to maintain and those he has lost interest in. His life as a single person is extremely dynamic. Unlike Achim R., he has no clear centre or direction in mobility practice. But Wolfgang S. nevertheless sees himself as the navigator of his life. This is an often-observed paradoxical self-description among mobility pioneers. The less people are able to control their mobilities, the more they see themselves as navigators.

But still Wolfgang S. is not a 'drifter' (Sennett 1998) who simply goes with the flow. He wants to steer his life's course and to influence the conditions of his life and work. His experience of life makes sense to him, and he formulates many aims and goals. For example, he has a clear definition of success: to be on the top means to make enough money in two weeks to finance a pleasant life for the next two months. This is completely at odds with the advice he had given to young entrepreneurs, which was to minimize economic risks and to avoid professional failure. Although socialized in the Protestant ethic of discipline and success orientation, he wants to establish for himself a new concept of 'life quality' and subjective growth.

Wolfgang S. is very competent in making social contacts. He is socially well-embedded on a high complexity level. He lives on his Balearic Island in a residential community without partner and maintains many contacts with locals. He is well-integrated in a worldwide network of communication with his extended family in Germany, old and new friends, colleagues and like-minded people. He says of himself:

> "I'm going to virtualize my life step by step. E-mail has become my favourite mode of communication. I only use the phone when I really have to. I can be reached by e-mail and via my homepage wherever I am. I do not write letters or postcards. It happens more and more in my working life that I don't see my customers. They know my work, they know my price, and so they do not need any physical contact. I'm astonished myself, but people have a lot of faith in the medium Internet."

Wolfgang S.'s case illustrates *de-centred mobility management* very well. He lives the network, and he gives life to it. Switching between national territories and continents, he has given up his former goal to marry and to start a family. Love, sex and friendship follow the idea of networking. He has contacts with women, but he distinguishes between different purposes: talk, intensity, sex, love, social, psychological and technical support, etc. He maintains a social network on a high level of multiplexity.[6]

De-centred mobility management is an ambivalent concept of mobility and practice. On the one hand, it implies considerable personal freedom and self-determination connected with movement, travel and transnational commuting. But

[6] See Pelizäus-Hoffmeister (2001) for a discussion of mobility and the multiplexity of social networks; see also Hollstein (2001, 2002).

at the same time, Wolfgang S. is under great pressure to be on the spot and to secure the income needed for his particular pattern of life.

In cases such as that of Wolfgang S., de-centred mobility management takes place on a high level of income, comfort and competence. Behind his casual talk on the 'logistics of mobile lives' there is a must, not a desire. The individual decision to leave the security of a stable job and to choose the freedom of self-employment produces unintended consequences. To live a life beyond local fixations and to develop an individual culture and practice of 'uprooting and re-grounding' (Ahmed et al. 2003) demands competence, discipline, concentration and mental strength. The personal challenge is how to re-integrate all these different networks.

Motility in this case comes from its plurality, i.e. the social and technological competence needed to manage complex networks with numerous opportunities and risks. Wolfgang S. actually wants to reduce physical movement. But physical travel is nevertheless the instrument he must use to realize an independent life without the restrictions of a 9-to-5 job. He talks about himself as a *cyber creature*. If he had the chance, he would choose *virtual mobility* as his preferred mode of travel. Virtual networks are part of his motility and enable him to spend much of his time in the Balearic Islands. These networks function as a resource for his worldwide presence without being physically present. Technologies such as the Internet, e-mail and mobile telephones permit him to be away and still be accessible. What he aims at is a maximum of connectivity and a minimum of co-presence. He temporarily decouples himself from the 'compulsion of proximity' (Boden & Molotch 1994, Urry 2002). In his island and on the move, he is accessible for those who want to contact him directly.

The prerequisite for this complex juggling with different places, social belongings, identities, and social, material, and virtual networks is a set of competencies and skills. The decisive factors seem to be his technological competence as an Internet pioneer and his ability to keep in touch with friends, colleagues and clients. These two factors converge in his ability to maintain contacts and achieve social integration via Internet. Different levels of professional, private and cultural activities come together in different identities, which he manifests on different homepages. He produces himself as a private person interested in people, nature and ecology, beauty in general, music, food, cultural events, etc. But beyond this quasi-hedonistic performance, he presents himself as a successful, effective and reliable professional. The integration – and the decisive instrument for his de-centred mobility management – is a public time schedule on his homepages where friends and clients can see where he is and where he will be at any given moment. Clients can see when he is booked and when he is free, and friends can likewise keep abreast of his availability. He is embedded in a far-reaching network of contacts and places and functions as a node around which others must arrange themselves for their own purposes.

