

Materiality, Topography, Prison and ‘Human Turn’— A Theoretical Short Visit

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This article explains the development of the topographic turn, new-materialism and the human turn in sociology and philosophy. Key concepts are the spatial turn and sociomateriality.

In “the new” we find traces of “the old”. Thus the introductory section, “*A brief theoretical overview*”, has historical, epistemological, ontological and theoretical structural relevance. The works of earlier theorists are vital to understanding the new materialism and the ‘spatial turn’. I start therefore, with a historical synopsis, viewing the theoretical, philosophical and sociological roots of new-materialism, space philosophy, space sociology and the spatial and topographic turn.

In “*Norwegian prisons’ sociomateriality and ideological basis*”, I compare old and new ideologies and their effect on existing prison conditions. First, I look at the ideology behind the Norwegian prison system. Shifting criminal-political guidelines and criminological theory alter the functional requirements and the interior sociomateriality and design of prisons. High-security prisons are architecturally and sociomaterially, repressive, security-intensive and totalitarian expressions of current punitive ideological and penal principles.

Ideological and economic limits affect prison design, material structures and ways of functioning. The Norwegian correctional system uses the

concepts “humanism” and “normalization”. What do they mean? I continue my criticism in “*Prison - materialism, the topographical turn and the spatial turn*” and in “*We must understand what we are doing - it is a value requirement*”.

Finally, in “*The human turn*”, I reflect on how human, topographic and spatial turns can contribute to new, analytical and theoretical reorientations relating to prisons, practice and the sociomateriality of everyday living conditions.

A timeline - A new way of thinking?

The Swedish sociologist Gert Nilsson cites the French philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre: “Man is a product of his own creation”. Nilsson continues: “Human relationships do not exist in a vacuum; on the contrary, human relationships are anchored in the material world, primarily in processed matter: houses, tools, furniture, books, television sets, and roads. Practical objects or things of all kinds, *the socio-material*, acting as intermediaries between humans, our perceptions, feelings and actions, point to and are incorporated into, these objects” (Nilsson,1987:13).

Twenty-five years later, Lene Tanggaard and Svend Brinkmann (2010:1), in their introduction to a special publication on materiality and topographic inversion state: “In recent years, social scientists have begun to refer to what they call a ‘spatial turn’ or a ‘topographic inversion’, neo-materialism, and generally we see a reorientation towards objects, space, bodies, movement, materiality and architecture”. They continue: “The material world and its objects are no longer seen simply as a result of human social practice, but are seen themselves as actively creative in the process”.

After three decades dominated by individualism, idealism, cognitivism, postmodernism, constructivism and symbolic interactionism there is a new tendency: The materialistic way of thinking is strengthened - referred to as ‘the material turn’, ‘body materialism’, ‘postmaterialism’ or ‘neo-materialism’. In addition, other ‘turns’ are gaining acceptance: the topographic turn, the spatial turn, thing power, post-humanism, and the linguistic transformation. But are these new concepts - or just a wave of neologisms?

In this article, I will first present **A brief theoretical overview** of some of the theoretical and historical roots of these ‘turns’ and take a quick look at certain

theorists from a materialistic spatial-philosophical and spatial-sociological perspective. Several of these theorists have challenged dualism's objective structures and subjective constructions and attempted to transcend the dichotomy between objectivism and subjectivism. Based on the article's ontological and epistemological framework, I present some theorists and their thematic reflections in the following sub-sections: *Neo-materialism, topographic change and spatial turn*, and after that *A way points, modern sociology of space and Topofili and "violent space"*.

Following this are some ideas on 'neo-materialism', 'the topographical' and 'the spatial turn' as possible analytical and theoretical views of the current mission-statement of the Norwegian prison system. Beginning with an explanatory section, **The Norwegian prisons' sociomateriality and ideological basis**, I continue with a historical summary. Thereafter is a brief presentation of the prison system's ideological essence, and finally the sub-section *Prison – materialism, topographic and spatial turn*. The 'turns' mentioned can result in an important professional reorientation and a revised datum line for Norwegian prison research and may emerge as a corrective to the established way of thinking. For me '**The human turn**' forms an essential perspective. I present a holistic view of humanity where man is seen as a proactive and creative entity in an inner dialectical relationship with the outside world's natural and man-made conditions. The relationship between the material and social conditions in everyday life are thus ontologically and ethically fundamental.

A brief theoretical overview

Neo-materialism, topographic change and spatial turn

Historically, the contradiction between idealism and materialism has been intense. But what about 'neo-materialism', 'material turn', 'spatial-philosophy', 'spatial-sociology', 'spatial turn' or 'the topographic turn'? Some words and phrases are often used indiscriminately, or are influenced by fashion, and become inaccurate jargon. Can "*turn toward something ...*" be an example of this? Is '*space*' as we mean it also being misused? Moreover, what about the use of the word 'body'? Is it possible that the term 'body' may easily become an

abstraction and a reductionist, destructive description of the individual rather than a holistic description of a unique personality?

In space philosophy and space sociology, 'space' has different definitions. Space physics and metaphysics, space phenomenology and spatial aesthetics are common expressions but we are concerned with social space, symbolic space, and linguistic space. In the present economic, military, political, technological and climatic terminology, *space* and *place* are given extended meanings so as to encompass such phenomena as 'the political-geographical space', 'global space', etc. Space may refer to micro-space (rooms) or macro-space (global space, territories, regions, national states), and space seen in an inner relationship to materiality – natural or man-made.

