UNIVERSITÉ DE TOUS LES SAVOIRS

Movement in Hypermodern Societies

(Le mouvement dans les sociétés hypermodernes)

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The question of movement is intimately linked with that of change and it sits at the core of our questions on modernity.

I would therefore like to offer you a few definitions of movement, of mobility, and of modernity, drawn from the Littré and Petit Robert dictionaries, supplemented by a few personal additions.

MOVEMENT.

The action whereby a body or one of its parts passes from one place to another, from one position to another.

Term from the science of mechanics. Change whereby a body is successively present in different parts of space; state of a body whose distance relative to a fixed point changes continuously.

MOBILITY

The quality or condition of being mobile.

Ability to adopt different expressions. "This actor has great mobility in his physiognomy."

Ability to shift quickly from one mood to another. "What I adored about them, was the grace of their minds, the mobility of their imaginations, the easy turn of their ideas and their language."

Instability in laws, institutions, customs. "When legislation was in constant mobility..."

TRANSPORT

The action of transporting something or someone from one place to another. Transport of merchandise, of artillery, of money.

Fig. Violent emotional movement that takes us outside ourselves.

MODERN, adj.

1 — That which is of most recent times. (A modern author generally proves that the ancients are inferior to us, in two ways, by reason and by example).

Modern history, history since the Renaissance in the 16th century up to the present day.

2 - That which benefits from recent progress in technology, in science

3 — That which is designed, made according to contemporary rules (implicitly from the "Western" world).

4 - That which takes account of recent developments in a given field

5 - In sociology: combination of societal changes typical of Western societies since the Renaissance (reason, individualism, social differentiation, commercialization...), and changes which, according to some, are becoming more radical (supermodernity, hypermodernity) or being left behind (postmodernity).

Modern societies are therefore societies in movement, which is to say that people, goods, territories, ideas, ways of thinking, and representations, are on the move.

Of course, traditional societies also experience movement — how could life be imagined without it — but this movement is in general essentially cyclical. And of course, some religions have given direction to this movement, extracting it from a framework of pure repetition, and embedding it within an eschatological vision, imbued with both purpose and *telos*.

However, it may be said that modernity — probably connected in certain ways with the Judeo-Christian tradition — has given the historical arrow of time precedence over cyclical movement. Modern movement is therefore characterized by changes that do not ensure repetition, but instead take society in a certain direction. However, that does not mean that this movement lacks reproductive properties. It plays somewhat the same role for modern society as for the bicycle: movement is both a way to travel towards a destination and a way to maintain balance.

However, in the last 30 years or so, the debate on modernity — which itself is an old one — has adopted significantly new forms and taken root in very different environments, first philosophical and architectural, then the humanities and social sciences as a whole, artistic spheres, and even the world of politics: modernity was supposed to be in crisis and Western societies were entering a new era, the era of post-modernity, characterized in particular by a break in the connection that had essentially seemed to link the development of reason, science and technology, and progress, notably progress in the human condition. For the post-modernists, the modern movement has lost meaning and direction. For them, reason, which had been applied dramatically in the 20th century, is no longer synonymous with progress, and the grand narratives announcing better tomorrows have been largely discredited.

Personally, I do not share these post-modernist views, or more precisely the postmodern interpretation of these observations. I think that rather than speaking of a crisis of modernity, we need to speak of a crisis in a first modernity, or even a second modernity, precisely because these modernities were very substantially incomplete and because the process of modernization had only very partially run its course.

For example, the relationship between modern societies and science was still essentially pre-modern, because it was quasi-religious in nature. People believed in science and its intrinsic virtues. Today, a new relation to science is emerging, one that is more critical and less trusting, more controversial and less fetishistic, a fundamentally more scientific — and therefore more modern — attitude. So I belong to the current of thought that is critical of postmodern positions, positions that moreover have not insignificant social and political consequences insofar as they legitimize a degree of relativism and skepticism with respect to certain societal undertakings. Instead, I share the view that modern western societies are experiencing an accentuation or a radicalization of modernity, that they are entering what I call the hyper-modern phase, a phase characterized by an accentuation of the dynamics that together drive the modernization process: rationalization, individualization, differentiation, and commodification.

Rationalization refers both to the disenchantment of the world and the replacement of beliefs and religions by scientific approaches. It also refers to the replacement of traditions and routines by considered and reflexive practices (i.e. the back-and-forth between action and thought). And finally it refers to the mobilization of knowledge and the increasingly widespread use of technologies in all spheres of life.

