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How do parking practices structure urban territorial communities?

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Abstract

In this article we analyse the socio-spatial contexts and consequences of the practice of car parking in housing estates. Fredrik Barth's idea of socially constructed boundaries and the theory of social practice form the theoretical basis of our analysis. The empirical material comes from research conducted in 2016 and 2017 in three Polish cities. We analyse the practice of parking in terms of the specific aspect of mobility that is 'mooring'. The research shows that parking practices influence the structuring of territorial communities in housing estates on two levels: everyday activities, norms and rules, as well as social differences and boundaries in the space occupied by the housing estate.

Introduction

Car traffic and its consequences (social, cultural, economic, for urban planning, ecological and political) are among the most important subjects covered within the field of urban and mobility studies (Urry 2004; Hagman 2006; Hannam, Sheller & Urry 2006; Merriman 2016; Jensen 2017). In this article, we perform a sociological analysis of one of the aspects of the 'automobilisation' of cities: the presence of cars and vehicular traffic on housing estates. The central question is: how do parking practices meet the organisation and reorganisation of urban communities? In particular, we would like to show a wider context making parking practices a central issue in contemporary big city housing estates and then grasp how normative and structural order emerges from every day actions and events concerning parking practices.

Our analysis is based on three premises. First, we emphasise the unique importance of practices of everyday life as a sphere in and through which social reality is created, reproduced and modified (Giddens 1987; Reckwitz 2002; Schatzki 2001, 2002; Hui, Schatzki & Shove 2017). We are therefore interested in mobility analysed from the perspective not of statistics or public opinion research (although we recognise the value of such studies and treat them as important information sources), but of regular, commonplace activities directly and indirectly related to moving around a city – walking, strolling, or travelling by bike, motorcycle, car, tram or bus. Second, we assume that every space, for example estates, together with the mobile elements/objects that are part of them, is not just a 'scene' or 'background' for practices, but itself is an aspect of them – specific practices are as they are because one space or another is part of them (Hui 2013; Petersen 2013). The third premise, directly connected with the practices of mobility, is that an immanent element of them is 'mooring' in a space, i.e. stopping, parking, locking up one's bike or leaving a stroller in a pram storage room (Aldred & Jungnickel 2013).

In the context of the aforementioned 'automobilisation', analyses conducted on a microscale – for example that of a housing state – reveal the complexity and dynamic of the variable circumstances affecting the quality of life of the inhabitants of large cities, other than solely vehicle traffic, restriction of which is called for as a condition of city development (e.g. Parysek 2016; Wiszniowski 2015). Treating the problem of parking as an element of daily life, we therefore believe that a thorough observation of specific behaviours, activities and practices directly and indirectly associated with the car traffic on an estate can provide valuable information not only on urban processes and phenomena themselves, but also on much broader social processes and mechanisms.

A relational perspective in studies on territorial communities

The analysis of parking practices presented in this article results from the *Differences and Boundaries in the Process of Creating Neighbourhood Communities in Large Cities. A Socio-spatial Study*, research project which has been taking place since 2016. The objective of the research is to explain the mechanisms of development and reproduction of urban territorial communities at an estate level, which we assume to be closely related to the processes of differentiation, social construction of distances and their limitation. In conceptualising the research problem, we referred to Fredrik Barth's idea of socially constructed borders as well as concepts of social practices, especially as described by Theodore Schatzki. Following F. Barth (1998, 2006), we adopted a relational and contextual understanding of the social differences structuring communities and social groups. According to this perspective, for example, within a given territorial community (estate, neighbourhood), the same people in certain situations create distances between each other, isolate themselves from one another or even enter heated conflicts, while in others they cooperate and form coalitions and alliances – permanent or more temporary – and in other situations still they construct relations permitting them to organise common areas of life relatively smoothly and free from conflict. Social differences and the (material and symbolic) boundaries produced on their basis therefore do not derive from any deeper divisions (class-based, racial, ethnic), as in traditional approaches which substantialise social boundaries and differences, but rather result from everyday disagreements, disputes and tensions. F. Barth's relational conception of boundaries and differences corresponds closely to the theory of social practices, the second of our theoretical inspirations. This assumes, firstly, that social reality is constructed and reproduced by what people say and do in everyday situations. The elements of the practices – for instance residing, resting, moving around or consumption – are therefore discursive and non-discursive activities, statements and actions, forming a higher level of units acquiring meaning in reference to a specific situation or context, that might be symbolic, material, temporal or spatial. Secondly, social practice has a spatial and a temporal dimension, meaning that space and time for it are not only a context, but a significant component influencing the course and duration of the practice. For example, the fact that traffic jams take place in a large city – in the morning in the vicinity of housing estates and in the late afternoon around exits from the centre – is connected to the fact that in the morning people go to work from the outskirts,

