"On the move" without moving: The 20th Century Culture of "Anytime, Anywhere"

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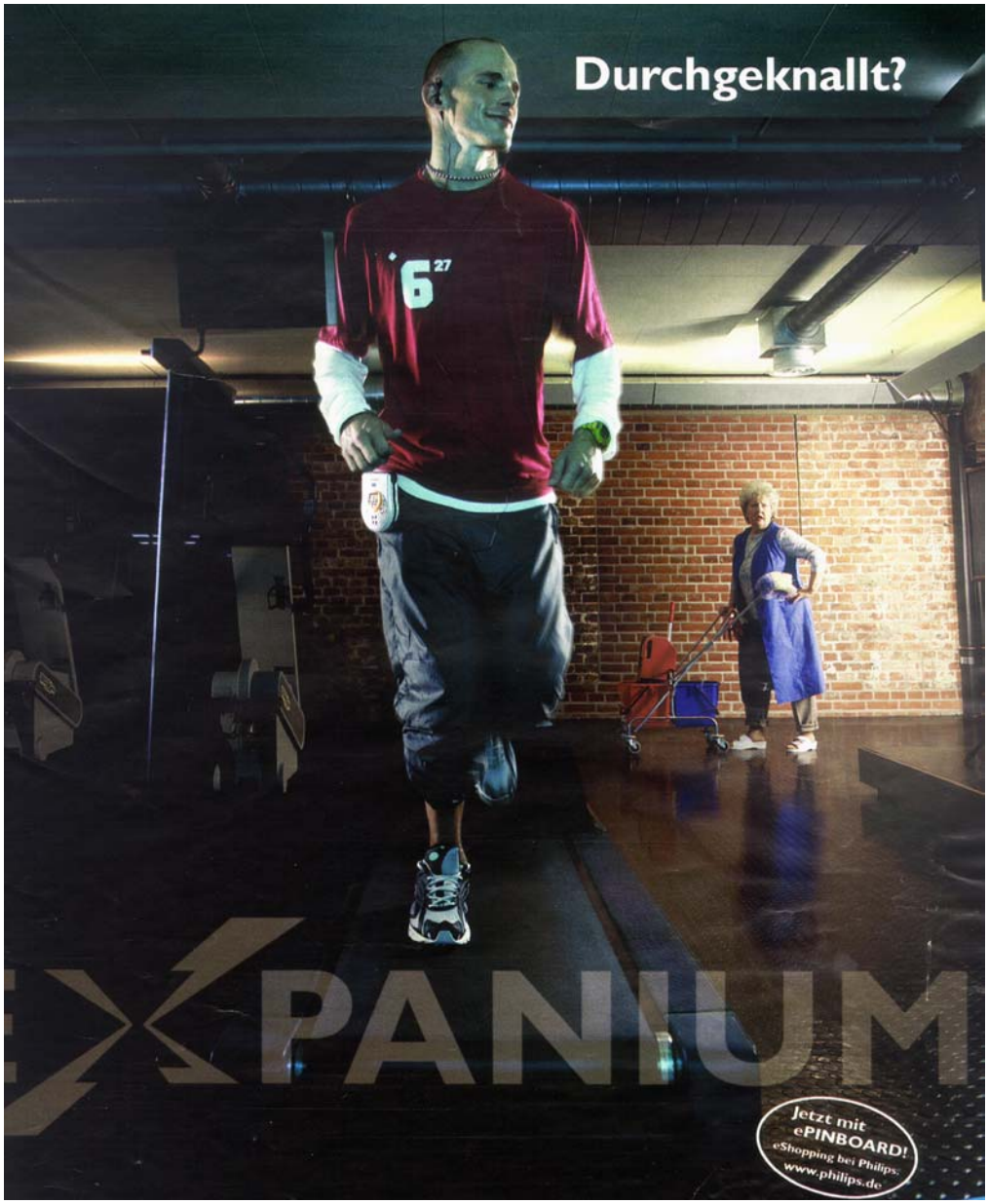

"Mobility means freedom. We are in need of mobility for the gratification of most of our needs. In modernity, mobility is the most characteristic expression of the pursuit of happiness". This statement was to be found in one of the "theme parks" of the EXPO 2000, which was entirely devoted to mobility.[1] As this quotation shows, mobility is a highly valued aspect of modernity. Moreover, it seems to imply more than mere physical movement. But if so, what does "mobility" mean? And how does the stated pursuit of happiness, which apparently makes us moving around, relate to phenomena of immobility like the daily traffic congestion on urban streets, or even the urge to find a stable place in society, family or everyday life?

Mobility has always been a diverse term, carrying connotations of freedom, success and often also individuality. In the past, the so-called vertical mobility referred to a person's rise and fall in social rank, while horizontal mobility referred to the spatial dimension. In the latter, migration was distinguished from residential mobility, everyday mobility, and tourism. In traffic studies as well as in the history of technology, mobility has usually been equated with the measurable physico-geographic movements of traffic and transport. Accordingly, the terms "traffic" or even "auto mobility" have often been used synonymously with the term "mobility". This paper will challenge such a restrictive notion of "mobility", and argue that mobility should not be equated with the potential result of physical motion. At the same time, it will also put into question those euphemistic assertions of the last decades in which mobility, seen as one of the defining conditions of modernity, one-sidedly stands for freedom and happiness.

Sociologists have recently begun to conceptualize mobility in new ways to react to the growing necessity of moving articles, to the extended understanding of "mobility", and to its increased importance in present societies. I shall combine these conceptions with thoughts on mobility resulting from the historical development of mobile consumption technologies such as portable radios and cell phones during the last five to six decades in West Germany.

Portable electronics and mobility are interrelated in several ways: Firstly, as car phones or musical travel companions, portable electronics originate in the co-evolution of transport technology and communication technology, both of which enable the bridging of space and time. Secondly, because of their portability, they can be used anywhere, be it on the bus, at work, at home, on vacation or while in the countryside. Thirdly, they add yet another dimension to the alleged "illocality", since they enable their users to get connected with a distant world at any time.