Individualization refers to the continuation of a dynamic — dating back to the Renaissance — whereby individuals seek to increase their autonomy.

Differentiation is the process that produces individuals who are increasingly distinctive, less and less deducible from their membership of big social groups. It is a dynamic that interacts with individualization and with the division of labor, and which in a way results from the mobilization of science and technology to economic ends.

Finally, commodification is the process whereby the economic sphere expands to encompass every aspect of life and every social practice.

It seems difficult to deny that these dynamics are continuing, not to say strengthening. In consequence, our society is more than ever and in every respect in movement, towards more science, more individual autonomy, and at the same time more interdependence, more diversity, more commercial goods and services.

However, this modernization movement brings both potential and risks. Hypermodernity is precisely a modernity that is critical and cautious with respect to itself. Hypermodernity is the result of a crisis of faith in modernity, or rather a disenchantment with it, because we are well aware today that it can produce both best and worst.

Thus, movement or the movements of modernity have not stopped. On the contrary, they would even seem to be accelerating in many respects, but we now know that these movements are not taking our society in a single direction and are not linear.

Now the physical mobility of people, goods, and information plays a very important role in these movements, in these dynamics of rationalization and therefore of individual choice, autonomy, and control of personal spacetime, in differentiation, in complexification, and in the expansion of the economic sphere.

Very concretely, moving today has become indispensable for access to most goods, services, and social relations. In fact, movement governs access to housing, to work, to education, to culture, to health, but also in a way to love, to friendship, to politics… The time when homes, jobs, schools, leisure, family, friends, fellow activists, etc. could be found in close proximity to each other is long gone. Being able to move is therefore more than ever a freedom profoundly associated with the development of the modern world, a freedom already clearly stated by Hobbes and entrenched by the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen.

However, "moving" has also become an obligation which, in a sense, raises the counter-question of a right to immobility, in a society where movement has become a key condition of every exchange, and sometimes an instrument of power.

Moreover, travel is increasingly a problem in our society, not only because it is a source of environmental disturbance for people living close to roads and tracks, but because it consumes a great deal of energy and is a significant contributor to the greenhouse effect. Yes, we can try to organize cities better, to coordinate spatial relations more effectively in order to optimize travel requirements with respect to different constraints. But in a highly developed society, where the division of labor is becoming ever more marked, movement seems largely ineradicable and is taking on growing importance.

The real possibility of urban movement, which can be deemed one of the basic freedoms in democratic societies, thus becomes an even more essential priority that makes the right to transportation, already entrenched in France through different laws and notably an act of 1982, into a sort of generic right from which many other rights are derived.

So thinking about the relations between modernity and mobility requires us to focus our attention on this question of the right to transportation. However, this right might remain only a statement of principle if it were not defined as a fundamental right, a "right of".

We therefore need to look very specifically at the purposes and resources of today's urban mobilities in order to think about this right also as a political right — a "right to" — i.e. one that for our societies, whether individuals or public authorities, implies resources, obligations, but also limits.

I will therefore examine in turn the issue of the collective control of new urban territories, the issue of the control of personal space-times, and finally the new ways in which this hypermobile society is structured. This will enable me to resituate the question of the right to mobility within its societal context and to examine both supporting and opposing factors.

Mobilities and collective control of urban territories: hypermodern metropolitanization

As Pierre Veltz has shown, the modern economic model is clearly founded on a dynamic of increasing division of labor, which itself is founded on the capacity to move people, goods, and information. Without excessive economic determinism, it can also be stated that modern cities are the product of the division of labor and in their turn generate this division; cities thus exist by movement alone. They enhance the performance of societies, whether the rationales that drive those societies are rooted in power and defense, in religion, or in economics.

The collection of large populations in cities therefore implies that some of the individuals in a society, city dwellers, are no longer engaged in tasks of food production, so that food therefore has to be transported and stored for them. Historically, the food requirements of urban populations have therefore contributed to the development of the division of labor, of trade and, with them, to the invention and spread of money, accounting, and writing, which are methods of exchanging, transporting, and storing value and information.

The growth of cities was therefore driven not only by transportation technologies, but also by technologies for the storage of goods, information, and of course people. In addition, these different technologies form a system, as we can clearly see today in the development of delivery services: certain purchases that in the past required the purchaser to travel both to acquire information and to buy, have been replaced in part by telecommunications, but also require new methods for the transportation and storage of goods, information, and people.