Several philosophers and sociologists (particularly within phenomenology and Marxism) have worked meticulously with the *relationship between* people, materiality and environment, where architecture, interiors, objects and different forms of social space are prominent. Some of them, such as Henri Lefebvre, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Anthony Giddens, Pierre Bourdieu, Yi-Fu Tuan, Michele Foucault, and theorists within activity theory and critical psychology, which I highlight in this article, have (or have had) an important influence. New theories evolve, with resulting diversifications. Worth noting is Jane Bennet's 'vital materialism' in which she is inspired by Bruno Latour's actant theory and his social and material constructivism, Henri Bergson's neo-vitalism and Gilles Deleuze's life philosophy. Professor of Sociology, Martina Löw's *Raumsoziologie* has received considerable attention. The Danish anthropologist Kirsten Hastrup has also developed interesting perspectives within topography. She uses 'topographic inversion' instead of 'spatial turn' in order to emphasize more clearly the material, geographical and historical dimension.

My philosophical and theoretical foundation is Activity theory, Critical psychology, phenomenology and existential philosophy. With this approach, materiality, lifestyles, topography, location, time, activity, artifacts and everyday sociology become essential components of my analysis. Just as essential are the spatial-sociological, spatial-philosophical and situational-philosophical perspectives. Since 1970, I have worked considerably with these subjects and with everyday philosophy and everyday sociology.

A social structure is almost always a socio-material structure where people construct and develop social phenomena through social practice, and where nature, landscape, the man-made world, historical development and social life mix with, and mutually reinforce each other. In my work related to suicide, violence and prison research, I have used the expression 'society and the everyday production of suffering'. This term highlights the specific conditions of life, the socio-material conditions, everyday demands and production of misery, that are central components of my analysis. I also question which human values, ideology, ethics, aesthetics, theory, method and practice are reflected in the topography, spatial awareness, materiality, business and socio-material practices. Further, what is the meaning and significance of social space, its content and form, and how is the "inhabited" space used collectively and individually in relation to local requirements and historical development?

A theoretical way points

In 'the new' we find traces of 'the old'. Almost forgotten, is a classical Marxist and sociological study of the everyday life of the proletariat, depicting how life unfolds socially, materially and structurally in oppressive material surroundings. I am referring to Friedrich Engels' book about London's impoverished areas *Die Lage der arbeitenden Klasse in England* from 1845, a sociological analysis that is particularly *spatially* oriented. Within a dialectical-materialist framework, Engels describes, in detail, working-class housing and living conditions, the architecture found in slum areas, interiors, spatial density, and polluted and environmentally destructive conditions.

The Norwegian philosopher and sociologist Dag Østerberg refers in his book *Architecture and Sociology in Oslo* (1998:23) to Ferdinand Tönnies (1887), Georg Simmel's essay on cities and culture (1903) and the Chicago School's *Human Ecology* as theoretical socio-material 'roots'. The increasing divergence in living conditions and class relations presents itself in the socio-material structures that evolve. Østerberg claims: As the differences between life in the countryside and in the cities decreased, other explanations of modern socio-material structures gained credence. The relationship between space, matter and social conditions - termed as social space - has taken on a different meaning and significance.

The Marxist philosopher, Henri Lefebvre writes that space is not just an isolated entity, but consists of relationships between entities. According to him, space is part of a social practice which he understands both as symbolic and imaginary. He promotes a dialectical materialist view of man, in which man is seen as an active being creating himself and his immediate environment in close relationship to his wider surroundings. For Lefebvre Marx's concept of practice is therefore fundamental to human creative and liberating development: The 'body' and 'space' are subject to capital, power and state domination and forms of expression. Liberation from oppression, alienation and the development of ideology in daily life and 'space' are key issues for him. In the analysis of a spatial dialectic, he refers to the importance of different socio-material dimensions of things, structures, cultural practices and economic processes. In that sense he represents, both theoretically and practically, a Marxist humanism that takes into consideration the whole person, who is to be freed from alienation, social and economic oppression. Based on this understanding, he distinguishes between *spatial practices* (i.e. the production and reproduction of spatial structures in a given society), *spatial representations* (conceptualized space, the space of scientists, planners, urbanists, social engineers), and *representational space* (space as directly inhabited through its associated images and symbols). These three forms exist within an inner, interactive relationship with each other (Lefebvre, 1991/2014:38–39). Further, "rhythm awareness" becomes central and he writes: "Everywhere where there is interaction between a place, a time and an expenditure of energy, there is *rhythm*". (Elden, 2014:s.8)

Maurice Merleau-Ponty's corporeality philosophy expands the human body's relationship to space. However, this is different for 'objects': "It is through the body that we are present in the world, communicate, are in contact with objects and so on." Thus, continues Merleau-Ponty, "One cannot say that our body exists in social space that only exists in time." (Merleau-Ponty, 1994:93). The body is, for Merleau-Ponty, the subject of the personality, and it is through the body that consciousness takes shape and is an expression of human existence. The body 'inhabits' time and space as a place of action - a space that has significance for the individual situation giving it meaning. In short, an intentional and existential relationship to the object is created in the social space where it 'installs itself'. The movement of the body and the subject in space is crucial, and the body gains meaning by virtue of its 'being-in-the world'. He stresses, "I

am my body”, and through the movement of the body, we see more easily how it inhabits space and time (Merleau-Ponty,1994:47). Later, in the 1960s, he showed the limits of our visible experiences of the world and claimed that “the invisible forms the visible”. Regarding corporality philosophy, an important difference is seen between Merleau-Ponty and Sartre’s existentialist phenomenology: Merleau-Ponty focuses on bodily experiences and their inner relationship to the outside world, while Sartre is concerned with the external, and the body as an object - the self as being-for-others. (Rendtorff,1998:29).

