EXPLORING SOCIAL AND SPATIAL OPPORTUNITIES TO MOVE WITHIN A CITY – A RESIDENT’S PERSPECTIVE ON URBAN MOBILITY
ELISABETH DONAT & MADELEINE KOCH

Geographies of Uneven Development
Working Paper
Abstract

The unequally distributed opportunities for being mobile lead to consequences on mobility patterns of individuals and distinct social groups within urban environments. In- and exclusion processes occur that have wide influence on social and spatial inequalities and by this considerable effect the quality of life of urban residents. Placement and movement of objects, humans and locations are constantly in transition; also relations between them are altering (URY 2006). Meanwhile the structures of inequality in space are institutionalized by repetitive behaviour of urban citizens (Löw 2001) and varying extension of action spaces and different levels of local knowledge among residents strengthen inequalities in distribution, utilization and acquisition of urban space. In this paper we focus on individual socio-spatial arrangements and mobility practices to investigate urban resident’s perspective on mobility and their individual opportunities to move within a city to fulfil their everyday needs and daily routines. We conducted a case study in the city of Salzburg, to explore the hidden factors of mobility orientations, preferences and aversions to specific mobility styles and behaviours of urban citizens from various social milieus. We investigate the complex argumentation structures of travel mode choices that had to be traced back to tangible and intangible aspects of individual and collective mobility. This qualitative approach enables us to explore, how manifold mobility patterns in urban space appear and how social milieus and mobility patterns are linked. By focusing on varying self-concepts in public space we suggest to distinguish between three empirical types of residents: top dogs, transient and modest when analysing mobility patterns of urban residents.

Keywords: mobility patterns, local knowledge, action spaces, social and spatial inequality, social milieus, qualitative survey, case study, urban sociology, urban geography, social geography

www.uni-salzburg.at/geo/uneven_development
1 Interest & Aim

“All everyday activities require the negotiation of space and time...” (Jarvis 2011: 519) by individuals to meet the multitude requirements given by work, family and other social networks as well as by society. Besides the individual mobility that fits the distinct needs of a person, mobility patterns of various social groups associated with different lifestyles emerge as a consequence of the coordination of things and people in space and time. Restraints on being mobile bear social consequences such as limitations to social participation (Shove 2002), because even today most everyday practices, e.g. working, daily shopping, catching up friends, educating oneself, keeping care of others, require co-presence.

Sheller & Urry draw attention, in their 2006 article “The New Mobility Paradigm”, to the idea that there is a lack of knowledge about how people and things move supported by changing objects and technologies. The actual fragmented socio-temporal order, the changing requirements for individual flexibility and social as well as spatial inequalities (Shove 2002) affect urban mobility patterns at an individual and societal level. Additionally Sheller & Urry state that there is no deep understanding of how actual and potential movements organize and structure social life. Furthermore, the new mobility paradigm argues that not only people but also places are on the move. Understanding everyday places as the product of a negotiation of relationships between people and tangible and intangible infrastructures, it is obvious that such places can shift their location over shorter or longer distances, in various time horizons and also from reality to virtual worlds and thus are not tied to a specific position in space.

The purpose of this paper is to address the theme of “mobilities, action spaces and local knowledge” within a city by thinking about people moving through time and space with their individual and manifold purposes, capabilities and demands. As an emergent property, mobility itself leads to socio-spatial inclusion and exclusion processes and so challenges the urban planning system in practice and raises questions about spatial justice (Soja 2010) at a societal level.

We use social practice theory to frame our work and to transfer our study results to a societal level by exploring individual mobility behaviors within an urban environment and uncover mobility patterns of urban lifestyle groups participating in dissimilar socio-spatial arrangements. Combining a geographical and sociological perspective, we approach our understanding of the mobility of urban citizens by conducting a qualitative survey to comprehend local knowledge as well as perception and the use of urban spaces by different types of residents with dissimilar lifestyles and habits.