In the 19th century, the development of industrial and urban capitalism demanded an unprecedented growth in these techniques which, among other things, revolutionized urban forms and the ways cities functioned. The transportation and storage of information, particularly with the telephone and rotary

presses, the transportation and storage of goods and people with electricity, trams, and elevators, the transportation and storage of food with the train, canning, the invention of production lines in slaughterhouses at the end of the 19th century, then refrigeration and the individual refrigerator, made it possible for cities to function at a new scale and contributed to the production of new urban forms.

Today, the dynamic of metropolitanization, which is intimately linked with the dynamic of globalization, is driving the quest for and implementation of new ways of transporting and storing goods, information, and people.

Metropolitanization can be defined simply as the concentration of human, cultural, and material riches in and around the biggest cities. In fact, it is a continuation of the urbanization process in societies where almost the whole population already lives in cities. As they grow, metropolises absorb suburbs, towns, villages, and rural areas from ever more distant zones, and incorporate them into their day-to-day operation. The result is the formation of new types of urban areas, diffuse, discontinuous, heterogeneous, and multipolar, which I have named "metapolises" to express the idea that they are a new form of city, different from anything that came before.

This dynamic of globalization-metropolitanization notably requires the development of new techniques for transporting, storing, and communicating information. The very rapid progress in this domain, in particular through digital technology, but also through a whole series of new techniques ranging from aerospace to nanotechnology, are in turn contributing to steer economic and urban development towards new forms.

The spectacular drop in the cost of transmitting, storing, and processing information has resulted in these technologies being incorporated into a very wide range of activities.

Elsewhere too, however, transportation technologies as a whole have advanced considerably, including the technologies of intra-urban travel. In certain cases, therefore, higher individual urban travel speeds can effectively substitute for density as a way to maximize interaction potential, thereby allowing less intensive urbanization. Fast mass transit systems, for their part, are in many cases producing new logistical models, similar to the "hubs and spokes" of air transportation. The result is that these hubs are becoming the quickest way to access any point in the city in roughly equivalent times. So districts located at the other side of the city become no further away than adjacent neighborhoods. This, as Pierre Veltz has shown, has altered the whole system of geographical proximity, not to say urban centralities.

One of the major effects, which is only apparently paradoxical, is that the spread of these new technologies, far from erasing the effect of physical distances or local specificities, instead increases the importance of physical accessibility and the specificity of place. Indeed, telecom networks have become so essential everywhere and for everything, that they have spread in different forms, with the

result that they are gradually ceasing to influence the location of activities, any more than water, electricity, or sewer networks ultimately did. On the other hand, everything that cannot be communicated remotely or that is hard to transport, plays a greater role, both economically and socially. Just as bad money drives out good, domains in which technological progress is slow have a big impact. This has a number of effects on urban dynamics and forms.

First, there is a reinforcement of the processes of spatial polarization and spatial functional differentiation, because of the relatively increasing importance and cost of proximity. All activities tend to form "zones" or "centers", be it business, shopping, leisure, culture, research. At the lower level of polarization, we also see the formation of "clusters", "districts", etc.

Second, both people and businesses choose locations that maximize physical access to one or more primary resources. For many urbanites, therefore the priority is living space, a detached dwelling, and proximity to natural areas. In fact, the car allows them both to live close to the countryside, and to have easy access to the city and the amenities they require there. Other households, either childless or members of the cognitive elites, go the opposite way, preferring the resources afforded by downtown areas. Similarly, some companies look for low-cost land on the outskirts of cities, with easy access for car owning employees, whereas other economic sectors seek more central locations, near high-skill services and jobs, and in places where the face-to-face meetings they require are more convenient.

The result of this twofold dynamic is an expansion of urban areas, together with increasing spatial differentiation, if not polarization. Urban sprawl thus goes hand-in-hand with the "gentrification" of the old downtown areas in many European and North American cities, where wealthier populations move into inner-city neighborhoods. Similarly, suburban industrial and business parks go hand-in-hand with the hypertrophy of key urban centers and with the dynamism of downtown areas. Finally, out-of-town shopping malls form a system with the specialization and "touristification" of stores in old downtown neighborhoods.