Modern sociology of space

The philosopher and sociologist Pierre Bourdieu advocates understanding *social space* as a practice field, which, together with the execution of social control, is fundamental. His “epistemological experiment” not only aims to produce knowledge, but to reveal the objectives behind the production of knowledge. In this way, he intends to create a research platform, which incorporates parts of both objectivism and subjectivism. Bourdieu stresses that there is an objective reality that exists independent of the individual’s consciousness, and that the social sciences must be aware of what it means to live in, and populate, the social world. (Wilken,2006). He describes social space as a force “where the agents are being forced to take a position on the means and objectives that differ, depending on their position in the power structure, and in this way can help to preserve or to transform the structure” (Bourdieu,1999:45–46). The socio-material conditions and social spaces, where one can delineate classes, are constructed in different ways: “The social agents assume a relational position relative to one another in a space - the social space” (Bourdieu,1997a:21). ‘Field’ should be understood as habitus and specific forms of capital. Bourdieu defines habitus as a system of dispositions that allow and determine how people should act, think and orient themselves in the social and material world. It is a socialized and structured body that represents the product of the individual’s accumulated knowledge, and biographical experience through which he develops throughout life. Bourdieu’s concepts of capital are essential to understanding his work. In addition to material and financial capital, Bourdieu includes terms such as cultural, social, and symbolic capital. Practice unites habitus, the field and the social world around us in a dialectical process. (Bourdieu,1997b:66)

For Bourdieu, all fields are structured by degrees of power and interests. A field is a restricted area characterized by specific objective structures that are relatively independent of other social fields. However, between the individual fields there may exist internal relationships, because they are located within a larger social space consisting of coexisting social roles played by other persons. According to Bourdieu, social space is an invisible reality, which one can neither touch nor see - but which organizes the person's practices and behavior. The social positions within the social space depict the material conditions for existence and are characterized as much by economic as by cultural resources. Apart from the social space, he also refers to a number of other different spaces: practical space, symbolic space, physical space, geographical space, male and female space.

The sociologist Anthony Giddens (1994), clarifying his theory of structuration, states that social systems are self-constructing and binding in time and space. However, he not only describes a socio-material image of reality, he also sees them as man-made organizations, expert systems and institutions of modern life. This also presupposes *trust* and *ethical requirements* for the material and social organization. He continues: "When I go out of the house and get in my car, I place myself in a framework, permeated by expert knowledge: of the design and construction of cars, of motorways, crossroads, traffic lights and many other things" (Giddens, 1994/1990, s. 31).

For Giddens, structure can create opportunity but also limit possibilities. The actions, which *constitute* and are *constituted* by the social system, produce the space in which the practice takes place, but at the same time bind the social system and these actions in a particular time-space context. (Giddens, 1984; Kaspersen, 1995: 63–70). The individual cannot simply be reduced to a product of the system – nor must he be seen as tethered to its structures. According to Giddens, society is a social practice to be understood as the *structuring process* whereby human actions both *structure* and *are structured*. People thus *create the structures by which they are bound*. Social actions are always situated *in time and space* but they also *provide the content of time and space*. People are more dispersed in time and space. Technological advances have resulted in space being expanded. We can find ourselves in the same space, but not necessarily in the same place.

Martina Löw's sociology of space has received considerable attention. She has developed a procedural and relativistic spatial understanding, which

transcends the distinction between social and material space (Löw,2015:12–13). In my interpretation, Löw's concept of social space emphasizes the importance, not only of the space itself in relation to the individual but also of the spaces themselves, i.e. the spaces between the objects and/or persons. According to Löw, social space should be understood as *arrangements* of social goods, materials and people. Space does not exist as an entity but should be perceived as a "container" (cf. Giddens), formed by things and objects that are seen in relation to each other. Town planning for example, must take into consideration: roads, cars, adjoining shops, benches, streetlights, rubbish bins, trees, all having a certain relationship to each other and related to people's spatial activities. The spaces between objects/people are central to Löw's understanding. She emphasizes their symbolic meanings, at the same time illustrating the importance of visual, auditory, tactile and olfactory senses that are important for the constitution of places and spaces.

Within *Activity theory* (Tätigkeitstheorie) and the *Critical psychology* of dialectical materialism, the individual is studied as a product of the innate, social and cultural conditions of life (Holzkamp,2016;Schraube&Højholt,2016;Dreier,2016). At the same time, the individual is seen as an active and creative individual who relates collectively and individually to natural and man-made conditions – to other people and other living creatures. Accordingly, the material conditions, architecture, interiors, artefacts, space, place and time are key components in the individual and collective being. People exist in time and space and are affected by this spatial placing. Further, relationships exist between individuals but also between persons and man-made objects. Some key basic themes in the development of relevant theory are: human social and material interaction within various activities (work, school, arts, sports, etc. (Enerstvedt,1982)), and interaction with their artifacts (as instruments, man-made things, architecture, interior design, computer technology, etc.).