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where they live, to the centre, where workplaces are located, and in the evening they return from the centre to the outskirts. Time and place here become components of the practices, rather than an objective system of coordinates. Finally, every practice reconstructs the characteristics of broader orders and social structures, which, conditioning the course of the practices, are in turn actualised and subjected to change through these everyday collaborations (Schatzki 2002). The everyday space shared by people familiarises and accustoms them to otherness, and therefore to diverse differences (e.g. cultural, ethnic, status) often become invisible and not evident in everyday contacts and situations. In this type of neighbourhood, such characteristics as length of residence on an estate, age, property structure, and previous life and work become components constructing practices, but not the foundations of differentiation separating distinct social worlds. In other words: the mentioned structural factors are revealed only within and through practices, which in turn are contextual and situational, released in the course of everyday events. It is therefore not objective characteristics of group affiliation that produce lasting and temporary differences and boundaries between groups, but rather everyday disputes, conflicts and tensions connected to wider contexts and orders.

Case study of parking practices / Parking practices in the field (research)

The main unit of our analysis is not groups or individuals, but social practice, in this case exemplified by the practice of parking as well as its manifold contexts and circumstances (legal-administrative, socio-cultural, or related to urban planning and architectural concerns). Based on extensive empirical material, we drew up a diverse list of behaviours and activities of the residents of the estates in question, which varied in terms of their specific nature, spatiotemporal range or permanence, and are discussed here under the common denominator of parking practices. The practices of estate mobility and parking are impacted by an array of actions, rules and norms as well as convictions: looking for a parking space, ways of positioning a car, increasing access to this place and regulating its availability, disciplining those not entitled to occupy a parking space, reporting infractions etc. These are both routine actions concerning parking (and relating to others using the estate space) and the associated regulations concerning entry, trips, zones and times of stay. They are also related to other socio-spatial practices, such as practices of marking boundaries (erecting fences and barriers, information signs regulating behaviour in the estate space etc.). These practices are embedded in various external contexts such as communications

infrastructure, spatial management, estate history and structure of ownership, changing life styles and economic standards, and themselves re-produce social distances, hierarchies, differences and divisions by cutting through estate communities (Schatzki 2002).

The estates where the research was conducted were chosen deliberately in accordance with a 'diverse-case method', meaning 'the selection of a set of cases – at least two – which are intended to represent the full range of values characterizing *X*, *Y*, or some particular *X/Y* relationship' (Seawright & Gerring 2008: 300). Diverse values referred to the spatial context of the estate, history, dynamic and individual nature of the socio-spatial processes. Our initial research, the results of which are discussed in this article, was performed in Krakow, with two estates selected: a modernist one from the 1970s, and a gated estate, referred to here as KO (Krakow-Old) and KN (Krakow-New). The research techniques were tested in these two locations over approx. 10 months. In total, we conducted 43 in-depth interviews with social experts as well as residents of the estates (31 KO 12 KN). In February 2017 research commenced on two estates in Tychy, and then, in July, on two more in Lublin. With all the estates, we tried to differentiate the sample of respondents on the basis of the ownership or rental situation: flat owner – lessee, and, in the case of older people, length of time spent living on the estate. In the article, we also refer to material assembled during study walks and field observations.