These changes clearly show, therefore, that the modernization process continues to shape cities. In recent years, there has been a belief in some quarters that modern urbanism was in crisis, in particular with the problems of the big social housing projects, the challenge to intra-urban freeway infrastructures, the renaissance of old neighborhoods, a certain taste for post-modern architecture, etc. In fact, when we look more closely, we observe that modernity in urban design is thriving as never before, founded once again on increased mobility and differentiation. This is because it was not in fact the principle of modernism that was being challenged, but the forms that it had taken during what might be described as the Fordist-Corbusian period. The aim then was to make cities more "efficient" by simplifying them, by implementing time and motion principles for urban functions, by trying to mass-produce houses, and by applying Fordist principles to housing, using the welfare state to build all sorts of amenities and public services directly.

Today, the models of efficiency have changed: the watchwords are flexibility, responsiveness, managing complexity and uncertainty. However, the fundamental issues are still the same and are still just as modern. Actual urban design today, in other words how cities are conceived and built, is not moving towards post-modernism, despite a few examples of spontaneism and a few decorative flourishes, but is demonstrating a renewed commitment to knowledge and control, in a modernity that is radicalized, exacerbated, in hypermodernity.

Mobilities as the outcome and tools of the control of personal spacetimes

A particularly characteristic feature of the modernization process is the dynamic of individualization. In contemporary society, individuals want increasing autonomy and control over the spacetimes of their day-to-day lives, whether to develop the private sphere or their social interactions. "Free-together" — to cite the title of a book by François de Singly on the family —seems to be the watchword of the contemporary individual today. The application of this slogan is embodied in today's societies by the search for every resource that enables individuals to choose the objects, places, partners, moments, and contexts of their activities. "What I want, where I want, when I want, how I want, and with whom I want" is the increasingly pressing demand and, as Alain Bourdin has clearly shown in his recent writings, mobility is one of the major tools for maximizing this capacity to choose.

To take control of their spacetimes, individuals therefore need to be able to dis-place and re-place themselves, and also to desynchronize and re-synchronize. The technologies for the transportation and storage of goods, of information, and of people, are among the means employed for this. Ready meals and the microwave, email and messaging apps, the individualization and portability of many devices that were formally shared and fixed (such as the telephone) are all resources that enable people to choose the where and when of their activities, whether solitary, with other individuals, or in company.

The result of this development is an ever greater variety and diversity in the movements of populations, goods, and information, and increasingly in multiple directions and at any time of day or night. This mobility is generated by the process of individualization and stimulates it in return. The development of cities and urban transit illustrates this with particular clarity.

In the past, city life was largely synchronized by factory sirens, church bells and school bells, the cooking of meals, train or bus timetables, even by the TV programs broadcast by public channels. Broadly speaking, people travelled every day at the same time, on the same routes, and in the same way.

Today, the timing of activities is increasingly variable, personal adaptations increasingly possible, and mobility more irregular, as urbanites travel at different times, on shifting routes, using a range of transportation modes. The instruments of travel and desynchronization that enable them to do this are

increasingly individual and efficient. In fact, the growth in urban mobility today arises primarily from peripheral and tangential trips, outside peak times. This means in particular that the traditional mass transit solutions, which were practical when journeys were largely synchronous and concentrated on particular routes, are often obsolete outside central or very dense areas, where subways, tram systems, and buses remain very efficient.

Contemporary mobilities therefore seem simultaneously to be the result of and a contributing factor in the individualization and diversification of social practices. They actively increase the complexity of society, by making it possible — not to say compulsory — for many activities and schedules to be personalized. Just as industry and big retailers now face growing demand for personalization, for the bespoke, and for the one-to-one, urban transportation systems are expected to respond to the demand for "door-to-door" services at any time of the day or night.

Industrial modernity made urban mobility possible for the majority, through the mass production of cars or transit systems. Contemporary hypermodernity demands even greater mobility, but a mobility that is shifting and variable. The complexity that generates and arises from this mobility requires substantially new approaches. It is no longer possible to design an infrastructure or a transit line simply as a means to get from A to B. Not only do transportation systems need to be designed in networks, but these networks must be built as multimodal and intermodal structures. People need to be able to access any point in the city, at any time, in as many different ways as possible, because their trips form part of schedules that are increasingly multiple and shifting.

