

## PREFACE

There is a camera at the airport's gate. Often, it is left unnoticed, but if one is asked she would probably know to say it is there. Many of us are by now familiar with such cameras and various security apparatuses that are installed in public spaces—airports, streets, pubs, train stations, shopping malls, or elevators. Most of the readers of this book are probably also familiar with the many critiques of the growing expansion of such mechanisms, their uses and abuses. But what does the camera monitor? Some cameras today can identify faces (to match the profile of a runaway), body heat (to trigger an alert when detecting an anxious—and thus presumably a suspicious—person) or logos of cars (to identify the economic status of a person, in order to prompt the appropriate advertising on a billboard). But the vast majority of security apparatuses today monitor *movement*.<sup>1</sup>

These security apparatuses are based on algorithms that analyze the data accumulated via a variety of sensors. The algorithms are used, first, to identify regular patterns of movement and then to flag movements that deviate from this identified norm. The norm thus becomes a pattern of movement deduced from sets of natural and social phenomena.<sup>2</sup> Once established, every deviation from this norm is defined as a problem or a potential threat. We therefore have “normal” and “abnormal” movements: the movements of airport travelers (and the airplanes themselves), of the business people or shoppers in their

daily routines, of subway passengers; but also the movements of those who seek to kill them or themselves (suicides on railways are apparently a major economic hazard for transit companies),<sup>3</sup> to steal, or perhaps simply to reside in a nonresidential space of movement (homeless people whose presence is undesired by municipal, governmental, and economical authorities). The first (normal) movement is to be maximized; the second (abnormal movement), to be eliminated, or at least minimized.

Monitoring movement began as a solution for a technical difficulty: the need to separate an object from its background. A security threat is often imagined as an object (usually a bag that is an index for the bomb presumably hidden within it). Yet while the human eye can identify objects, the first learning algorithms could not. Like primitive brains, they could only see movement.<sup>4</sup> Objects could thus be identified by these algorithms only once they moved, were moved, or stopped moving. Hence, questions had to be revised: suspicion could not be ascribed to objects but to the *irregular movements* that brought them to their suspicious location. This was the technological requisite that placed movement at the forefront of contemporary security apparatuses. However, we will see that the tie between the two—movement and security—has a long history. Whereas these surveillance technologies undoubtedly create new desires for regulation and reframe old questions, the regulation of movement was the object of political desires at least since Plato. This book sets to trace these desires, as well as the different—and differentiated—bodies they seek to capture, but also produce and shape in this process. It is a book about movement—about motion, locomotion, and mobility as physical phenomena, images, myths, and figures, and first and foremost about movement as an axis of difference.<sup>5</sup>

The story of these technologies, however, does not end here, with a pervasive regulation of movement that is founded on parting normal from abnormal patterns of movement or modes of being in space. Irregular movements are, after all, quite common, and these systems therefore trigger alerts constantly. So the question had to shift again. “The question is no longer how to identify the suspicious bag,” said a CEO of a large security company whom I interviewed for this project. “Rather, the question is how to stop evacuating the airport every other week.” The objective was accordingly altered: neither identifying a suspicious object nor detecting suspicious movements, but securing the regular movement of goods, passengers, and airplanes. “Bombs don’t go off that often,” he remarked, “so it makes no sense to stop the activity of the airport so frequently for this statistically negligible chance.”<sup>6</sup> This may

bring to mind the attribute of liberal security/biopolitical regimes identified by Foucault: an integration of threats—albeit minimized—into the normal order of movement. This integration rests on the assumption that any attempt to completely eliminate threats would bring to a stop the circulation of things and people whose furtherance is perceived as the most essential goal of politics.<sup>7</sup> Movement is the order of things.