Spatial pressure in contemporary cities and its effects on estates

The processes of urbanisation observed in Poland in recent decades are often concurrent with those taking place in urban areas throughout the world, but there are also specific elements associated with legal matters (e.g. the Law on Spatial Management from 2003 [*Ustawa z dnia 27 marca 2003 r. o planowaniu i zagospodarowaniu przestrzennym*]), which restricted the influence of cars on the administration of space), political factors (an urban policy, cf. Gądecki & Kubicki 2014; Sagan 2016), or cultural concerns (the tendency, rooted in the past, to place high value on private ownership) (Smagacz-Poziemska, Bukowski & Kurnicki 2018). The issues of parking practices on housing estates must therefore be considered in a wider context, on the one hand created by the processes of suburbanisation, and on the other by the rapid development of housing and services investments in urban areas. Suburbanisation is frequently accompanied by the process of deconcentration and deglomeration of central areas, with the resultant development of a new form of city and means of getting around, dominated

by cars (Graham 2016; Wiszniowski 2015). This is connected to the development of motorisation, falling costs of purchasing a car and a high 'automobilisation' rate of the residents of cities and suburbs, which partly comprises an individualistic approach to the urban lifestyle, and is partly the result of a still underdeveloped public transport policy.

The scale and character of urban mobility have a direct influence on the quality of life in a city, from their environmental impact and the functions of the public space, via lifestyles, residents' health, safety and feeling of safety, e.g. as pedestrians, cyclists and drivers, to questions of the aesthetics of spaces and the city's image. Among the most important instruments for regulating the urban transport system are local policies, which have also been developing in certain Polish cities in recent years. One element of such policies is the attempt to regulate parking capacity, which takes place through, for instance, reducing the number of parking spaces available for cars, blocking and rationing access to parking areas, setting a hierarchy of users of public parking spaces, enforcing rotation by introducing parking zones and raising parking tariffs, or introducing increasingly severe environmental norms for gasoline-powered vehicles.

Large numbers of cars, increased traffic and the air pollution caused by on-road vehicles (Eurostat 2018) are becoming a fact of life not only in city centres, but also in estate areas, influencing the quality of life of the people living there. New developments in built-up areas, bus and tram termini, the vicinity of service points, schools, administration offices, doctors' surgeries and hospitals, as well as large shopping areas can become troublesome areas since they generate increased traffic and pressure on parking spaces. Attractively located urban areas are subject to huge investment pressures, and the local administration has minimal influence on the degree to which an investment satisfies non-residential needs. Since the 2003 Act, the standards by which developers need to abide are determined by the Construction Law (*Ustawa z dnia 7 lipca 1994 r. Prawo budowlane*), which does not place any obligations on the developer in terms of the accessibility of social infrastructure for residences or communication and transport links between the estate and the surrounding area. In Poland, a spatial plan for an estate must take into account the restrictions stipulated in local spatial development plans (if they exist) and in the conditions of planning permission. However, the last two decades of development practice demonstrates that an investor's overriding objectives are to maximise the floor space and living space and the correlated minimum standards regarding the parking ratio.

Parking practices: socio-spatial contexts and consequences

Analysis of the material clearly shows that the residents of the neighbourhoods we studied are extremely concerned about car traffic on their estate, the availability of parking spaces, the ways they are used and blended into broader spatial complexes. They make various efforts to deal with these issues in their local area. These initiatives take place on a daily basis in diverse situations and contexts, which can be grouped into two main subject areas. The first encompasses questions of the direct organisation of parking in the limited space on the estate. This concerns the formal and informal norms regulating permissible and prohibited places and times of day, along with a plethora of penalties corresponding to these norms. The second refers to all the initiatives, actions and events concerning group interests and the associated tensions and conflicts arising around the way the parking space is organised on the estate, as well as the perception of this space in the context of the functions and aims of the common spaces of the estate as a whole.

Individual actions and the emergence of a normative order

Within the structure and dynamics of everyday practices, one can discern the framework of an emerging normative order concerning parking on the estate. It is worth taking a closer look at the specific conditions and circumstances in which the actions regulating ways of parking within the area of the estate are realised in order to obtain a better insight into the mechanisms responsible for the character of these regulations, and subsequently the consequences of these regulations for the social order as a whole.