In summary, the inner logic of de-centred mobility management is reticular and non-directional in the sense that there is neither a clear centre of life nor a clearly defined aim of his social and spatial activities. In other words: his mobility practice does not involve the modern idea of movement with origin, direction and destina-

tion. There is evidence in this case that social and physical mobility patterns must be seen as parallel expressions of the individual logic of social orientation. I.e., there seems to be a strong connection between social and geographical mobility practice, and it makes sense to interpret the one as an expression to the other.

5 Virtual mobility management

Wolfgang S. reveals a mobility pattern where spatial and virtual mobility compete with each other. It raises the question as to whether a change from spatial to virtual mobility management is possible and empirically justifiable. This third ideal type of mobility management radicalizes the virtuality pattern. Johanna R., a well-known freelance journalist in Germany, exemplifies virtual mobility management.

Johanna R. is a highly competent specialist in Internet and data security and freedom of information rights. She is married, with a 5-year-old daughter, and lives near a middle-sized city. Her income exceeds € 5,000 per month, top earnings for freelance journalists. She reports on secrecy services and German and European data security law. In a certain sense she seems to be immobile. She is a non-mover and does not travel. Caring for her daughter is solely her responsibility; her husband does not participate. This is the most important restriction in her life and determines the boundaries of her professional activities. In fact she has just five hours per day to allocate to her extremely busy professional life. This is a serious challenge, as participation in professional life is very high in her value system. She attaches great importance to being an active political citizen and journalist. Consequently she must solve a recurring mobility problem: In situations where physical movement is the absolute prerequisite for public presence, importance and impact, she must fail. She must develop other forms of mobility which function as a substitute and a vehicle to enable her to realize her own projects and plans.

I asked Johanna about important 'places' in her life. Her answer was quite surprising. Her distinct preferences were her e-mail program, her computer and telephone, her desk and her house. She did not mention her place of residence nor her hometown. She mentioned only two cities where she had lived for a few years and Turkey, the country of origin of her husband. On the same level as the two cities she mentioned three homepages, calling them 'important locations'. When she starts work in the morning, the first thing she does is to visit these homepages for new information and to check her e-mail. Her efforts as a journalist and political citizen standing up for freedom of information and in defence of the private sphere are documented on these homepages. She knows no better platforms for public and expert discourse on data security and freedom of information. And she, as an expert and a public voice, is located in the middle of discourse. These homepages are an important resource for her motility, supporting the realization of her plans and projects. Her Internet connectedness is one of the main reasons why she is one of the best-paid freelancers in Germany, continually in demand for new articles and books.

For Johanna R., there is no better place to be present beyond this virtual forum. From time to time she travels to a conference or a lecture. But she minimizes her travel to about ten trips a year. Before becoming a mother, she enjoyed touring around. Today physical travel is not important for her. Nevertheless she is a very motile person, with considerable mobility potential, and maintains a multiplex social network of professional and private contacts, some of whom she has never met in person.

Johanna R. has created her own individual *scape* based on a specific constellation of technological, social and virtual components. She has shaped her own configuration of scape elements and thus her own optional space or mobility potential.[7] In her private life, direct interaction and the facilitators of direct interaction (bike, car, public transport, etc.) are relevant. But in her professional life, virtual interaction and the technologies of virtuality are much more important than any conventional mode of transport. She plays an important role in professional networks with specific restrictions, options, risks and chances, with many nodes and relations. She arranges them to interface with social networks which are localized and virtualized as well.

Johanna works in a niche and is a mobility pioneer in that we cannot generalize her experience over population. Her journalistic activity permits an extreme form of immobile mobility. In her work she moves through cyberspace without need of contact with the physical world. The world comes to her - channelled through her computer. On the Internet and in e-mail, she uses PGP – Pretty Good Privacy - a computer program to encode and decode information and prevent misuse by others. This guarantees confidentiality in her communication with informants. Thus, confidentiality technology also fosters new dimensions of interaction and opens up new mediated spaces of connectivity and proximity. This reduces the compulsion of proximity for her. This is one of the main reasons why she is so effective in her field. In a certain sense she drifted into her chosen area of journalistic activity. But she is not a drifter at all. The connection between her spatial and her social mobility is very weak. Her social networks also rely on virtual mobility practice. She has an individualized concept of social success and satisfaction. She has found a very specific solution to the problem of harmonizing her social role as a mother and homemaker with her demanding career. She is not interested in upward social mobility. The case of Johanna R. manifests a non-directional concept of mobility where contingency is high and there is no clearly defined destination and end point of professional and personal success.