In fact, these conditions and needs are already having a significant impact on public transportation policy. The heavy transit infrastructures like subways and tramways, as well as lighter infrastructures such as designated bus lanes, need to interlink with the different personal transportation systems (cars and bicycles), pedestrian facilities (including travellators, escalators, elevators), intermediate transportation systems like taxis, shuttles, shared cars, parking systems (car parks and valet parking), etc. It is also very likely that in the coming years, efficient urban transportation will require integrated management of these different modes and mobility hubs that will be capable both of providing real-time multimodal information on the possibilities, timetables, and duration of all the travel modes and their combinations, and of managing some of these different flows.

The future of urban mobility therefore lies more in the application of the knowledge and information economy to the design and management of ever-growing complexity, than in an unlikely return to local neighborhood systems, to slower travel, to a simplification of traffic flows and road systems. Hypermodernity in this regard is probably characterized by the quest to connect scales, speeds, and timeframes.

The challenge that these connections present prompts us to consider how the hypermodern society is structured.

Hypermobility and the hypertext society

It is increasingly recognized, following on in particular from Simmel's analyses on the multiplicity of social circles, that individuals belong to a variety of social milieus. We might say that individuals are multi-belonging. In very concrete terms, therefore, whereas in the past neighbors were also colleagues, relations, and friends (or enemies), today individuals increasingly frequent a variety of physical and human milieus. They move, physically and virtually, in different geographical and social territories. Each person seeks to connect these different territories in their own way, and to configure their different times, spaces, activities, and relations in specific ways. Each individual is thus simultaneously a "member" of distinct social fields — work, family, neighbors, activism, friendship, etc. Metaphorically, these fields may be seen as forming a sort of social hypertext.

A hypertext is a set of texts linked by common words — nodes — which make "links" between the texts. It is a structure with several dimensions: each text has its own structure, its own syntax, grammar, semantics, but these texts also form a multiplicity of shared structures, defined by different words present in several of them, which create links between them. When these texts are digitized and combined in a shared database, the reader can "click" on the word in one text, and access the same word in a series of other texts. In a hypertext, therefore, each word belongs simultaneously to several texts; in each of them, it helps to generate different meanings by interacting with other words in the text, but through syntaxes that may vary from one text to another; and hyper-textual productions differ according to which words are chosen.

Metaphorically individuals may be said to be simultaneously or successively present in distinct social fields, in the same way as words are in the different documents in a hypertext. In their professional social field, people interact with colleagues by means of a professional "syntax"; in the family sphere, interaction with relatives employs a family "syntax"; in another field, they will interact with partners through a sports-related "syntax" etc. As "individuals-words", they are links between these "texts-fields". They move from one field to another either physically or through remote location. When an employee phones home from the workplace, he or she in a way switches from one "text" to another, or even from one behavior or personality to another.

The various social fields are different in nature. People may participate in them voluntarily or by obligation, lastingly or briefly. Interactions may be economic, cultural, emotional, reciprocal, hierarchical, normalized, face-to-face, written, spoken, remote, etc. Dominant values, and even ethical principles, are increasingly distinct: performance, profit, love, friendship, solidarity, etc. The fields vary in scale (from the "local" to the "global") and also in openness. The networks that structure these fields may take the form of stars, meshes, or hierarchies. And people practice code switching, juggling with different social and cultural codes in order to move from one field to another. This requires specific skills and necessarily produces different individual and social inequalities. The fact is that not

everyone has the same capacity to construct n-dimensional social spaces, or to move easily from one social field to another. For some people, the network layers are completely fused: their economic, family, local, and religious fields very large overlap. Thus individuals who are excluded from the labor market generally belong to few social spheres: they usually live in big social housing projects, make their living in the local "informal" economy, and only interact with people from their own neighborhood.

The possibility of moving within a series of fields creates opportunities that are therefore not equally open to all. Physical and virtual mobility is thus becoming an increasingly important factor in education and in the emergence of individual and social inequalities. As for the multiple personality, which seems to be required by the social hypertext, it may sometimes takes pathological forms that raise questions about individuals' real capacity to manage multiple selves. Nonetheless, what we are seeing today is the development of the type of individual already sketched by Simmel, people able to behave in different ways in the different social fields through which they move.

We can therefore say that the hypermodern individual is no longer located in a single temporality and spatiality, but in an n-dimensional spacetime, and therefore navigates constantly within multiple times and places. Faced with the growing variety and differentiation of these spacetimes, individuals — as we have seen — employ the tools they need to move as quickly and easily as possible from one field to another, attempting to achieve in one form or another the ubiquity and the simultaneity which, in a sense, bring a pseudo-unity to an increasingly fragmented self.