Land ownership is one of the fundamental factors affecting the organisation of car traffic and parking on an estate. When parking spaces are located on land belonging to the municipality, access to them on estates is theoretically open, and all interested parties may use them. When a carpark is situated on land belonging to a housing cooperative or community, this body can, in agreement with residents, take steps to regulate it. Parking spaces might also be the property of a developer, which puts them up for sale, either as part of purchase of a flat on the given estate or independently. The type of land ownership, in terms of buildings and the surrounding areas as well as the common areas of the estate, therefore becomes a formal framework for parking practices.

Based on the statements of the research subjects' and fieldwork observations and using the model of social practice designed by T. Schatzki (2002), we can

distinguish two general types of action concerning the organisation of parking areas and the regulation of their availability: resulting directly from the formal framework, and informal ones played out in formally non-regulated situations. The first type includes regulation of access to parking spaces through the option of purchasing a space, especially when their quantity is limited to the number of flats or less, or the allocation of one parking space within a homeowners' association, housing cooperative or a workplace operating in a given area. Parking spaces of this type are usually marked and/or secured with a barrier or entrance gate. Formal initiatives also include marking of vehicles belonging to residents, usually in the form of an identification card issued by the homeowners' association administrator or the housing cooperative office.

Putting up information boards and signs prohibiting parking in a given area is also a popular method (Fig. 1).

A lack of formal regulations concerning the rules for using parking spaces, coupled with a shortage where they are openly accessible, usually increases spontaneous, informal competition:

Actually there are three spaces, right at the entrance to the estate, that are not numbered and are generally available, there's a *constant battle for them.* (KN06)

Figure 2
Gates preventing free movement
(Krakow, 2017)
Source: photo by Marcjanna Nóżka

Figure 3
Blocking of public parking spaces
(Krakow, 2017)
Source: photo by Marcjanna Nóżka

A practice restricting unrestrained parking of cars that was often encountered on the estates we studied was the installation of plant pots or posts along pavements and green areas to prevent cars from encroaching (Fig. 2), or also planting of trees and bushes on green areas. Such initiatives are usually not directly caused by formal authorisations but are in a way an informal consequence of them.

The informal actions regulating the organisation of parking practices and spaces also include numerous ways, rules and agreements among neighbours concerning economisation of the space, i.e. increasing a limited parking area by placing their cars appropriately:

[The number] of cars is growing, but there are no more spaces. [How do you cope with that?] You park tightly. (KO.07)

There is also often an unwritten rule of avoiding occupying places which are generally – by prescription or based on tacit acceptance – used by a neighbour.

[The neighbours] park their cars in such a way that it's clear who leaves early, and who doesn't. It's really well organised […]. Even when our daughter comes in her car, when my husband's parked, she parks behind him, so as not to block anyone's space. (KO.04)

Occupying spaces that belong, formally or informally (e.g. through prescription or consensus) and are used by a given resident is often frowned upon:

[…] it's good having the barrier as fewer people come here, because I've known people to park outside our block, in our space. We come and… well, because outsiders don't know; although there's a sign, still… (KN.02)

This means that when these tacit parking rules are broken, for example by wilful blocking of public parking spaces for one's own use, ignoring the aforementioned consensus, this has an impact on neighbourly relations, often becoming the source of latent tensions or overt conflict (Fig. 3):

He [the person who runs the estate grocery shop] parks there all the time, I move his crates out of the way, he doesn't say anything anymore. […] he made a private parking space for himself. He blocks [it] with crates… One time I had a little row with him, I said it wasn't his private space. (KO.12)

The interviewees also pointed to practices of neighbours themselves patrolling the parking space, which generally meant pointing out transgressions and warning guilty parties, but also personally enforcing the norms:

One man, from our stairwell, because my partner has a different registration number, so he parked outside this… [block]. And the man said, 'You can't park here, because you have a different registration number and you can't park here, please remove your car, because outside this block there's only a carpark for people who live here'. (KOINST.12)

A wide range of behaviours associated with traffic on an estate and parking are subject to invigilation and evaluation. Blocking other cars in a way preventing others from leaving the estate or representing a threat to other users also encounters negative reactions. Uneconomic use of space as a result of unfamiliarity with the internal rules of using a carpark causes disapproval, as does failure to follow information signs (e.g. lines marked on the road surface):