Topofili and "violent space"

But how are the surroundings and social spaces *experienced* by the "inhabitants"? In 1974 the geographer, Yi-Fu Tuan (1974) described *topofili* as the affective bonds between people, material environments and locations. The sociologist Johan Asplund (1983) explains that Tuan does not restrict these bonds to emotional experiences, but they should be seen (and essentially so) as

cognitive and determinative. Tuan's term, 'topofili', must be understood both in the narrower sense - of being bound to some local physical entity, and in a broader sense - as contextually bound and determinative, and thus, the immediate environment is just one element in the overall contextual understanding (Asplund,1983:170). These perspectives provide opportunities in which to consider relationship and dependency, from an alienated socio-material responsiveness.

Space must be studied from both the ethical and aesthetic perspective. The material world around specific locations and social space is not always a positive experience. A space can also awaken feelings of alienation, threats and sickening sensations – as experienced by the protagonist Rouquentin in Sartre's philosophical novel *Nausea*. *Rouquentin's* nausea is not within him, but as he puts it, "I feel it out there in the wall, in the suspenders, everywhere around me. It makes itself one with the café. I am the one who is within it" (Sartre,1985:28). The 'violent space' developed by the German historian Joerg Baberowski is another relevant concept. In my book *I fars vold (A Life in My Father's Violence)* I describe my own upbringing in an extreme totalitarian and violent family where I experienced similar material and physical alienating nausea (Møller/Hammerlin,2000). In this book (and my later research into violence) I have developed the concepts of 'the space of 'unfreedom', violence and powerlessness' where I describe the various forms of power, domination and violence that are the framework of socio-material everyday life. The apartment, the rooms, the interior were the material framework of the constricted and unfree life that resulted in the *existential and alienating nausea*. My father was there all time as he was molded into the room. How often have I heard from prisoners how their existential desperation is felt to be a result of prison rooms and cells and their repressive restrictiveness? However, space can also be described as the opposite - being beautiful, contemplative and peaceful. The Norwegian painter, Harriet Backer expanded the concept to *interspatial beauty* to describe the spatial relationship between objects and elements and items. Taoist philosophy goes further and argues metaphorically, that when a vessel is formed from clay, "It is the space within that makes the vessel useful". Materiality and space have therefore two practical aspects: possibility and limitation. This brief theoretical overview shows that the *new turns*, are rooted in and branch out into theoretical work that is not new. Related to the development of "the new turns" are the analytical components which are also highly relevant to the prison system.

The Norwegian prisons' sociomateriality and ideological basis

A historical glimpse and a view of the present situation

In connection with a research assignment I had in a new and internationally renowned prison, (which has also received interior design awards), a prisoner accosted me. He showed me his cell and said, "Look here, the cell window has no bars, and that's good. But the view? When I look out the window, I see two things: a grey wall covering 2/3 of the window surface and some fir trees sticking up behind it. That's all. It makes me depressed not to see anything else". For him, life in the cell was oppressive, threatening and crushing because a cell window without bars, and the prison topography otherwise, engendered other expectations. "The room darkened like a tomb," wrote the Norwegian author Arne Garborg (his metaphor became a reality for 69 Norwegian prisoners who committed suicide in prison space in the years 2000–2015 (Hammerlin, 2009,2015b,2017)).

The structural organization of prison space is the product of a past, a present and a future. The physical form of a high-security prison is universal, where 'layer upon layer' of closed spaces and stringent regulations form the environment in which prisoners must exist and to which they must relate. Stringent regulations and security measures determine how the material, the architecture and the interior of the prison space are organized. Outdoor areas are to be seen as outer 'prison spaces'. How is power and ideology expressed in the material conditions, the architecture and the interior? And how is materiality, the architecture and the interior expressed *as* power and repression?

Many of today's Norwegian prisons are old and are shaped according to prison ideology, culture and topography from days gone by. In 2012 one of the prisons still in operation in Norway had been built in 1820, and 15 more were built in the latter half of the 1800s. In addition, six prisons date from between 1902–1920, and five more were built before or during World War II. Seven prisons were built in the 1950s, seven in the 1960s, six in the 1970s, two in the 1980s, three in the 1990s and one after 2010 (White Paper/Meld.St.12/2014–2015:23). Topographically there are significant differences - not least in relation to the local community. Most prisons are found within, or close to, urban areas. Others are relatively isolated and are found in rural areas with forests or

farmland between them and the nearest built up area. In the 1970s and 1980s, there were a number of different categories of prison: national prisons, security institutions, local prisons, labour and forest camps, halfway houses, day release homes, and auxiliary prisons. Some institutions are large, others small - some are closed, others open. In the early 2000s, the categorization was simplified and prisons are now simply designated as being of high or lower security (*sic*) instead of the previous grouping of open and closed prisons. Several of the prisons in current use were originally institutions used for other purposes, but have been taken over by the prison authorities and converted into prisons.

From the 1950s and up to the present, criticism of material conditions in prisons has been based on economic issues, current correctional theory, health or ethical grounds. This also applies to debates from the interwar period and earlier on what imprisonment should entail for the prisoner. In the 1970s, a number of suggestions emphasized that revised qualitative changes were essential in order to achieve a modern and humane treatment of prisoners (Hammerlin, 2008). It was argued that the old prison buildings were of a low standard, having particularly poor sanitary and hygienic conditions. Then, as now, what the minimum standards of prison conditions should be were questioned. The socialization, differentiation, progression and normalization ideology of the 1950's should be enhanced (cf. work-experience prisons in the 1960s and 1970s). Prisons, it was argued, should have an architectural and internal socio-material structure, which would allow security to be a priority, but would also allow work experience, education, cultural, sports, and other spare time activities.