It is difficult to say whether Johanna R.'s mobility management concept based on virtuality is successful or stable. There are few criteria for comparison with others, as her positioning in virtual space is individual and very specific. She makes a very good income, she participates in public life without being co-present, and she defines her situation as satisfactory. Her concept of virtual mobility management is an intelligent solution to the problem of unintended immobility. But unlike the non-directional pattern of social mobility Sennett (1998) describes, she configures

[7] For the term 'optional space' in relation to mobility research, see Canzler and Knie (1998).

and reconfigures her individual scapes as required by her life situation.[8] It is difficult to predict whether this is a lasting solution or just an intermezzo between more spatial mobility patterns.

6 Considerations for future research

The three cases are ideal typological. Each represents an essential mobility pattern found in the empirical data of the Mobility Pioneers project. The centred mobility management type reveals a very first-modern concept of mobility. There is strong evidence in the data but in other studies, too, that it is the prevailing mobility pattern in modern societies. Our research in the IT branch and the observations of highly mobile in Schneider, Limmer and Ruckdeschl (2002) show the importance of the centred mobility management. Limmer (in this volume) puts it as circulating mobility where people return to a clearly defined centre of life. The mobility pioneers show that there is a strong 'will to order' (Parsons 1972) in this concept of mobility. It relates to the idea of an autonomous subject that is the maker of its own mobility. Mobility pioneers of this type understand themselves as the navigators of their own spatial activities, their own life course and career. They dictate their own movements and activate their motility in their own best interest. This type resembles what industrial sociologists call the 'Unternehmer der eigenen Arbeitskraft' (Voss/Pongratz 1998). People view themselves as actors in private and economic life who manage their situations in order to exploit economic and social opportunities and avoid risks. The pursuit of career and individual satisfaction and the maintenance of social networks are basically grounded in spatial mobility. This mobility type deploys a high level of motility, using spatial networks such as transport and communication systems to establish a strongly focused social and professional network around a clearly defined centre of life. Among the IT professionals in our sample, a pattern of reproductive immobility (family and household) underlying spatial mobility practice is more common than among journalists (see Bonss/Kesselring/Weiss 2004: 263). For most of these IT interviewees, centred mobility management seems to be the characteristic strategy. Among journalists in the sample, the range of possible forms of mobility management is broader and more complex.

The decentred mobility management type relates to what I call 'reflexive mobility' or the second-modern mobility concept (Kesselring 2001). It shows that the strong relation between social and geographical mobility as seen in the centred type is not immutable. New technologies provide people with the (mobility) potential to substitute other modes of presence and absence, proximity and distance. Being away, while being accessible is the crux of this second mobility type. It is a technology-driven approach which involves the decoupling of spatial and social

[8] Sennett describes late-modern social mobilities as moving like a crab, retrogressive and non-directional. He posits drifting as a passive adaptive mobility pattern in which individuals 'go with the flow' and end up where external factors force them to be.

mobility. Wittel (2001) describes this as 'network sociality' but talks about an additional sphere of connectivity and social positioning. n the decentred case we see that spatiality, sociality and virtuality are entangled with one another. Mobility pioneers such as Wolfgang S. maintain their social networks by using the Internet, e-mail and intelligent communication as instruments of social mobility. The social positioning of these mobility pioneers rests on complex, efficient (infra)structural as well as subjective motility.

The third type undermines the first-modern mobility concept where spatial movement builds the backbone for all social change. The virtual mobility pattern is radicalized. Here, spatial movement does not emerge as an essential element of mobility practice. All activities in geographical space remain local and extremely centred. The social network is small but very intense. By contrast, the virtual network and virtual professional activities are multiplex and globally linked. In particular, the professional social network transcends spatial activities. Face-to-face interaction is nearly superfluous and sometimes even explicitly undesired. Mobility pioneers such as Johanna R. maintain lasting and stable contacts with colleagues, informants and friends without co-presence. Interestingly, the complex codices of behaviour in virtual space allow the social construction of trust and reliability.[9] Mobility pioneers who practice virtual mobility management avoid the modern compulsion of proximity and mobility.