In our study, conducted in the city of Salzburg in spring 2013, we analyzed the mobility behavior of residents from different age cohorts, sexes & genders, social positions, from ethnic minorities as well as migrants, to explore the explicit styles of mobility of people living in specific circumstances. We asked about the individual constraints that influence the perception and use of action spaces taking all everyday activities into account, e.g. travelling to work, meeting people, use of leisure time and their manifold arrangements. What do local people know about their use of the city’s urban spaces? How do mobility styles articulate mobility needs? And what can urban planning learn from this, to valorize urban spaces and streets and, by doing this, adapt to altering mobility styles and needs?
2 Theoretical relations between mobility and local knowledge

If individuals are asked to reflect on the meaning of mobility for their everyday life, as was done in our study in the city of Salzburg, most of them associate mobility with the mode of transport they are familiar with, to match their everyday needs and daily routines e.g. driving a car, using public transport systems, cycling and walking. To travel a required spatial distance in a given time frame and with affordable costs to meet the requirements of oneself and others (e.g. family, friends, and colleagues) is of high importance if one is to feel mobile within an urban environment.

In cities where manifold individual mobility requirements come together, mobility itself, and the individual opportunities to be mobile, become key elements in the constitution of the modern urban networked-society as well as in the construction of social and urban spaces. Mobility leads to a self-positioning in social space of lifestyles and, by doing this, mobility is widely influenced by the behavior and values of others. The arising collective mobility patterns of certain social groups (e.g. upper middle class car drivers) have mostly been unnoticed and underestimated in their effects on the mobility of other urban residents (e.g. migrant women without a car). So, when talking about mobility in urban environments it is finally essential to highlight the significance of individual mobility for acquisition of space, to enable each citizen to fulfill their everyday needs and daily routines.

Thus mobility can be defined as an elementary need of each individual in order to fulfill the basic requirements of social life and as an emergent phenomenon that is constituted by individuals and society in their everyday practice of fulfilling their basic needs. Manderscheid (2012) and Dangschat & Segert (2011) differentiate further between necessities to be mobile, forces to be mobile and the satisfaction of needs by being mobile, although the border between those three ends seems to be fluent. The relevance of mobility for a person’s well-being becomes even more evident in the WHO’s definition of quality of life: “The WHO defines Quality of Life as individuals’ perception of their position in life in the context of the culture and value systems in which they live and in relation to their goals, expectations, standards and concerns. It is a broad ranging concept affected in a complex way by the person’s physical health, psychological state, level of independence, social relationships, personal beliefs and their relationship to salient features of their environment” (WHO 1997: 1). The WHO definition reflects the interdependence of mobility (here understood as a level of independence) with other parameters of well-being: physical and mental health, social networks and environmental circumstances like available infrastructure and housing conditions. Figure 1 displays this interdependence between these various components and gives a first impression of indicators for the six main dimensions in terms of urban mobility.
Undoubtedly, quality of life is most often accompanied by social inequality: “Social inequality in a broader sense is inherent wherever possibilities to access commonly available and desirable social goods and/or positions are underlying enduring restrictions and are therefore limiting/enhancing life chances for the individuals, groups or societies involved” (Kreckel 2004: 2, translation ED). This definition of social inequality does not only focus on equal access to social goods/positions (causes), but also on the consequences of inequality, i.e. unequal life chances and quality of life. Perceptions of opportunity structures and reactions towards them can of course vary. Poor access to mobility infrastructures is not always accompanied by feelings of deprivation (Glatzer 1984).

Cass, Shove and Urry (2002) suggest analyzing social inclusion and exclusion within a society as an emergent property using a schematic model, which interlinks (a) social obligation and practices, (b) individual rationalities and resources and (c) physical infrastructure. In addition Shove highlights the importance of social capital in her definition on “… social inclusion/exclusion (i.e. failure or ability to meet normal conventions or accomplishments necessary for membership of society) as an emergent property of these three elements…much depends upon the social groups to which people belong (or want to belong) and what practices this requires of them” (Shove 2002: 4).