Ultimately, in the design of hand-tailored portables, they materialize the potentiality of being mobile without necessarily being on the move. At first, the development of portables originated from the needs of traffic and tourism, and they were implemented in the respective mobile spaces such as trains, cars, or caravans. However, while they were once used mainly as technical "travel companions" when on the move, portable electronics have increasingly become a part of our daily and domestic, homebound routines. During the time of diffusion, the idea of using a certain portable while moving around physically, has been supplanted by the idea of an "anytime, anywhere" consumption. This development was foreshadowed by the portables of the 50s and 60s, and has manifested itself overtly during the last two to three decades. This new kind of mobility culture includes both the possibility of moving around at liberty and the further undermining of previous time and space restrictions, while not necessarily revealing much about the actual physical movement going on behind the scenes.

[1] Cited according to: Strassmann, Burkhard: Oooh und Aaah im Themenpark. In: Bewegte Welt. Mobilität ohne Grenzen oder Leben im Stau? Konflikt, Konzepte, Visionen (Zeit-Punkte. Das Magazin zu Themen der Zeit, No. 3, 2000), pp. 54f, here p. 55.

The first paragraph of this paper will focus on the extension of meaning in the semantic field of "mobility" in general and introduce its new principal metaphor - the so-called "urban nomad". The second paragraph will be devoted to the origin of portables in traffic technologies and will show how they were gradually separated from the mobile space of travel, tourism and transport while taking over the symbolic power of the traffic technologies as icons of mobility and freedom. The third paragraph will discuss the paradoxical relation of mobility and immobility, of movement and congestion – a paradox Paul Virilio called the "racing standstill".[2] The conclusion will summarize my thoughts on the arising new culture of mobility as an "Anytime, Anywhere" consumer culture.

1. Mobility and its extended meaning

As a historical conception, mobility has changed a great deal - even if only the last five decades are focussed on.[3] A short look into dictionaries of different epochs suffices to show the change in the semantics of the term. In 1955, the German *Brockhaus* defines mobility in a few lines, mainly referring to residential mobility. Apart from this term, the noun of military "mobilization" is being explained in greater length, while the adjective "mobile" is defined by the adjective "agile". In the edition of 1998, the headword of "mobility" is being explained on more than two pages. "Mobility" is acknowledged as a basic anthropological experience. Besides, the 1998 edition states that "mobility" can not only be used to characterize a person – but one can also talk of a "mobile society".

Colloquially, „being mobile" means both bodily and mental health and flexibility. It denotes the openness, but also the readiness of an individual for innovation both in leisure and at work. Thus, in the colloquial understanding, mobility does not mean to be „on the move" but to "be flexible" and "readily available". In this way, the meaning of „being mobile" approaches the semantics of the Latin expression - "mobilis" means not only "agile", but also "pliable," and "mobilitas" means "speed" as well as "agility" and "unsteadiness".

In the last two decades, this extended meaning of mobility has turned into a new paradigm of everyday life in public discourse. In a recent book on the job world, the far-reaching demands on people are described as follows: "The new culture of mobility effects us far beyond the spheres of business and labour – it has a deep impact on society and on private life and whirls around structures and values which have been fixed so far". Subsequently, mobility and being mobile are defined as follows: "(...) to be mentally, socially and emotionally mobile – to behave in a way which at once expresses tolerance, openness, empathy and courage, to search for new experiences and to look for new mental horizons."[4] One aspect of such proclamations is the fact that they hardly mention physical movement any more. Rather, "mobile" and "mobility" serve as buzzwords to proclaim the happy future world of techno-nomads who take movement for granted.

People have been fascinated by "mobility" also in the decades around 1900, when mass transport evolved in and near the sprawling cities. Terms like "velocity", "traffic", and "mass" as well as "ceaseless" und "restless" developed to the headwords of a rising modern consumer

[2] Cf.: Virilio, Paul: Rasender Stillstand. Essay. Frankfurt a. M. 1997.
[3] Cf. for a schematic overview from the 18th century onwards: Urry, John: Sociology beyond Societies. Mobilities for the twenty-first century. London, New York 2000; Bonß, Wolfgang; Kesselring, Sven: Mobilität am Übergang von der Ersten zur Zweiten Moderne. In: Beck, Ulrich; Bonß, Wolfgang (Eds): Die Modernisierung der Moderne. Frankfurt a. M., pp. 177-190.
[4] Quoted from: Englisch, Gundula: Das Ende der Sesshaftigkeit. In: Grosz, Andreas; Witt, Jochen (Eds): Living at Work. München, Wien 2004, pp. 186-191, here p. 190.

society.[5] The railway and diverse urban transportation systems were the icons of technological progress [6]. Urban strollers and the users of mass transportation systems were the corresponding lead figures.

The corresponding lead figure of today's situation is a visionary metaphor, namely the "urban" or the "digital nomad". It was inspired by the digitalization of the last decades, in particular by the rampant spread of the cell phone towards the end of the 90s. "E-topians" like e.g. Tsugio Makimoto and David Manners interpret the mobile phone as the first tool of the "digital nomad". They claim that the "digital nomad" would introduce the most radical change in life since 10.000 years, namely a new nomadic age.[7] The conception of the "digital nomad" denotes a person who travels the globe virtually via his or her wireless computing tools. The conception of the "urban nomad", on the other hand, defines someone who really moves from metropolis to metropolis, provided with portable equipment that s/he can use ubiquitously. This figure is portrayed in the following description, which oscillates between reality, fiction and irony: "What was the habit to the monk (…), is the equipment to the "urban nomad". This equipment includes laptop, "discman", and cell phone as mobile devices used for communication, diversion, work and play, and shoulder belt, backpack or cargo-pants, which are fitted up with innumerable pockets serving as a mobile equipment room, maybe a jacket which can be transformed into a seat or a tent, a watch which contains a TV and a global positioning system, a pocket ventilator and pocket heating as a mobile air-conditioning system, a credit card and a pocket knife which not only cuts but has integrated functions of personal hygiene, labour, hobby and of mere survival." [8] The laptop and cell phone mentioned have already developed into common phenomena; they only appear strange because they are put into a line with fictitious devices like pocket air-conditioning systems. However, in such visions, it is usually forgotten that the traditional nomads of the past moved from place to place in a different way, i.e. in social groups. In contrast, it is obvious that the contemporary "urban nomad" is an individualistic, well-off business worker, who earns enough money to be able to pay e.g. hotels, expensive transportation and portable electronics, which form the necessary stable sub-structure needed for such a lifestyle. Besides, more stationary dimensions of life, e.g. family life, are not debated.