Relations with the outside world, the local environment and the professional community were important. The ideal goal was then, as now, that prisons should be designed in accordance with modern penal policies, allowing unimpeded imported professional services to be performed. However, these standards are incessantly and contentiously discussed in the mass media: How "comfortable" should the new prisons be? A common (mis-)conception is that new prisons resemble hotels with their concomitant luxury and comfort. This is contrary to the generally accepted sense of justice and the idea of what prison life should be like. The counter-argument uses the 'normality principle' and the ethical requirements for humane and constructive prison conditions. At the same time, consideration has to be given to the need to build state institutions in accordance with prevailing civil engineering and

architectural principles. Academic correctional theory highlights the difficulty in implementing modern treatment of prisoners within the 'old' material and ideological frameworks. Security requirements must be clearly defined and expressed unequivocally politically, in public documents, and in targeting strategies formulated in the Ministry of Justice. In Norway, we find prisons that represent extremes, but also permit *differentiation*, *normalization* and the *progressive serving of sentences*. On the one hand, we find prisons that are very security oriented, power heavy, repressive and totalitarian; and on the other hand, we have small prison institutions hardly recognizable as penal institutions (Hammerlin, 1994,2008,2015).

The prison system's ideological roots and essence

Norway's current prison system is based on two fundamental ideologies.

Firstly, it is typified by (i) a *security focused*, liberty restricting, penal ideology, underpinned by material, practical, administrative, social, technological and symbolic limitations. Prison life and the execution of sentences also consists of compact and subtle, but at the same time, overt and covert forms of control, discipline and security procedures. The prison system must protect society, but must also maintain peace and order, prevent crime within the prison, as well as preventing escapes, etc.

Secondly, the system has, at its core, a (ii) *rehabilitation and care ideology*. This has roots in different treatment, (re)habilitation, assistance and care-ideological activities, and humane principles. Rehabilitation and care-ideology have two rationales: a) As an initiative to reduce the harmful effects of a term in prison; and b) Rehabilitation (or habilitation) as embodied in targeting strategies to help the prisoner acquire trade skills and other proficiencies that will enable him to live a non-criminal life integrated in society when released from prison. These measures have two main paths: The first is system-oriented and system-adapted, often with an object perspective on the individual prisoner; the second is aimed at the individual and personalized, with a subject perspective on the prisoner. Different disciplines are found and practiced within the aim of rehabilitation, care and treatment ideology. In addition, there are various schools of thought within these disciplines. They are based on

varying humanitarian theories, ideologies, attitudes and methods. Even in prisons with a high security level, rehabilitation and care initiatives are well developed and based on humane ideals, but adapted to match the necessary safety, disciplinary and control requirements. Although often portrayed as representing a consensus, historical experience shows that these two firmly established ideologies can be in opposition, with a resulting tension between them. Security and economics take precedence and become the governing and regulatory principles. When security is relaxed or threatened, the rehabilitation and care initiatives are tightened or removed. (Hammerlin, 1994, 2004, 2008). At times, opposition and tension become intensified, in others more subdued. A Norwegian Minister of Justice expounded a few years ago, “Tough on the tough, soft on the soft”, explaining his idea of the treatment of prisoners. But I raise the question: How soft is soft? No matter how ‘soft’ a prison system appears to be, it will always retain some of the ‘hard’ (Hammerlin, 2004, 2008).

During the 1980s and 1990s, (iii) an ideology of economic and instrumental rationality gained a strong foothold. This ideology is typified by: Centralist bureaucracism, management inspired ideas (NPM/neoliberalism), economism with strict financial constraints producing an effective control of the use of resources, activities and practices. The Competition State challenges the Welfare State! Seen thus, the gap in this ideological dichotomy is expanded (i and ii) to become a three-way conflict (i,ii,iii) reflecting tension and antagonism between different ideologies, humaneness, ethics, requirement structures, objectives and practices in the treatment of prisoners.

Prison - materialism, topographic and spatial turn

In Lefebvre’s terminology (Lefebvre, 1991): Prison is ‘social space’ of a particular type within specific safety and control contexts. I differentiate between high security prisons and open prisons, and describe the former as totalitarian. There is a significant difference between the regimes in these two types of institution, especially in relation to control and domination. *Existentially*, what does it mean to be imprisoned? What does it mean for *a person to be in prison* and *a prison to be in the person*? As a prison researcher, my many studies and interviews with prisoners, and others, over a thirty-year period have shown that the prisons’ rooms and the cell rooms, with their compact, locked tightness, determine the prisoner’s understanding of *being-here-and-now*. Not only that, but

they also influence his *there-and-then-existence* (thoughts, yearnings about life without walls and fences). The whole person is affected existentially by being incarcerated. Thoughts, emotions, sights, sounds, smells and the tactile senses are constant everyday experiences. A prisoner once told me that the cell is also influenced by those who have been there earlier. Prison life is unquestionably physically demanding, and some say that over time it becomes addictive and routine, while others adapt to the everyday demands of the prison just to avoid being negatively sanctioned. Still others resist - directly or indirectly.