In order to fulfill the obligations and needs of daily life and to be mobile, local knowledge is needed. In a broader sense, local knowledge can be described as experiential knowledge about how things can or should be done. Furthermore, it is transmitted and enhanced via social networks and therefore includes local networks with relatives, friends and in broader social contexts. More tangible aspects can be summarized as knowledge about existing local infrastructures like public transport, leisure and shopping facilities, health and educational institutions etc. in the potentially accessible household environment. Local knowledge and mobility are associated via a feedback-relationship rather closely. Growing spatial mobility can lead to a growth of local knowledge and
individuals can gain insights into their local environment by traveling. Nevertheless, travel behavior is strongly influenced by routines (Verplanken & Wood 2006), which are only re-evaluated if major changes in the course of life (moving, new job etc.) occur. Therefore, the acquisition of local knowledge might also face some saturation for long term residents. Even more, habitual traffic behavior might lead to some ignorance of and fatigue towards the surrounding environment and therefore decreases the learning curve in local knowledge. It can be concluded that local knowledge does not emerge arbitrarily but is also a product of motivated attention.

Which parameters actually lead to unequal distributions of space and local knowledge? The unequal distribution of space has been discussed a lot currently according to the so called “spatial turn” which has taken place in the social sciences during the last decade. The discussion of space followed the notion of a “container” for a very long time (Löw 2001). In this sense, space has been mainly discussed as a rather uninteresting prerequisite of social life and has been perceived as a fixed and inflexible entity. Initially Anthony Giddens picked up the concept of space intensively in his theory of structuration (Giddens 1984). Space became one of the main determinants of social action in his theoretical approach and was described as the corset in which all social life takes place. However, the creation, formation and redefinition of space by social action is still not elaborated by his theoretical approach. Löw (2001: 65, translation ED) is missing an explanation for how spaces can change in these former concepts: “The absolutistic notion of space recognizes movements within spaces, but no moving and changing of the spaces themselves.”

Löw stresses a new definition of space as a relational order and arrangement of (human) bodies which are constantly in movement and therefore perpetually change their relations and distances towards new spatial definitions. The perception of space and its spatial components and the reassembling of these towards a spatial definition are influenced by biographical knowledge and individual education and socialization. This process of perception is called “synthesizing” by Löw (2001) and includes perceiving, imaging and remembering as core mechanisms. The everyday (social) construction of spatial orders is not done for the first time, but can rely on existing schemes which are a product of our repeated actions. This repetitive behavior is responsible for the emergence of social structures and institutions in space. Vice versa, these structures influence the performed behavior, which can easily be imagined as travel behavior which is driven by habits most of the time (Verplanken et al. 2008). The mere arrangement of things and humans cannot be defined as a specific space by then; the perceived composition has to be stuck together by synthesizing first in order to form a concrete space. Obviously, local knowledge is a key resource during the process of synthesizing.

The relational order which can be perceived in a spatial composition is not driven at random, but is in many cases induced by conscious and strategic planning, the thinking and acting of individuals or groups. All spatial order, like the arrangement of buildings, the space reserved for transport and various vehicles or pedestrians and the placing of humans inside this material world, is not arranged randomly. Therefore it has to be questioned which items/humans are arranged in this order, who has the power/right/ability to arrange these things and how this process of placing takes place. Pierre Bourdieu (1985) has defined the social space as a constant “battle field” for various social groups defending their claim of ownership. The various amounts of economic, social and cultural capital of the actors influence their ability to negotiate and to develop lobbies in order to defend their interests (Bourdieu 1983). According the traffic network of a city, various interest groups and lobbies can be deduced by analyzing the amount of space which is provided for motorists, cyclists, pedestrians and
public transport by the city council. Furthermore, people who rank high in the social strata dispose of more material and symbolic space, which can be observed for example by taking a look at a city’s housing policy and level of segregation.

Quite similar to Bourdieu’s concept of social inequality, Löw (2001: 214) differentiates four dimensions of social inequality with respect to the constitution of spaces: unequal chances according to unequal material resources, unequal knowledge resources, unequal social positions and unequal affiliations to this space. Social inequality concerning access and distribution of space occurs whenever these inequalities become institutionalized in the process of synthesizing. Since the concept of “class” has undergone widespread skepticism in general social sciences, the concept of milieus has simultaneously gained much influence in urban fields of social research. Individualization, globalization and increasingly complex social structures have led to a variety of life styles and diverse patterns of values and attitudes. Nevertheless, the initial euphoria about the milieu approach has been replaced by a more differentiated view, re-emphasizing the importance of objective life circumstances like age, gender, ethnicity or income (Scheiner 2009). Dangschat & Segert (2011) used SINUS-Milieus in their study on sustainable mobility in various social milieus. They classified preferences for and aversions to specific mobility styles in various social milieus (Table 1), as a rather shortened version of a more complex picture.