[…] it's worse when outsiders arrive, because then they don't know the customs, and sometimes they park in such a way that one car takes up space where three could park. (KO.04)

[The problem is] when someone doesn't park as they should, for example taking up two spaces, without thinking that it would be good to make room for others. (KO.05)

Similar objections are raised in response to people parking too close to windows:

I reverse into the space, rather than parking forwards, and there's this old woman who comes out and tells me that I'm polluting her air. (KO.08)

We therefore see that residents both negotiate the norms and apply specific sanctions to those who flout them. The various reactions to transgression of set formal or informal rules regulating estate parking can be divided into two generally defined types of action:
1) disciplinary and repressive, e.g. calling the municipal police, abusive notes inserted under the windscreen wiper:

Sometimes somebody might not have parked in their space because a guest has come, and it seemed to be empty, so I put my car there. And then there were even notes left, please park… At times with obscenities, park in your place, not here etc. (KN.05)

FIGURE 4
Information slip prohibiting parking (Krakow, 2017)
Source: photo by Marcjanna Nóżka

2) informational and admonitory, e.g. inserting information concerning appropriate behaviour inserted under windscreen wipers.

> The municipal police sometimes show up here when cars park in unmarked spaces, but it's not residents that call them, it's the estate security, first there's a warning note, and if someone doesn't remove their car, the security call them. (KN.05)

Figure 4 illustrates an example of regulation of informal parking regulations. Despite the lack of a formal prohibition of parking in the space of a block belonging to one of the estate associations, cars without a parking card issued to residents are informed of the existence of such a prohibition by means of a warning placed under the windscreen wipers. Residents, in response to the pressure of formal regulations and informal social control, usually adapt to the situation. The factors mentioned above encourage conformist behaviour, as the following account suggests:

> *I called the midwife, the midwife came over and I called security… between contractions I called: 'You know what, the car's a Multipla (…) I'd really like to stress that if the police come, if they could not give a fine, because it's a midwife, because I'm having a baby right now.' And when my husband wakes up, he'll sort out [a "legal" parking space]. (KN.04)*

This incident is an example of the embodiment and routinisation of normative rules reflected in social practices. On the other hand, though, the increasingly petty and restrictive ways of organising parking areas and regulating access to them are increasingly met with disapproval from residents, especially when they are perceived as unnecessary, and even dysfunctional, causing specific difficulties or inconveniences:

> *Carpark issues… blocking spaces where one could easily have parked, I don't know who it would bother to put up more posts and chains to make it harder to park, even for people*

crossing the pavement [it hinders them], because they have to go to the end of the pavement to cross to the other side [...] there are more and more estate streets blocked by barriers, which I think is stupid. (KO.08)

Dissatisfaction with adopted regulations is often expressed in material terms by letters (usually to the estate administration office), with the objective of protesting at unaccepted actions, or by direct intervention with the administration office, or even destruction of signs, posts or greenery that restrict traffic, moving or disassembling plant pots, as well as ignoring information signs. These are just some examples of contestation of norms or conflict over norms. The contours of normative order are negotiated, which particularly applies to the scope and form of access to restricted common spaces.

The materials presented reveal the mechanisms of construction of the normative order, embedded on the one hand in formal regulations (ownership rule), and on the other in informal negotiations resulting from everyday pressures, needs and interests. The latter supplement the sphere of formal regulations and specify everything that the former does not take into account or does not regulate (Helmke & Levitzky 2004). But this does not mean that the construction as a whole is constant and stable; on the contrary, it is subject to continual contestation of various levels of intensity. The normative order is therefore not so much established through norms and regulations as negotiated in everyday practices: on the one hand, checking, disciplining, punishing; and on the other, protesting at, breaking or questioning established laws and rules.