Nevertheless, the specimen of the techno-nomad is not only a mirage of the future, but also a powerful *Leitbild* of present consumer society and its technological development. Industry is driven by a stark belief in the market value of wireless technology, and designers and architects have called for a so-called "mobi-tecture". Examples of such a mobile material world are transportable houses, furniture on wheels, or jackets that can be turned into tents, thereby continuing the tradition of the habitation capsules which were designed at the climax of the space age in the 1970s.[9]

One should, however, mention that - contrary to the suggestive power of the nomad metaphor - people still value their homes. The given residential mobility at least does not show any sign of a new nomadic era. At the end of the 20th century, almost half of the population of

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[5] Cf. on this: Radkau, Joachim: Das Zeitalter der Nervosität. Deutschland zwischen Bismarck und Hitler. München 2000; Borscheid, Peter: Das Tempo-Virus. Eine Kulturgeschichte der Beschleunigung. Frankfurt a. M. 2004.

[6] For example, Werner Sombart defined the bus and the electrical urban transportation systems as symbols of the modern metropolis, but he also mentions e.g. telegraphy. Cf. on Sombart as well as on further canonical sociologists and their perception of „mobility": Rammler, Stephan: Mobilität in der Moderne. Geschichte und Theorie der Verkehrssoziologie. Berlin 2001.

[7] The term "E-topians" refers to W. Mitchell`s "E-topia", cf.: Mitchell, William J.: E-topia. Urban Life, Jim, But Not as We Know It. Cambridge, M.A., 1999. On the digital nomad cf..: Makimoto, Tsugio; Manners, David: Digital Nomad. Chichester 1997. More generally on the metaphor of the nomad cf.: Urry, 2000, p. 28f.

[8] Cf.: Schwartz-Clauss, Mathias: Das bewegte Wohnen der Moderne. In: Schwartz-Clauss, Mathias; Vegesack, Alexander von (Eds): Living in Motion. Design und Architektur für flexibles Wohnen. 2002, pp. 79-131, here p. 130.

[9] Cf. on the habitation capsules: Topham, Sean: Where`s my space age? The rise and fall of futuristic design. 2003. On mobi-tecture: Schwartz-Clauss et al.

Germany have settled near their place of birth. Nearly half (48%) of the group aged 40 to 54 lived at the same place as their parents, and only 17% of that group lived more than a two hours' journey away from that place.[10] However, the quality of daily "micro-mobility" has changed dramatically. Commuting between place of residence and place of work has become normal since the 60s.[11] At the end of the century, the average German was on the move for roughly one hour per day, whether for shopping, leisure or owing to the job. With 74 minutes, the average man took the lead to the average woman who was on the move for 64 minutes.[12]

To grasp the complex phenomenon called "mobility", which I have briefly sketched here, sociologists are developing new ways of thinking about such dynamic societies.[13] Terms like "(socio)spheres", "scapes" or "fluids" relate to mobile identities and fluid structures. In the face of a situation, in which not only people move, but also pictures, objects, ideas, information or even our garbage, John Urry in particular called for a re-framing of the sociological way of describing society: a sociology of the new century would have to focus on "mobilities rather than societies", since, with their new life-defining spatio-temporal conditions, global networks and mobile processes would transform the very nature of social life.[14] Since they undermine former basic principles of the social order such as the distinction between public and private, John Urry and Mimi Sheller even postulate that this distinction should be dispensed with.[15] Suggested differentiations concerning mobility are the following: The term "motility", used by Ulrich Beck and others, reacts to the paradoxes inherent in physical mobility, e.g. traffic congestion, delay and waiting periods: phenomena which limit the freedom of mobility of the individual. "Motility" denotes the flexibility of people, goods or information in the sense of their potential to move in social and geographical space. The "virtual mobility" of the Internet or E-Commerce bridges space and time while sitting in the living room.

To point to the extension of the concept of mobility both in the sense of any potential to move and in the sense of any crossing of time-space-restrictions without moving oneself, this paper suggests the notion of the "mobilization" of human and technical resources. Although mobility is predominantly evaluated as a positive phenomenon in current discourse, the term hints, with its militaristic background, to the totality of a culture which insists on "anytime and anywhere". The marketing of and popular discourse about the latest wireless technology can serve as an example to illustrate this claim. Lately, the German news magazine *Spiegel* described the functions of some third generation cell phones with the phrase "(t)he whole world in one hand".[16] The article suggests that, via the mobile Internet connection, the whole world is at the disposal of the cell phone user. It even talks of a "great mobilization" due to the wide diffusion of mobile telephony.

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[10] Source: Alters-Survey, cf.: Kohli, Martin; Künemund, Harald; Motel, Andreas; Szydlik, Marc: Generationenbeziehungen. In: Kohli, Martin; Künemund, Harald (Ed.): Die zweite Lebenshälfte. Gesellschaftliche Lage und Partizipation im Spiegel des Alters-Survey. Opladen, pp. 176-211, here p. 186, quoted from: Schneider, Norbert F.; Hartmann, Kerstin; Limmer, Ruth: Berufsmobilität und Lebensform. Bamberg 2001, p. 18.