Table 1 Mobility preferences in various social milieus (Dangschat & Segert 2011: 65, translation ED)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Milieu segment</th>
<th>Milieu</th>
<th>Preferences and Aversions towards specific mobility styles and modes of transport</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Upper Milieu</td>
<td>Established</td>
<td>(+) comfortable, fast (-) laborious</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Post Materialists</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young Milieu</td>
<td>Modern performers</td>
<td>(+) spontaneous, intensive (-) boring, inefficient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Experimenters</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hedonists</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mainstream Milieu</td>
<td>Middle class</td>
<td>(+) predictable (-) insecure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Consumer oriented Basis</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traditional Milieu</td>
<td>Conservatives</td>
<td>(+) simple, sociable (-) impersonal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Traditionalists</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rural Inhabitants</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The crux of this milieu concept becomes obvious when ethnic minorities have to be integrated into this differentiation. Nevertheless, we are going to use this key-concept as a useful heuristic or starting point, but we also allow for supplements and revisions which are in line with our qualitative study.

The following research questions can be formulated after this theoretical abstract:

1. Which of the following tangible and intangible determinants influence the mobility orientations and mobility behavior of our interview partners?

   - tangible: socio-structural background as individual rationalities and resources (social, economic, cultural capital), perceived physical infrastructure;
   - intangible: local knowledge (“synthesizing”) and integration, attitudes and life styles, self-concept as citizen and traffic participant, social obligations and practices;
2. How do these mobility patterns appear in an urban space, which kind of relational order can be derived from them and is there an association between social status and mobility patterns?

3. Method and Research Design

To prove and expand the theoretical statements above and to answer our research questions we designed our research as a multiple case study (Yin 2009). As a spatial reference level we incorporated six out of 24 districts of the city of Salzburg: Itzling and Lehen, two former working-class neighborhoods located in the north of Salzburg's city center, Schallmoos, a district with an utmost mixed and unstructured land-use including residential, industrial and commercial areas in the northeast, Maxglan, a popular residential area in the western part of the city, as well as Aigen, the most expensive residential district in Salzburg in the south east and adjacent Parsch, an older residential area close to the city center covered mostly with houses for one or two families. These districts are attributed with specific and divergent characteristics in the form of their residential buildings, accessibility to the town center and neighborhood districts by public and private transport, population structure, and infrastructure facilities. Due to the limited number of 37 interviewers (the research proceeded within a student's university course) we decided to build a theoretical sample (Flick 2002) aiming to represent a wide range and high level of dissimilarity of participants in population structure, social milieus as well as life- and mobility styles.

The data collection was gathered as a qualitative survey with semi-structured guided interviews. Depending on the population size of each district a minimum of five and up to ten face-to-face in-depth interviews were conducted. The interview guide was prepared as flexible and fluid in structure and contained predetermined open-ended questions following a sequence of themes on housing (e.g. individual situation, living in the district, neighborhood, and patterns of migration during life-span, leisure behavior, perception and utilization of the city), transport and mobility (e.g. individual mobility assessment and transport mode, perception of other citizens using public or private transport), individual utilization of action spaces within the city, and socio-demographic data as important information sources on the interviewee's economic and social background.

To discover the different lifestyles, mobility patterns and daily routines of Salzburg's residents, the interviewers paid attention to individual living environments: attitudes, knowledge and the use of nearby residential locations and surrounding infrastructure, mobility and transport modes in everyday practice, awareness about and connectedness with the local neighborhood and resulting social relations, perceptions of the entire city environment as well as specific districts and places. We addressed the individual mobility behavior, values and attitudes towards personal mobility by talking about explicit knowledge about traffic infrastructure, influences on and choices of individual transport mode as well as perceptions of others while being mobile in everyday life.