Collective actions and the structural order

Observing the practices of parking, we can notice group-forming processes enmeshed in them. Residents sometimes consolidate with the aim of protecting the land from damage or changes to its previous function, e.g. in response to plans to increase the number of parking spaces. They react especially when the changes are to take place at a cost to them, e.g. destruction of something that has developed as a result of their joint work and/or financial investment, restricted access to other valuable goods (e.g. playground, recreation area), damage to the aesthetics of the land etc.:

Every tree that's here was planted by us for the community. [...] everyone wanted to have this greenery, because there was nothing here. [...] And the woods further over, they wanted to clear it all to make a carpark. Because there's a doctor's surgery, no room for carparks, this, that and the other. And again there was an avalanche, hundreds of people's signatures to stop the municipality. (KO.09)

Similar protests and expressions of collective indignation arise when intruders appear in a space that a group considers its own:

For example someone drives from here to Lewiatan [supermarket] by car, because let's say it's below zero, how are they supposed to walk 15 minutes to the shop [...] And people park their cars there, and the people from the local housing cooperative call the municipal police, sometimes the regular police even [...]. And straightaway on our estate forum they say, 'Oh those lot, how could they, so spiteful'. At the same time, on our estate, as soon as someone parks by the road, there'll be some kind person who'll call the municipal police and inform on a neighbour from the same block. But those lot are bad and we're good [...]. (KN.05)

When there is a shortage of space, it is also common for people to use free parking spaces in an area far from their own home. This leads to antagonisms between neighbours, as it usually means parking on land adjoining another housing cooperative or homeowners' association.

The above examples demonstrate not only the fomenting of tensions and group conflicts, but also the emergence, based upon shared interests of collective entities, of something akin to 'parkinghoods', which not only recognise each other internally and integrate in the course of everyday practices, but also develop the ability to recognise and 'mark' outside parkers. The most frequent consequence of the emergence of this type of 'group parking interests' is fencing of common spaces. An increasingly popular practice is putting up fences, barriers and gates around a given area, which, apart from restricting access to parking spaces, can also, in various ways, limit and regulate other means of moving around the estate, e.g. for pedestrians or cyclists:

1) partial restriction of movement of other users of the estate space in a given area by leaving entrance gates open only for pedestrians and cyclists (Fig. 3);
2) preventing free movement around a given area for other users of the estate space by installing closed gates opened with a key or using a transponder or code (Fig. 4).

A separate group of conflicts and tensions is those played out between car owners and residents who do not own one. The latter are not passive actors. Even when they share the opinion that it is necessary to solve the problem of the shortage of parking spaces and traffic congestion in their district, they are reluctant to increase the costs of investments, or of control and prevention initiatives, instead shifting this responsibility onto the municipality or car owners:

The city should build a carpark so that there'll be somewhere to put the car. If they want people to use public transport. There's land there by the terminus. [Here there is no fence and assigned parking spaces] but apparently there will be. I even wrote that I don't want them. Why should I pay for everything? I haven't got a car. […] it's pointless, because that kind of remote control costs 100 PLN, or 90. (KO.02)

Willingness to participate in decision-making processes and to bear costs increases when people without a car perceive a personal interest – such as the comfort of visiting family and friends – in possessing a parking space or increasing the capacity of roads adjacent to their block. In certain circumstances, the parking-related actions cited above were conducive to the relations of people with specific resources and interests and initiated contacts between residents, whereas in others they antagonised and provoked conflicts, becoming the source of rifts:

[…] at first there was already this kind of division between people… regarding parking. […] Those…, who wanted to find a solution, and those who said there's nothing to solve as far as parking cars on the estate is concerned. So I think there was that one kind of divide. (KN.04)

Apart from the factors mentioned, further elements leading to group divisions related to parking issues might be the number of cars in a family, a flat's location in relation to the estate carpark, ownership of a space in a garage, the likelihood of regular visits from people from outside the estate owning a car (a common situation among older people, who do not have their own car but whose children visit them by car). Our research showed that such characteristics structure the group of residents in contentious situations when, for example, questions of the location of new parking spaces or the rules of using them are resolved. On one side of the dispute are people open to discussion and to looking for solutions as they experience the problem of having somewhere to park. On the other side of the dispute are those who categorically block discussion of the problem. These are usually people who: paid for the most expensive parking spaces, or have ground-floor flats with gardens, next to potential parking spaces. This example leads to broader structural phenomena associated with the level of affluence of various groups of residents living in the neighbourhood. One interviewee emphasised the differing motivations of people who have already paid for a parking space:

I suggested the possibility of making extra parking spaces. So what was the crowning argument [not to make extra parking spaces on the gated estate]: 'I didn't pay all those thousands for a space just so someone could park for free […] Because I didn't pay for a garage just so somebody else wouldn't have anywhere to park, but because no matter the season, day, or time, I can come back early in the morning, and I know that the place is there waiting for me.' (KN.05)

Later on in the interview, this person adds:

Because if a given group has some common denominator, be it a common enemy or a common interest group, they tend to stick together. Or hold some shared group of views, such as 'I paid for the space, so why should he have it for free?'

This is an example of social diversity, but in a new form. Ownership is still a significant factor in stratification, but it functions in a different socio-spatial context: when the members of various groups and social strata are forced to live in direct spatial proximity. In this case, class difference is stressed through attempts to block or limit access to spaces common to other, less affluent groups of users in order to highlight the distance dividing these groups. As a measure of the vitality of social distances, including those based on class, and proof that they by no means disappeared with the arrival of postmodernity, let us quote a resident of a gated estate speaking during a heated discussion on an estate internet forum: 'If you bought a cheap flat without a parking space, then live there, you fool, and we won't let you through our estate'.

As the aforementioned types of (self-)organisation of residents show, the various issues related to parking and management of space are becoming an area of competition, conflicts, and bargaining, a subject of contestation, but also regulation or segregation, and even an inspiration for creating short-lived or more lasting communities, groups and coalitions.

Conclusion

Researchers in many disciplines, including the social sciences, have long been very interested in the subject of car traffic in cities, with all its macrostructural conditions and diverse functional consequences. In this article we took a slightly different approach to these issues corresponding with O. B. Jensen's assumption that 'the mobilities turn suggests that we are alive as we move and increasingly the way we move must be understood to have

profound repercussions for the ways we think of ourselves, of social others, and of the material world' (Jensen 2017: 10). We, likewise, comprehend the parking practices.

In this article, we proceed to analyse the effects of such planning of the urban space, in particular that of estates, pointing to the diverse actions of actors involved in this space and their wider circumstances and consequences. Based on the results of the empirical research, we indicate various actions and initiatives undertaken by residents and other people using the space of the estate in order to achieve a variety of sometimes mutually exclusive goals: adaptation or improvement of the current situation, minimisation of the stress generated by car noise, pollution and congestion, and even complete spatial reorganisation. Our research leads to the general conclusion that parking practices are part of larger systems and contexts (e.g. normative, civic) which themselves have specific consequences such as the formation of local communities (with parking as the common denominator) or even broader orders (e.g. class-based), with a different form from previous versions.

The mechanisms of social structuring of estate communities can be discerned by observing the everyday activities and behaviours associated either with the regular parking of the residents themselves, or with the longer and shorter stays of 'guests' visiting the estate. Diverse tactics and strategies accumulate around 'car mooring', regulating the rights to the parking space and enforcing the execution of these rights. Apart from formal regulations implemented by the municipal authorities, cooperatives and associations, informal disciplinary and control mechanisms also emerge, which may be either complementary to or independent of the formal ones. As a result, everyday activities and practices produce the contours of a wider normative order which is in turn subject to social negotiation through various practices conforming with or contesting the previous system. As it turned out, the space, its elements and characteristics become an indispensable component and product of this order, helping to define its main parameters in the form of material and symbolic boundaries, barriers and limitations. Furthermore, the analysis demonstrated that parking practices join together, merge and 'intersect' with other practices, mainly related to investments and developments, but also civic initiatives with such objectives and protection of green spaces from expansion of parking areas, sometimes backed by wider movements in favour of sustainable development. Our research also showed that practices related to the parking display characteristics of broader structural orders such as class. Blocking access to space for parking as well as diverse formal and informal ways of regulating it are often, in fact, contemporary 'markers' of social distances and class affiliation. These are revealed in such situations as when people with different social statuses are forced to live close to each other and share common spaces.

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