A prison is a contrastful and distrusting system. It is expressed by the prison system's topography, architecture, interior, walls, spaces and security measures - and by its regulations, control and restrictive practices. Modern, closed prisons with a high security level have a high standard of material structure that is aesthetically pleasing and practical. There are also open prisons that are hardly recognizable as prison institutions. Notwithstanding this, the basic functions have not changed and the regulation-steered, coercive basis is the same for all prisons. In some prison research, the institution-sociological power analysis seems diluted, and the negative effects of incarceration are downplayed. One often finds studies that skip lightly over the repressive and totalitarian power structures, and which fail to reveal tensions between conflicting ideologies, prisoners and human values. In keeping with a "fashionable" and a fragmentary use of Michel Foucault's understanding of power, the real application of power in prisons is not revealed (Hammerlin, 2008).

The state of "*being a prisoner*" is governed by effective safety and control measures. Material devices, technological adaptations and social disciplinary and control structures determine where the prisoner is in space and in time. Prisoners construct and mold their thinking, needing and behavior patterns within the totalitarian institutional framework. Many prison analyses are currently too little concerned with the topographical conditions, material structures, technological installations, architectural form and interior adaptations. These components are fundamental to the understanding of how prison space influences the individual's prison identity and the employees' working conditions. "Neo-materialism", topographic inversion, space sociology, space philosophy and "spatial turn" may therefore be important analytical aids in understanding prison life in a more coherent and concrete perspective. According to Foucault (1977/2002), Goffman (1976) and Sykes (1974), the organization of modern prisons is based on a strict division of the space, and a strict

division of time, into discipline and control practices. Foucault's analyses of prisons are important in understanding prisoners' self-disciplinary processes and their self-technologies, while Bourdieu's analysis of power fields can expose the material and social power structures. Quoting Foucault again, "The design of prison space is a form of compartmentalization". It is not simply about the organization of space and systematization in which the *corpus* may be disciplined. Prison space produces devices with spatial disciplinary systems (space...distance) and temporal regulations in the form of schedules, work hours etc. Inspiration from Karl Marx's *Das Kapital* is evident: The control and disciplining of the working classes in the production process under capitalism and industrialism; and as Max Weber and Friedrich Engels showed, this also applies to the armed forces (Hammerlin,2008;Foucault 1977,2002,1982).

The Human Turn

"We must understand what we are doing – it is an essential requirement," said the former Minister of Justice Knut Storberget (Hammerlin,2008,2017).

I consider "the human turn" as a generic expression, or framework, for these and other previously mentioned "turns". Firstly, the relationship between individuals and the world surrounding them is undergoing continuous change. The human aspect is therefore also *being* constantly revised. Secondly, *the human turn* reflects the human collective, institutional and individual forms of activity, and is shaped by the world around in a creative and/or destructive way. The 'human turn' describes not only the person in a dialectic relationship with other humans and other living beings, but also the relationship between the person and the natural and man-made materiality. Thirdly, it encompasses an ethical dimension, where man is made responsible for collective and individual actions - globally and locally. Fourthly, a holistic view of humanity is necessary. Several of the theories presented are analytical sources of inspiration: Bourdieu, Giddens and Löw's structural and system analyses provide portions of information essential in understanding the dialectical relationship between materiality, social space and the individual - also overriding the unresolved dichotomy of subjectivism and objectivism. Likewise, this applies to Sartre's later works.

Activity theory and critical psychology have made great strides in dialectic analysis. The inner dialectical relationship between the creative human and the

natural, man-made material and social conditions - both historically and situationally related - is, within these theories, to be understood in an overriding, dynamic and comprehensive manner. Lefebvre's "spatial dialectic" and his distinction between *spatial practices*, *spatial representation* and *the representation of space* are likewise useful analytical tools. In addition, his understanding of rhythm inspires further thinking. Merleau-Ponty's phenomenological ontology should also inspire: that man "inhabits" space, and time as space in a meaningful and significant sense are dynamic perspectives. This understanding also directs us to the "understanding of being" in existential philosophy terminology, and G. Deleuze, A. Badiou and S. Žižek's understanding of 'event' and 'being'. Bourdieu's emphasis on 'social space' as a power and practice field offers a new dimension through his habitus and capital concepts. Giddens' 'confidence/misunderstanding' as a material dimension, encourages an awareness-raising holistic approach, in which the complex organization of materiality is clarified.

Further, the consequences of alienating materiality and the social space in prison highlight a further development and concretization of Marx, Sartre and Lefebvre's understanding of ontological and existential alienation. Lefebvre's understanding of the space dialectic between reification, alienation and emancipation should help to support criticism of the suffering resulting from imprisonment and pain inducement - both intended and unintended (ref. Hammerlin's *The prisoners' catalogue of losses*, 1987/2008/2015; Schaanning, 2009). But what about the turn that encourages further revelations? In this article, I can only provide some rudimentary reflections as a deeper analysis would require significantly more space and a specific justification. I confine myself, therefore, to two main themes: the assertion that the Norwegian Correctional Service is based on humanitarian principles and practices normality, and the normalization principle. Both are highly topical issues in light of the architectural, the interior purposes, the tangible, the socio-material, the topographical and space sociological/philosophical facilitation in the ideological frame of 'normalization'.

Critical Reflections: 'Humanism' and the 'normality principle' - an idealization?