[11] Cf.: Ott, Erich; Gerlinger, Thomas: Die Pendler-Gesellschaft. Zur Problematik der fortschreitenden Trennung von Wohn- und Arbeitsort. Köln 1992, p. 79. According to the authors, in 1950 14,5 % of the working population of Germany had to commute outside their municipality, in 1961, it was 24,1 %, 1970 28,1 % and 1987 36,8 %.

[12] Cf.: Küster, Christine: Die Zeitverwendung für Mobilität im Alltag. In: Flade, A.; Limbourg, M. (Eds): Frauen und Männer in der mobilen Gesellschaft. Opladen 1999, pp. 185-206, here p. 191-193.

[13] Cf. as overview: Mobility and the Cosmopolitan Perspective. A Workshop at the Munich Reflexive Modernization Research Centre (SFB 536), Munich, Jan. 29.-30, 2004, http://www.cosmobilities.net/Dokumente/dokumente.html.

[14] Cf. Urry, 2000, in particular p. 210 and 188.

[15] Cf.: Sheller, Mimi; Urry, John: Mobile Transformations of "Public" and "Private". In: Theory, Culture and Society, 2003, vol. 20, 3, pp. 107-125.

[16] Cf. Spiegel, No. 11, March 11, 2002, p100ff, here p. 100.

2. Portables as material manifestations of a changing mobility culture: From travel and driving companions to discrete icons of freedom and mobility

The history of portable consumer electronics illumines the changing mobility culture. Having been developed in interrelation with travel and traffic, in which the car held a central position, they have increasingly become independent of this relation.

At first, portables were installed in places of traffic and transport, i.e. in trains, cars, planes and caravans, to enable personal communication and mass-communication.[17] They connected travelling people with well-known content or with well-known people. Before portable electronics had shrunk to truly portable sizes and weights, vehicles of transport had been the first place – at once mobile and stationary – at which the consumption of mobile technology could be tried. E.g., mobile telephoning for travellers on express trains was tested as early as in the 20s. Besides, to coordinate traffic it was necessary to connect ships, cars, planes and trains to the outside world via radio or telematics. But portables have also been taken along when using the underground, cycling or skating.

The intrinsic linkage between portable electronics and technologies of transport is also displayed in many images of advertisement and usage, which have often visually connected both categories of mobile technologies (cf. pictures 1-4). During the 80s, finally, the body appeared as a place of usage for portable electronics, while the corresponding means of locomotion were one's feet fitted with sneakers, skates or snowboards.

„Music on journeys", Philips ad for portable radios, late 50s

A tape recorder used while driving. Title page of a technical journal, 1961

Sharing music while biking. Early walkman usage as pictured in the press, 1980

At the airport – Mobile phoning in Germany, early 90s

[17] Thus, the convergence of transport and communication technologies to which Mimi Sheller recently hinted to (cf.: Sheller, Mimi: Mobile Publics: Beyond the Network Perspective. In: Environment and Planning D: Society and Space, 2004, vol. 22, 1, pp. 39-52), was proceeded by their co-evolution.

The portable electronics of the early post-war decade were shaped according to the common mobility behaviour of the average family, which, at that time, primarily meant a joint excursion on the weekend. Portable radios, as the most popular form of portable electronics, were placed in a small suitcase design and were supposed to accompany a party going on a journey or an excursion, camping or having a picnic. In the mid-50s, they represented seasonal consumption offers, being sold from spring to autumn. They were called "journey receivers" and marketed as "journey companions". The *Lido* and *Riviera* by *Telefunken* were even named after some newly discovered Italian holiday resorts.

In the time following, the automobile became the customary means of motorized individual transportation. At the beginning of the 60s, more than a quarter of the West-German households owned a car, in 1973 the number had increased to 55,3%, in 1983 to 65,3%, and in 2003 it had reached 78,0% of the German households.[18] As a place at once mobile, yet private and isolated from the outer public sphere, it took on a leading function in the consumption of mobile electronics.[19] The former travel companions now turned into driving companions. As early as 1956, almost every third new car in West Germany was fitted up with an integrated receiver. Picture 2 shows a car driver who has put her magnetic tape recorder on the seat beside her. In the U.S., the so-called 8-track system was nearly entirely devoted to car usage, and the Philips standard cassette, introduced in 1963, also made its way into European cars. Outside the car, however, it was mainly teenagers who used this cheap, low-fi music tool. In 1975, when its sound quality had essentially improved, the German music firm *Deutsche Grammophon* decided to produce a classic series on tapes to bring classical music on the road, too.[20] This series was promoted as "classics on the way", and an ad showed Claudio Abbado as a car driver, appraising the tape's "advantages of mobility". Likewise, after the launch of the first compact disc players, the auto-discman soon followed. In today's cars, the early implementation of GPS systems can be seen. As a corollary, one can say that cars have long since stopped to be mere means of transportation and have turned into "mobile centres for communication"[21], as the German producer of auto receivers, *Blaupunkt,* phrased it

As people spent more than half of their transit in cars (public transport: around 15%, on foot: men: 13,5%, women: 21,9%)[22], the car remains a popular spot for the use of mobile communication technologies. Furthermore, cars provide "a safety bubble amidst the public".[23] Nevertheless, the close relation between automobiles and portable electronics has been loosened, while the ubiquitous use of portable electronics has become a dominant characteristic of the so-called mobile lifestyle. In the following, this will be shown with the example of the mobile phone.