This n-dimensional mobility characteristic of hypermodernity takes us back to the question of the right to mobility that I raised in the introduction.

The right to mobility

To be able to move, both physically and virtually, in a variety of social spaces that differ in their codes, systems, and values, implies that individuals have the right to move and possess the resources and skills to do so.

In our societies, the basic right — the "right of" — urban movement is largely a reality. Nonetheless, the development of certain public spaces in cities raises questions about the future of this right.

In fact, urban residents increasingly wish to limit access to their neighborhoods for outsiders. The reasons for this are diverse, but relate to security, tranquillity, and avoidance of pollution. This exclusion generally begins with physical obstacles of all kinds, such as street narrowing, "sleeping policemen", "speed bumps", chicanes, and bollards, parking restrictions or prohibitive charges for

nonresidents, with traceries of one-way streets, and sometimes the erection of barriers or road studs and the hiring of guards.

Some countries are also seeing a proliferation of "gated communities", urban spaces that are private, surrounded by walls, and characterized by particular internal arrangements. In other words, previously public urban spaces, i.e. areas that were open to all, are being converted to private communities, restricting not only access to the neighborhoods concerned, but travel and urban traffic through them.

This development is all the more problematic in that residents often attempt to extend such traffic restrictions to major road arteries, giving priority to residential functions over both productive activities and traffic flows. Since local authorities in democratic countries are elected by residents, and helped by policies of decentralization, the impact of these residential priorities is increasing and sometimes significantly restricts urban mobilities.

In fact, the differentiation in the urban right of movement between local residents and nonresidents presents a serious threat to the right to mobility as well as to urban dynamics. Cities are not simply an accumulation of villages, and the very value of each of a city's neighborhoods arises from the potential for interactions that it offers. This does not mean that the desire of residents for tranquility and security should be ignored, but that the methods employed should comply with basic principles of law and fairness, and not undermine the overall performances of the ci employ ty.

The question of the "right to", i.e. the means employed by public authorities to guarantee not only the freedom to move, but also the real possibilities of movement, is also very complex.

In developed countries, and even more so in developing countries, many categories of population in fact have no real possibility of moving. It may be because they suffer from a range of handicaps, whether social, cultural, economic, psychological, or physical; or because they have no private means of transport; or because there is no transit service where they are or where they want to go. They therefore have the right to expect society to provide them with the means of genuinely enjoying mobility. This of course leads into debates on the different ways in which society can make this mobility available to all, and therefore on the notions of a public and universal service.

These questions are all the more pressing in that the expansion of the geographical range of day-to-day life, and the fact that cities increasingly encompass very large areas in which the urban fabric is often loose, render collective solutions or the old individual palliative practices completely inadequate.

Walking, cycling, and buses are still effective solutions in certain cases, but nowadays city dwellers who depend exclusively on these methods have access to only part of the potential of the modern city.

The development of urban tolls of all kinds, and particularly fees charged to motorists in certain parts of cities (for example in the center of London), raises a problem of discrimination and fairness with

regard to this right to mobility. The dissuasive cost of this toll in fact makes life harder for the poorest populations — who are obliged to use use transit systems — and even constitutes a real handicap at certain times when transit modes are congested or conversely infrequent. At the same time, the rich enjoy better travel conditions, enabling them to take advantage of all the benefits of downtown living. This so-called "congestion charge", if not adjusted two social conditions, might therefore exacerbate the social and functional fragmentation of big cities.

The issue of the right to movement, especially in cities, has thus taken on a new dimension, both quantitatively and qualitatively. In itself, this is not a new issue. It has even been the target of social movements at different times, for example in France in the early 1970s when the struggles of transit users led to the creation of a special tax to finance mass transit facilities, and to the invention of the "carte orange" transit card. However, the right to transportation is now becoming a central aspect of the social issue in hypermodern societies, and a particularly acute factor for social integration and the right to work, as Éric Le Breton will show in one of the upcoming lectures in this series.

However, while mobility is increasingly central to society, it is also necessarily increasingly under threat. I will tackle this briefly from two different perspectives, in terms of energy issues and in terms of democracy.