"Words can become so great that they frighten," writes the Danish historian of ideas Hans-Jørgen Schanz (1990). The philosopher Ernst Bloch once said that the bigger the words, the greater the risk of misinterpretation creeping into

them. So, one can ask whether “criminal care” (name of the Norwegian Correctional Service content: Kriminalomsorg) is such a word, and is it a suitable designation for the Norwegian correctional/prison system? This title reflects the expressed humanistic platform but hides the restrictive, controlling aspect and the element of punishment. Punishment is commonly defined as the deliberate infliction of suffering. However, as indicated earlier, a prison sentence is not just an abstract evil, but also the intentional infliction of torment. In a number of texts, I have emphasized that life in prison and the security entailed are dehumanizing. How then, is it possible to insist that the system is based on humanistic principles and encompasses a normalization principle, when the prison system is indisputably totalitarian and repressive? Imprisonment and the prison space, through materiality and practice, *do something* to the prisoner, but the question is also what does the prisoner do to prison space and imprisonment? The three basic ideologies mentioned previously provide a framework for the content, form and principles of a prison. Statements of intent are formulated on this basis. I wish to highlight one of them: The White Paper Declaration that the The Norwegian Correctional Service is based on humanism and normalization.

The ideology of ‘humanism’

In a number of my earlier works I have argued, from philosophical and ethical viewpoints, that the Service cannot claim that it is based on humanism.

A prerequisite of the humanistic view of humanity is the acceptance that “all men and women are equal” (no individual is worth more than another) - that each have their own intrinsic value, are independent and creative, and shall have the *freedom* to shape their own lives. Recognition, respect and tolerance are fundamental ideological, ethical, moral and practical principles. Respect must not be diminished; it must not result in the sorting and grading of human dignity as a result of any form of handicap, nor must it discriminate on ethnic, racial, sexual or other social grounds. Humanism puts human dignity at the center and assumes the liberty, integrity and dignity of the individual to be self-evident. Do prisons, as coercive institutions created especially for depriving certain individuals of their liberty, meet these requirements? Imprisonment produces suffering, pain, shame, sorrow, despair, and other losses (Hammerlin,2004,2008,2015). Prison separates people socially and materially from the outside world in different ways. Prison architecture and

interiors form a socio-material structure, which epitomizes or symbolizes the guarantee of security and the coercive, punishing nature of the prison institution. High-security prisons in particular are, in their basic structure, totalitarian. Some prisons hardly resemble penal institutions, nevertheless, they reflect, symbolically, the organizational and practical attributes associated with institutions of segregation from society. These safeguards, security initiatives, coercive measures, etc. are in conflict with humanistic values (Christie, 1982; Mathiesen, 1995; Hammerlin, 2004, 2008; Schaanning, 2009).

Expressing ideal notions of human dignity, the prison system desires to create humane, dignified conditions for prisoners - to facilitate these in the most humane way possible and under the least torturous conditions in a totalitarian penal system, which is obviously a proud and worthy ambition. To claim that the prison system's fundamental ideology is humanistic is one thing, but putting this into practice requires a different set of values and quality requirements. The Danish professor of philosophy, Uffe Juul Jensen, supported my criticism as follows: There is a "sort of contradiction in that the means to achieve a more 'humanistic practice' are present, but they shift the perspective from the primary goal, namely, *free expression for all*." (Hammerlin, 2015; 136) He pointed out that the internal, professional and fragmentary development of positive partial measures is insufficient to meet the principles of humanism. It is therefore necessary to discuss the ontological and ethical dichotomy between humanistic ideals and what is experienced as an inhumane system. This imbalance must be seen in the light of the prison system's repressive security and control requirements. The imbalance, however, does not negate the positive initiatives employed by the Correctional Service, especially interdisciplinary cooperation. The Service has developed its own professionalism in which claims of humane conditions and human dignity are central to the programs and initiatives that are in use. It is also positive that some prison environments have adopted a holistic approach and a focus on humanity.

The question arises, however, whether positive intentions restricted by limited initiatives and activities, are sufficient to warrant the description: *a humanistic view of humanity*. Further, regarding the imported professional services: Is their academic autonomy sufficiently secured, or are they so influenced by the prison environment that they are inhibited from performing their tasks as they would outside of the prison walls? From my studies, the Correction Service in Norway is not characterized by humanitarianism, but functions with a

technocratic view of humanity (Hammerlin&Schjelderup,1994). From the 1950s until now, the Service has been steered predominantly by technocratic and administrative processes with a corresponding view of humanity. That is to say, experts and others control the practice and the dissemination of knowledge of humankind. This does not necessarily imply that they deprive the prisoners of their relative freedom and choices of alternative courses of action. Nevertheless, it can be seen that experts and professionals can treat the prisoner as an object that can, and should, be changed through therapy and various other methods. This can be done by applying various academic programs, applications, self-technologies, coercive influences and disciplinary techniques, etc. Often, the experts' "we-know-what-is-best-for-you" attitude results in a form of instrumentalism: 'We have the methods, we have the models'. And with this, follows the language of control, a tendency to paternalism, *expertocracy*, "academic megalomania" and provincialism.