Due to their heavy weights, mobile phones remained tied to the automobile for several decades. While in other countries handhelds had just been introduced, an official law prescribed a fixed installation in cars or boats in West Germany up to 1987. At first, the relation between car and car phone was kind of symbiotic. United, they represented a powerful symbol of speed, mobility and liberty – values the car was identified with previously. Describing his car drive

[18] Data according to the *Statistisches Bundesamt*.
[19] Cf. for the contemporary importance of the automobile the articles gathered in the special issue of Theory, Culture & Society, 2004, vol. 21, 4/5.
[20] Cf. the ad in: Stereo, No. 22, 1975, p. 19ff.
[21] Cf.: http://www.blaupunkt.de/13_3.asp (date: 21.08.2002).
[22] Cf.: Küster, Christine: Die Zeitverwendung für Mobilität im Alltag. In: Flade, A.; Limbourg, M. (Eds): Frauen und Männer in der mobilen Gesellschaft. Opladen 1999, pp. 185-206, here pp. 191-193.
[23] Term by Mäenpää who studied mobile phoning in Finland, cf.: Mäenpää, Pasi: Mobile Communication as a way of urban life. In: Gronow, Jukka; Warde, Alan (Eds): Ordinary Consumption. London, New York 2001, pp. 107-123, here p. 117.

across the American continent, Jean Baudrillard rendered the following statement, which is highly charged with meaning in reference to the overwhelming presence of the car in America's car-centred culture: "Freedom here has no static or negative definition. Its definition is spatial and mobile".[24] The same kind of semiotics was used for the cell phone, both while it was installed in cars and also after having become truly portable. Design as well as marketing of the cell phone took on the symbolic proximity of the two individual mobile technologies. Picture 5 shows a German ad for an early GSM-phone, a transportable for both portable and car usage by *Panasonic*. It plays with the associations of automotive speed, of dynamics and the conquering of space. But also the design itself owed something to the aesthetics of car styling.

Pict. 5: The Panasonic transportable is represented as a fast driving car on the countryside. The advertising text emphasized the European dimension of GSM. Ad from 1992.

Pict. 6: Ad for the Nokia 6510, visually equating the car and the handheld cell phone, 2002.

Many designers of cell phones, including *Nokia's* star-designer Frank Nuovo,[25] continued to be inspired by the sweeping lines of auto design. Eventually, cellular technology substituted the car as the predominant symbol of individual freedom and mobility.

Picture 6, an ad for the *Nokia 6510*, suggests the superiority of the cell phone over the car while yet associating them. The design of the phone mimics the contour of a car, and car and cell phone are visually equated. The textual information stresses that "one will always find a place" for the phone and that due to this and its many mobile functions, the Nokia "always is a brilliant companion".

[24] Cf. Baudrillard, Jean: America,...XXXX p. 94.
[25] Cf. Steinbock, Dan: The NOKIA Revolution. The Story of an Extraordinary Company That Transformed an Industry. New York et al., 2001.

In general, "freedom" was the predominant term in the promotion of cell phones. In 1992/3 e.g., *Ericsson* used the slogan "freedom has got a name"[26] for its GSM-handhelds. *Motorola's* advertisement, shown in picture 7, posed the question, "How free would you like to be?".

Pict. 7: Ad by Motorola, 1993.
(Source: DM, No. 7, 1993, p. 97)

The commercial photograph shows a surrealistic scene. A woman in a red summer-dress, fitted up with large, colourful wings is sitting on a water stage in the midst of a lake, enjoying the view of the blue wideness of the lake and sky. Here, the image of a very individualistic woman fitted up with wings in a grand nature setting symbolised a new kind of freedom, which was no longer associated with or even bound to the car. Succeeding the car, the bird was transitionally adopted as a symbol of freedom and mobility attached to the cell phone. The German network operator *e-plus* e.g. also chose a turquoise pigeon as its logo. Finally, around 2000, the cell phone itself turned into a symbolic icon. As the trends-researcher Matthias Horx stated, it represents "the explosion of mobility", and he interpreted it as a "tool of liberty, just as popular and emotionally charged as the automobile had been."[27]

Pocket radio, tape recorder, walkman and discman preceded the cell phone in this spatial de-linkage from transport technologies, while turning into technologies of a quasi constant mobility themselves. Their ideal users were not defined as travellers any more, but as consumers urging to consume music or information anywhere, at any time.

A principal shift towards the utmost everyday mobility, defined as the possibility of ubiquitous consumption, occurred since the late 70s, while the portable radio had antedated this development around 1960. At that time, consumers took along their radios into cars, to the bathroom or attic, as well as on many journeys, shaping the radio into a secondary medium. The radio sets were now named "universal receivers", signifying, on the semantic level, universal usage at any locality. Furthermore, "anytime" and "anywhere" had turned into heavily deployed terms in portable radio ads. From now on, the rhetoric of anytime, anywhere went along with the diffusion of any portable up to the currently implemented third generation cellular standard. Again, its naming, *Universal Mobile Telecommunications System*, refers to the universality of its usage. UMTS is promoted with the formula of "Any service, anywhere, at any time",[28] and its implementation is driven by the idea of a convergence of all previous portable electronics into one wireless and pocket-sized gadget.

[26] Cf. ads in: Funkschau, No. 6, 1992 (special issue), p. 22f; Funkschau, No. 7, 1993, p. 89. Also, network providers as well as public discourse made the association of freedom, mobility, and cell phone.
[27] Cf.: Horx, Matthias: Arbeit, Freizeit und Leben in der mobilen Kommunikationsgesellschaft des 21. Jahrhunderts. In: Lamprecht, Rudi (Ed.): Zukunft mobile Kommunikation. Wirklichkeit und Vision einer technischen Revolution. Frankfurt a.M. 2001, pp. 101-151, here pp. 103 and 104.
[28] Cf. e.g.: Funkschau, No. 4, 1997, pp. 68-71, here p. 68 („Das Mobilfunknetz der Zukunft").