Energy issues and the emergence of an environmental hypermodernity

On the one hand, it is clear that travel consumes a great deal of energy and contributes significantly to the greenhouse effect. In fact, the freedom to travel, and a long period of cheap energy, encouraged a model of development that might be described as extensive, insofar as it made no effort either to reduce the need for movement, or to use the space as efficiently as possible. On the other hand, the right to mobility is also contested as a thinly veiled way of imposing generalized mobility, part both of an economic scheme that seeks to promote universal competition between people, goods, and capital, and of systems of power and control. These arguments need to be taken seriously and raise two questions: first, should and will the risks of energy shortage and climate change prompt our societies to limit urban mobilities? Second, how can one simultaneously promote a right to movement and at the same time guarantee another right to immobility, for example in the form employed both by government authorities and by social movements of the "right to live and work in the country", of "local rehousing", etc. Obviously, our societies do not have the resources to provide all these rights without limitation, and ultimately choices need to be made. On what bases can they be made?

With regard to the first — environmental — problem, it would seem that the major question in the developed countries is the control of so-called "urban sprawl". It will probably be difficult in democratic societies to radically restrict the dynamic of urban spatial expansion and the development

of the suburban detached house. There is strong demand for these in all countries, and politicians will find it hard to go against the wishes of large numbers of voters. Moreover, improvements in the quality of dense intra-urban real estate operations will have some effect, but will only retain within the city a small proportion of households wishing to move into the suburbs and outskirts. Tax and price disincentives could be effective to a certain extent, but they will have to be applied carefully to avoid exacerbating social inequalities. Indeed, it needs to be borne in mind that today, particularly in France, many of the those who live in the centers of big cities belong to the upper middle classes, whereas the peripheral zones tend to be where the more modest social categories live and spend their time. This means that the first victims of penalties imposed on life in the suburbs and outskirts would be the poorer populations, who are heavily dependent on mobility in general, on the car in particular, and on speed. It is worth noting, incidentally, that the slowness of walking and of buses is becoming a privilege of the yuppie class, who live, work, shop, and enjoy their leisure in downtown zones.

It is therefore likely that the spaces of everyday life will continue to grow, along with mobilities, but that in return our societies will increasingly invest massively in transportation and urban planning techniques that make this peripheral urbanization as energy-efficient as possible. This will be possible in particular because environmental concerns have acquired sufficient legitimacy for future governments to be able to take ever more rigorous measures on energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions. This will not be done in opposition to auto manufacturers, but rather in cooperation with them, because equipment that saves energy and limits particle and gas emissions will become compulsory, producing a level playing field for producers. I have the feeling that this change is already well underway, and that the environment is increasingly seen as a source of renewal both for consumer goods and for production systems. The new laws and regulations will have the effect of making many tools of production and consumption obsolete, and thereby eliminating economic players that fail to invest in the new, environmentally compliant technologies. So hypermodernity, in particular from an economic perspective, will probably result not in an opposition between mobility and the environment, but rather in mutual reinforcement. We are not at the dawn of a post-modernity that will weaken the production mode, but of an extension of the sphere of production precisely as a result of environmental values.

Nonetheless, this commodification will not decide values for the three unknowns in the equation that constitutes what we now call sustainable development, i.e. the attempt to find solutions that are economically efficient, sociably equitable, and environmentally ethical. But it is likely that the ever-growing possibility of finding economically viable solutions to the ethical problems of protecting the environment and future generations, will forcefully raise the question of the cost to justice and social equity once again.

As for the second issue, the relations between the right to mobility and the right to immobility, in a way it raises the question of democracy and how to choose between rights which, in order to become a reality, require the allocation of specific resources that are in part mutually exclusive.

It is clear that movement undermines some of the forms of local democracy. The fact is that a city resident may live in one place, work in another a long way off, spend leisure time in a third, pass through many others, etc., but votes where he or she sleeps. A metropolitan scale democratic authority could provide at least a partial solution. But it must be recognized that most countries have not succeeded in establishing such authorities and that urban planning and transportation in particular are still very much dependent on very local interest programs. Hypermodernity undoubtedly requires more profound innovations, which are capable of accommodating the urban hyperspace that is now emerging. So perhaps we will one day possess a sheaf of voting rights that we can use in the different places where we live and travel. Perhaps too we will invent new forms of governance, which combine different types of democratic expression and representation. However, there is no doubt that hypermodern mobility will find it hard to get movement from the institutions…