My historical and topographical studies of the treatment of prisoners have shown that there are numerous technocratic views of humanity. This, combined with the precedence given to the needs of the institution itself, have dominated many of the measures. Of course, this does not mean that technocracy excludes the possibility of a humanitarian basis. All too often, however, the individual is reduced to an object or an objectified subject by various initiatives and academic interventions. Materials, architecture and interiors can lay the groundwork for a number of positive measures in specially adapted spaces even in the most compact totalitarian prison systems. Meanwhile, small open prisons with liberal regimes often develop an institutional character which permits various positive activities that are dominant and related to the local environment.

The ideology of 'normalization'

Normalization and the normality principle have been especially important concepts for correctional and rehabilitation ideology in the Nordic countries, but these definitions are unclear. Is it the prisoner, or is it prison conditions that have to be normalized? Normalization of prison conditions means here *normalizing material prison installations*. When the former director of the Danish Prison and Probation Service, William Rentzmann, retired in 2013, a series of lectures were held in Copenhagen. The theme for these lectures was "normalization in a national and international perspective". Ole Ingstrup,

doyen of Danish and Canadian prisons, began with the question “Normalization – a celebration speech or a management tool?” He discussed the content of the term based on the deprivation of liberty, normalization measures in prison and the relationship to freedom. Ingstrup focused on what needs to be done in order to show respect for the prisoner. Prison Governor Hans-Jørgen Engbo’s lecture, *Normalization as a principle, a means or a goal?* discussed normalization as a principle and as a means to ease the prisoner’s transition to release. He operated with a broad understanding of normalization related to ethical principles such as human dignity, the rights of the individual, and the rule of law in light of the social and material conditions in prison, thresholds of violation, etc. Contrary to those who see the normalization of prison conditions as a security threat, Engbo insists that it actually improves security - especially ‘dynamic security’. He clarified what he termed the *constructive foundation of security* (meaningful activities, welfare-enhancing environments, optimal contact with friends, family, a prison regime that minimizes internal stresses, etc.). He was willing to go far to normalize social and material conditions behind bars so that they resemble society on the outside and asked: “Is there any particular reason to do things differently in a prison?” His description differs from the more ambiguous Norwegian practice of normalization.

In Norway it has historically, as mentioned earlier, been an institutional objective to ‘normalize’ the prisoner’s mind-set by various methods of influence (especially cognitive) (Hammerlin, 2008; Hammerlin & Mathiassen, 2014). This reveals an ethical dilemma: It is our ethical duty to carry out a variety of aid and care measures, but how far can we go before we transgress the threshold of individual integrity? It must be more ethically defensible to *normalize prison life* and *prison institutions* as far as possible and to ensure the individual prisoner’s rights and integrity in line with any other citizen. There *are* limitations in the way a prison sentence can be executed in today’s prisons with the associated historical orthodoxy. Further, to what degree are politicians and others willing to accept an institutional, social and material normalization? Although some open prisons are little prison-like, their liberty restricting function remains intact.

Some high security prisons have also created similar departments with material, architectural and interior conditions, which aim to reduce the institutional atmosphere. Halden Prison (opened in 2010) is (along with Bastøy, Hassel, Ila and Bredtveit prison) a prison that has received considerable

international attention. The prison's Governor, Are Høidal, insists that the idea of a high security prison, which is humane, normalized and creative, is achievable. However, despite the intention of normalized social and material conditions, and a management and staff with humanitarian ideals, such intentions are hampered by strict political, economic, and centrally directed, rigorous security requirements. The modern prison's material structure and interior shows that *a modern aesthetic material design does not quell the feeling of a prison-like existence*. Nor is the prison system's essential totalitarian orthodoxy weakened. On the contrary, it can be enhanced by visible and non-visible structures (Merleu-Ponty). A prisoner compared the new modern prison he lived in with the older one from which he was transferred: "The rooms in modern prisons are not necessarily better than the threadbare ones in older prisons." He continued, "Often it is really the opposite!" With this, he confirmed the opinion of many other prisoners: A prison is a prison no matter what! Once again, the orthodox, repressive logic of prison is challenged: Why can't life behind bars be formed to offer a *real* socio-material "normalization"?

A rough sketch, some ideas and some rudimentary considerations

A prison may, in the purest essential form, be referred to as a social field, a socio-material arena and a 'social space' of a *distinctive, repressive and totalitarian type*. In this sense, both the 'new' and "old turns", the topographical understanding, space-sociology and space-philosophy may open the door to other professional perspectives and more composite analyses. The ways of thinking we have examined can be useful theoretical and academic tools of analysis, but also methodological, epistemological, ontological and ethical starting points for better prison studies and a more normalized sosiomaterial life in prison. The analysis methodology and basic understanding of "turns" can help us carry out even better critical studies of prison institutions' control-permeated practices and everyday life. In that sense, "turning" should enable more concrete studies of the activities of individual prisons, and thus reveal local conditions and a better view of the detailed everyday life of prisoners and employees. The various turns also inspire the study of topographical, material, architectural and interior-related layouts and practices in prisons. Further, 'the human turn' is built on the principle of a comprehensive and dynamic view of

humanity. This means that every imprisoned person must be accepted as an equal and unique personality with rights, specific needs and retaining personal integrity. The imprisoned person is, implicitly, isolated from the world outside in a repressive and vulnerable exile. That is, an inner and outer exile that affects thoughts and actions (Johannesen,2005). However, *the individual* is not only surrounded by walls and restraints imposed by the prison – he/she also forms himself/herself and the surroundings within the prison space and its various consequent constraints and opportunities. There are limits in the possibilities but also possibilities in the limitations!

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