Apart from the radio, however, the portable phonographs and tape recorders of the 50s and 60s had initially remained a domain of teenagers. Even if their marketing promised an anytime, anywhere usage, adults narrowed down the "anywhere" to a semi-stationary use in cars, at weekend houses, at beaches or in the garden, where no better tool was at hand. The "real" practice of listening to hi-fi music, however, was defined as a domestic activity accomplished with a high quality stereo and without doing anything else at the same time. Thus, it was teenagers that first realized the „mobile path" of modern life. They highly valued the transportability of their musical companions, and they were the first to use them while walking around. "Young people want to be mobile. Thus, the things and artefacts they use every day should also be as transportable as possible. Surveying it more closely: What is the value of record players, radios or tape recorders, when firmly installed somewhere? To tell the truth: exactly the half. One wants to take one's music along – to a friend, to a party, on a journey or just into the adjoining room", stated an article in the teenage journal *Twen* 1961.[29] Its whole argument was to praise the "handles" of music equipment while scoffing at parental reproaches. With their *objects nomades* – this is the term by which Jacques Attali referred to the mobile musical equipment of teenagers–[30] young people "mobilized" previously homebound activities. Accordingly, they could be called the "pioneers of mobility", using portables before the mainstream of adults began to indulge in the mobile lifestyle.

The urge towards a mobile lifestyle can be marked out by way of advertising rhetoric. Around the years of 1980, advertising rhetoric not only underlined the "anytime, anywhere", but explicitly talked of a flexible, sporty, and individual way of leading one's life. As early as in the promotion of the above mentioned classical music edition by the *Deutsche Grammophon* (1975), mobility had been emphasized as a main characteristic of contemporary lifestyle. In this promotion, it was stated that, "by way of the MusiCassette, classical music is able to conform to the modern, i.e. mobile way of today's life". Here, mobile lifestyle was still associated with driving a car. Later on, it was no longer necessary to mention the means of transportation. Instead, more generally, flexibility and independence were emphasised. "JVC's portable music pleasure – for any time and any way", JVC e.g. introduced a boom box in an ad of 1980, and it continued: "With JVC's portables you can enjoy the stereo sound you wish for anytime and anywhere".[31] The boom box was arranged with the photograph of a female roller skater just taking off her skates, representing youthfulness and activity. A later ad used the same rhetoric of sportiness and mobility, used now for an expensive hi-fi stereo set which was simply equipped with a handle to design it in a transportable way. The ad, addressing adult hi-fi listeners, stated: "JVC shows you yet another path to modern living. An active, sporty and mobile path."[32] *Sanyo* promoted its different portable electronics by defining them as an "expression of a new lifestyle".[33] In retrospective, in particular the *Sony Walkman*, introduced in 1979/80, has been interpreted as the emblem of this new mobile lifestyle. In an article on its 20th birthday, it was unanimously called a sign of "freedom", "individualism", and "pleasure always at call".[34] However, one should keep in mind that, while teenagers were immediately fond of pocket stereos, West German adult consumers, for the most part, disliked them. Not only did they not see any need for listening to private music while walking in public, but they also evaluated the pocket stereo as an anti-social technology of

[29] Cf. Twen, no. 2, 1961, pp. 30–33 („Ein Handliches Thema mit 14 Variationen").
[30] Cf.: Attali, Jacques: Bruits. Essai sur l économie politique de la musique. Paris 2001 (first edition: 1977), here p. 199.
[31] Cf. ad in the journal: Hifi-Markt, No. 3, 1980, p. 2.
[32] „JVC. Die vielseitigste Art HiFi zu erleben. (...) JVC zeigt Ihnen einen weiteren Weg, modern zu leben. Aktiv. Sportlich. Mobil." Ad from 1981.
[33] Cf. the journal: ffh, H. 11, 1979, p. 43.
[34] Cf. F.A.Z., July 27, 1999. p. T1 f („Als die Töne laufen lernten").

reclusion, if not escapism. However, their attitude towards wearing headphones in public changed around the mid-80s, and with the discman, adults were offered a high-tech-tool promising hi-fi sound quality, which they appropriated to their everyday lives.

During the course of the 80s and 90s, the average consumers integrated further hand-tailored portable electronics into their daily and even their domestic routine, complementing the ubiquitous radio. Due to their "wearable" design, pocket stereos were used by pedestrians or urban commuters as well as by cooking housewives or pupils doing their homework. People who otherwise disfavour physical "mobility", use mobile phones, nevertheless. In sum, "mobile lifestyle" became a predominant form of life, and this lifestyle was not necessarily linked to personal physical movement. Rather, it was characterized by an instant availability, leading to in-between and/or multitasking performances.

For the era around 1900, with its increasing traffic and transport phenomena, its crowded urban spaces and one speed record outdoing the other, Joachim Radkau has argued that "increased tempo" became the main element of the life and awareness of that epoch that also bred the new and much discussed symptom of nervousness. Likewise one might say that, one century later, the "Anytime, Anywhere" attitude became a main element of the so-called "mobile society", while stress and hyperactivity disorders seem to parallel the previous nervousness. The technological icons of this new era are not the means of transportation, but individual wireless and portable technologies like the cell phone, which now represent "mobility", "freedom", "progress", and, akin to the car, "individuality" and individual control.

3. The „racing standstill": Immobility and mobility as two sides of the same coin

In comparison to previous decades and, most of all, to pre-modern epochs, space can be overcome faster, cheaper and in more ways at the end of the 20th century. The quantitatively measurable phenomena of traffic and transport have, without doubt, increased; distance has approached us. However, whether we can evaluate this development in terms of an increase in "mobility" is arguable. The kind of challenge a foot-march represented to the medieval "society of proximity" can hardly be compared with the challenge of today's boarding of a plane – there is simply now way of rating its respective meaning. Besides, the rampant physical mobility of the last century has created many ostensible paradoxes, namely moments of immobility and inflexibility. The front picture, an ad for a *Philips* MP3-discplayer, can be seen as the post-modern epitome of the phenomenon of the "racing standstill": It shows a jogger on a treadmill, further equipped with a portable music player. Despite his appearance of utmost mobility and his personal physical movement, he does not move a single meter. When focussing on portable electronics, which are situated at the junction of the development of technologies of transport and communication and the "mobilization" of consumption, we find these paradoxes of movement and standstill as the two – unavoidable – sides of the same coin called „mobility".