The most interesting question arising from these empirical observations is whether these mobility patterns show more than only particular aspects of the complex relationship between mobility and society. More precisely, is there something in the data that suggests a possible structural change in mobility? Or are we seeing only the banality of technology-driven differentiation in the late-modern world and emergent network society?

At this stage it is impossible to say whether the existence of these spatial and non-spatial mobility patterns provides definite evidence for a strong hypothesis such as the theory of reflexive modernization, which posits a transformation from first to second modernity (Beck 1992; Beck/Giddens/Lash 1994; Beck/Bonss/Lau 2003). But nevertheless empirical data show that there are new ways to be mobile and to realize social belonging without being bound to place, to local community, thus weakening the modern pressure to travel and to be physically present. This is an indicator that a general principle of modernity, mobility with its paradigmatic connection between spatial and social movement, is in flux. Currently it is hard to say how far the new mobility patterns spread over population. But we see evidence that a decoupling of spatial and social mobility is possible and empirically verifiable.

This finding is quite important for a cosmopolitan theory of modern societies (Beck 2000; Vertovec/Cohen 2002). Social scientific cosmopolitanism implies a

[9] In another case study on the so-called Jonet (www.jonet.org), a virtual network of journalists for the exchange of information, jobs, knowledge and support, we investigated the functionality of these codices. Membership in this network allows participants to overcome spatial restrictions. Mail circulating through the mailing list can often solve problems of journalistic life and mobilize formerly unknown local support.

mobility bias and the development of new ways of social interaction beyond time and space (Beck 2004). The third type of virtual mobility management shows that individuals are already finding ways to be connected without meeting.

The decentred mobility management type buttresses the theoretical presumption that under the conditions of reflexive modernization in a technologically developed world new configurations of mobility and immobility, presence and absence and so on are possible (Bonss/Kesselring 2004). Mobility pioneers such as Wolfgang S. deploy their own 'socioscapes' (Appadurai 1998) while using the technoscapes of the global network society for re-structuring and re-embedding. Unlike conventional place-bound strategies of embeddedness and local belonging, these strategies are risky business. These scapes are connected to the individual and his or her motility. They collapse if the individual collapses. In this sense they are highly individualized mobility patterns in highly standardized infrastructural and technological environments.

As a suggestion for further research and the conceptualization of these different mobility modes, I propose the distinction between mobilities in 'transit spaces' and those in 'connectivity spaces'. Transit spaces are spaces of high and hard structuration and heteronomy. As Thrift (2004) puts it, they are 'movement spaces'. Transit spaces are characterized by directionality and linearity; places, meetings and interactions are just transitory situations of goal attainment. Mobility pioneers such as Achim R. experience the world as a transit space, as an environment that has to be controlled to manage the problems between periphery and centre.[10] It can be seen metaphorically as an airport with travellers passing through. Some try to reduce check-in time to a minimum and reach their destinations as quickly as possible. Although on the spot, they are already gone in mind and experience only the transitory situation.

By contrast, other people live in 'connectivity spaces', i.e., spaces of interaction, optionality and contact. At the 'airport' they stroll around and stay for a while. They connect with others and are able to change perspective. Travelling time is experience time and not 'dead time' between starting point and destination. In transit spaces we do not experience places, environments and surroundings. People moving through connectivity spaces live in intense relation to others, are less structured and more open to contingency. They want and need to experience what surrounds them. Mobility pioneers such as Wolfgang S. need to be continuously in contact with others. They use connectivity spaces as resources of creativity and power. Living a decentred life, they need to be able to reconfigure themselves in complex social, material and technological environments and networks.

Living in transit spaces and living in connectivity spaces are different modes of being in the world and are internally and externally differently structured. This suggests a direction for further investigation and mobility research. I think the distinction is important for the analysis of 'cosmopolitan mobilities' (Bonss/Kesselring/Vogl 2004) and of the internal structure of cosmopolitan places such as

[10] In a certain sense, this reminds one of Schivelbusch's 'panoramic gaze' (Schivelbusch 1977).

global transfer points (airports and major railway stations) and global cities (Kesselring/Urry 2005).

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