Firstly, too much traffic causes delay and waiting time. Traffic congestion is the other side of the coin of the automobile society, which Jean-Luc Godard captured in a ten minutes camera-ride in his movie *Week-end* from 1967. The higher speed of today's cars meets its limits at the point of metropolitan speed, which has not changed since the beginning of the 20th century. Indeed, mobile electronics were designed and marketed to compensate for that. "Mobile workers" used their car phones to discuss business while being stuck in their cars, and they used them to compensate for the time-loss due to more frequent car journeys. Besides, the cell phone is used to communicate disturbances in physical mobility, e.g. the delay of a train. Today's dvd-players are being promoted in order to bridge entertainingly the time spent waiting for a plane, which often takes about the length of a movie. Besides, portable electronics have enforced the attitude that

any idle time in-between must be used. The Philips tape recorder e.g. was promoted with the slogan that you can now use "any opportunity which leaves you a few minutes time." For this purpose, it was equipped with a "complete language course in your pocket".[35]

Secondly, physical mobility often goes together with mental or social immobility and bondage, e.g. when people travel to see what they already know. In the 50s, a radio called *Lido* connected German tourists to their domestic broadcasting services while visiting the Italian beaches. "Holiday pleasures are increased by a connection with home", an account on satellite-receivers for caravans stated in 1992.[36] As Ulf Hannerz pointed out, for most tourists, a vacation to Spain means "home" plus "sunshine", since they do not immerse themselves in the foreign culture.[37] This "home" is easy to take along via portables. Ultimately, the Walkman-listener takes his/her home along in listening to the well-known sound wherever s/he goes. Cell phones have become an invisible umbilical cord connecting people with family members and friends. The mobility of people fitted up with portable electronics corresponds to their own immobility and inflexibility, because these mobile technologies help them to deal with or even completely avoid the unknown in all its incalculability.[38] Bare of the outer shell of a car, portable electronics yet serve the same social function of providing an individual, intimate „safety bubble" while crossing foreign spaces. The bondage of any mobile connectivity tool becomes virulent in the case of the cell phone. Here, the freedom to call anytime, anywhere also means to put up with constant control by and availability for other callers. Yet, even the blurring of work and leisure by wireless working tools like the cell phone and laptop are often euphemistically characterized as "freedom". "Choose freedom – anytime, anywhere communication", *Toshiba* entitled an ad for mobile communication via notebook, cell phone and Palmtop, while the advertising photograph displayed a computing man in a garden setting with two kids bopping around.[39]

Thirdly, any conquering of space and time, which is technically mediated or technically realized, will always be paid for by creating a new kind of dependency, immobility and inflexibility caused by the necessary underlying structures. Again, the charging of "mobility" with meanings of "freedom" and "flexibility" negates this, yet this double-sidedness is to be found in any portable electronic. For example, the alleged mobility only reaches as far as batteries are provided for. Furthermore, portable radios and cell phones depend on an underlying radio network, comparable to the networks of streets or train tracks. Contrary to the historical ideal, then, the "urban nomad" is marked by a great dependency on socio-technical systems. Thus, s/he is both utmost mobile and utmost immobile. Usually, however, s/he only perceives this dependency actively when, for some reason, the systems do not work.

[35] Cf. advertising brochure by Philips ("Cassetten Recorder"), Deutsches Museum, Archiv, Sondersammlung, Firmenschriften Philips.
[36] Cf. Funkschau, 1992, No. 13, p. 48-50 („Mit der Schüssel in den Urlaub. Sonne, Sand und Sat-Empfang").
[37] Cf. Hannerz, Ulf: Cosmopolitans and Locals in World Culture. In: Theory, culture and society 1990, vol. 7, 2/3, pp. 237- p. 251, here p. 241
[38] Cf. also the thesis by Ulrich Wengenroth of a „Virtual Immobility", paper given on the annual meeting of the Society for the History of Technology, Toronto, Oct. 2002.
[39] Cf. Süddeutsche Zeitung, March 5, 2003, p. V2/2 (special report on CEBIT 2003).

4. Summary: The Culture of Anytime, Anywhere

By way of planes or cars as well as the radio or the Internet, space and time have become seemingly negligible factors. Mobile consumer electronics further exponentiate this conquering of space and time. The "mobilization" of this technology and its user re-shaped not only travel and tourism, but also the attitude towards space and time in everyday life. With portables, time can be used double: We can phone while walking, we practice multitasking. Teenagers in particular are said to be the real masters of parallel activities. The increasing independence of spatial restrictions was paralleled by the disruption of former time-bonds, leading to the so-called Non-stop- or 24 hour society.[40]

The history of transport, e.g. of car or train travel, has already been described.[41] The changes in the culture of mobility, however, which have been affected not singularly by transport technologies, but by the combination of transport and communication technologies and the "mobilization" of consumption, still awaits a thorough analysis.[42] Portable electronics could serve as a paradigmatic example for such an analysis because they are situated at the junction of transport and communication, forming a new kind of "mobile" technology. Striving for autonomy, humans have always designed portable equipment to take along. The Swiss knife or the pocket book are canonical travel companions. However, the "mobility" that is represented by portable electronics has reached a new quality. This is due to a combination of the following factors: technology, the ideal of its omnipresence and ubiquitous availability, and the self-chosen connectivity function. In many ways, this kind of mobility represents the current colloquial understanding of "being mobile" and the current pursuit of a "mobile lifestyle".

Focussing on mobility through the lens of portable electronics furthermore points out the simultaneous and interrelated development of the "mobile" technologies of transport and communication. Their interrelatedness, materialized in the history of portable electronics, clarifies two points often discussed in recent debates on mobility:

Firstly, it demonstrates that communication technologies – be they portable or stationary – will not substitute for traffic, contrary to the many aspirations concerning information and communication technologies (ICTs) and their possibilities concerning distant communication, discussed under the prefixes of "tele", "e", or recently, "m" (mobile commerce). When the first telephones were introduced, futuristic visions forecasted that families would soon be living in scattered homesteads and meet only on ceremonial occasions.[43] After the advent of electronic ICTs, Alvin Toffler likewise coined the term of the "electronic cottage", while for the business world, many foresaw the "paperless office".[44] Yet we still travel, and we still post paper. We wish to consume both at home and on our ways, thereby generating new and different movement such as freight transport affected by online shopping. The development of portable electronics, which

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[40] Cf.: Kreitzman, Leon: The 24 hour society. London 1999; Adam, Barbara; Geißler, Karlheinz A.; Held, Martin (Eds): Die Nonstop-Gesellschaft und ihr Preis. Stuttgart, Leipzig 1998.

[41] Cf. e.g.: Märki, Christoph Maria: Der holprige Siegeszug des Automobils, 1895-1930. Zur Motorisierung des Straßenverkehrs in Frankreich, Deutschland und der Schweiz. Köln 2002; Schivelbusch, Wolfgang: Geschichte der Eisenbahnreise. Zur Industrialisierung von Raum und Zeit im 19. Jahrhundert. München et al. 1977.

[42] Cf. as an example of such a study for the decades around 1900: Kern, Stephen: The culture of time and space 1880-1918. Cambridge M.A. 1983. Analysing the spatio-timely attidudes of recent decades, while focussing on media is: Großklaus, Götz: Medien-Zeit, Medien-Raum. Zum Wandel der raumzeitlichen Wahrnehmung in der Moderne. Frankfurt a. M. 1995.

[43] Cf.: Geels, Frank W; Smit, Wim A.: Lessons from Failed Technology Futures: Potholes in the Road to the Future. In: Brown, Nik; Rappert, Brian; Webster, Andrew (Eds): Contested Futures. A sociology of prospective techno-science. Aldershot u.a. 2000, pp. 129-155.

[44] Cf. Toffler, Alvin: Die Zukunftschance. Von der Industriegesellschaft zu einer humaneren Zivilisation. München 1980; Sellen, Abigail J.; Harper, Richard H. R.: The myth of the paperless office. Cambridge et al., 2002.

enable communication while on the move, shows that consumers want to have both: travel opportunities and communication opportunities.

Secondly, despite the potential "illocality" of portable electronics, the way consumers use them displays that space has not become meaningless. Rather, we experience a transformation of the meaning of localities. Users of portable radios, walkmans or cell phones create a "technoscape" (or "soundscape") around them.[45] While these "technoscapes" cross previous borders between the private and the public or work and leisure (e.g. the private SMS written during a conference) easily, they are not without any relation to space. They are mobile, but have a spatial character, and each user has to decide for him- or herself in which location s/he will use the technology, e.g. in the car, on the street or in public toilets. Its use in some places like churches or theatres will be considered as rude behaviour. Therefore, some authors link the increase in mobility and the "illocality" of wireless technology in a different way, talking of "neolocality".[46] In this way, they disclaim the previous thesis of the annihilation of the meaning of space through electronic communication technologies.[47]

Lastly, the history of former portable electronics illustrates that the urge for mobility was present in everyday consumption behaviour previous to the advent of the neo-liberal tendencies with their emphasis on mobility and previous to the 90s "digital revolution" with its "information highways" and "cyberspaces". Both tendencies certainly enforced the urge for mobility tremendously. Since the 80s, "mobility" and "flexibility" have become the leading paradigms of the job world and have turned into principal business factors. In particular, the cell phone of the late 80s and early 90s was promoted with the phrase of "time is money", taking over the business rhetoric of yuppies and brokers. Yet, as the history of previous portable electronics shows, to be available at any time and anywhere, had already previously been aspired elements of a modern lifestyle in everyday consumption. This lifestyle was finally termed "mobile" in the era around 1980. Both producers and consumers - and among them young ones in particular - have shaped the portable travel companions of the 50s into indispensable everyday technologies. The early designs of portable electronics often had to be installed in vehicles, while the following ones were equipped with handles. Later on, they reached "pocketability" and finally even "wearability".
Anytime, anywhere have been the buzzwords in the mass marketing of portable electronics since the diffusion of the portable radio. Yet, they also seem to be adequate for the naming of the new culture of mobility. It is a culture that emphasises the urge to do anything, anytime and anywhere, both during movements or standstills, rather than emphasising its given high physical mobility. It cannot be understood by focusing on the history of transport alone. In fact, we need to include the whole web of the technologies of connectivity and their many uses. The term "mobilization", referring to the constant availability of both human and technical resources, might be helpful to underline the totality of this new culture of mobility. Nowadays, being mobile does not necessarily mean to actually be "on the move". In the end, the "global nomads" who are really travelling are objects, be they material or data. The mass of their users, however, largely stay at their localities, connecting themselves to a distant world of reference anytime, anywhere.

[45] On the "soundscape" (term by Murray Schafer) cf.: Bull, Michael: Sound connections: an aural epistemology of proximity and distance in urban culture. In: Environment and Planning C: society and Space 2004, pp. 103-116.
[46] Cf. Mäenpää, p. 113. The meaningfulness of locality, here for the case of knowledge generation and ICT, is also pointed out by: Heßler, Martina: Vernetzte Wissensräume. Zur Bedeutung von Orten in einer vernetzten Welt. In: Technikgeschichte, 2003, pp. 235- 253.
[47] Cf. e.g.: Meyrowitz, Joshua: No Sense of Place. The Impact of Electronic Media on Social Behavior. New York, Oxford 1985.