As an important source of information about individual mobility patterns and local knowledge, we involved a mapping of action spaces to our interviews. Introduced by the Swedish geographer Torsten Hägerstrand in the 1960s the mapping of action spaces was devised to visualize individual human movement data in time and space (Hägerstrand 1970). As Klee states “[t]he urban space as well as its material and symbolic infrastructure are perceived, rated and finally used in a
differentiated way depending on individual value principles, life ambition, leisure requirements and
everyday cultural practices” (translation MK, Klee 2001: 184f.). Movement paths undertaken as
individual activity profiles were recorded in action space diagrams. Meanwhile participants had to
reflect on the type, location and duration of action undertaken, the co-presence of others and how
they move between different locations. This procedure allowed us to focus on latent motivations,
values and mobility preferences. By recording the similarities and differences of individual
movements, we aimed to reconstruct the explicit physical and implicit social opportunities and
constraints that shape the daily practices of Salzburg’s inhabitants. Finally, we followed a qualitative
content analysis to structure and analyze the collected data (see also Mayring 2007 and Schreier
2012).

4 Results and Side effects using the example of Salzburg, Austria

The following results are presented in terms of “ideal types”, which reflect empirical concentrations
of themes in the interview material and are formulated in a rather strict manner in order to clarify
the sometimes fluent borders between the types. The realistic aim of a typology can never be to
capture all empirical observations completely, but to describe as many phenomena in the empirical
material as possible. Ideally, types should be as coherent within one category as possible, and as
heterogeneous as possible between various categories.

Table 2 starts with a differentiation of the more obvious or manifest dimensions in our research
questions. According to the action spaces our respondents reported, it makes sense to take a closer
look at the extreme cases of very large and very small action spaces. Action spaces that are reported
here include not only the effective, disposable and manageable space of our respondents, but also
personally perceived action spaces. Inhabitants who report on extensive action spaces are quite
often long-term residents. Residents reporting rather small action spaces have just recently moved to
Salzburg or, as the second category emphasizes, are highly dependent on others (due to bad health
or the need for assistance from others) when being mobile. Poor language skills for example can lead
to problems with reading city maps or problems when asking the way. On the other hand, interview
partners who can manage their daily mobility, daily duties and daily needs more independently are
most often in a good physical condition and of medium to high social status or capital. An extensive
action space also implies that one is not dependent on the immediate social environment: respondents might also have close contacts in the neighborhood, but are also able to cultivate contacts all over the city or even outside the city’s borders. As Granovetter (1978) once formulated, this group is able to induce and to care for the very important and helpful “weak ties”, which often provide useful information on scarce resources, and other opportunities, that might enhance life chances (job offers, information about free flats etc.). Interview partners reporting on narrow action spaces are clearly more dependent on contacts in their near environment. They are engaged in just a few, but very strong ties, for example helping relatives or neighbors.

Both groups can also be associated with typical transport means: interview partners with extensive
action spaces are most often car users and/or bike users. Conversely, interview partners with narrow
action spaces are managing their mobility needs and duties most often by walking, using of public
transport or assisted transport such as taxis or relatives picking them up by car. Both extreme groups
can be associated with different social milieus. Interview partners from the first group (those with
comparatively extensive action spaces) can mainly be found among respondents from the upper or young milieu. Interview partners reporting on more narrow action spaces have a higher probability of being members of mainstream or traditional milieus. The issue of economic restrictions has only been addressed indirectly by our respondents. Some reported to regularly drive to nearby Germany for food shopping, because of the favorable price discount shops located there. Others told us about the healthiness of walking, but also emphasized saving money at the same time. None of our interview partners would admit being limited in their mobility and action space because of lack of resources. Quite the contrary, all respondents from higher social strata emphasized the importance of being mobile by using drastic formulations like “You are independent [by using a car, comm. ED]. I can always decide by myself what I am doing. That’s invaluable.” The luxury that is frequently associated by our respondents with owning a car is best illustrated by the statement “Because I’m worth it”.

All these different characteristics, which can be associated with varying action spaces, can also be observed in the appearance and self-concept of individuals while using and occupying public space. It has become obvious that the two introduced groups are equipped with unequal (material and immaterial) resources. These resources allow different forms of “placing” in symbolic and material space. According to our interview material, interview partners are seldom happy with narrow action spaces but most often adapt to “unchangeable facts”. This first differentiation of the more tangible determinants of mobility patterns leads to the observation of different self-concepts in public space: strong presence (being on the offensive) and weak presence (being on the defensive), summarized by Table 2.

Table 2: Tangible aspects of mobility: placing in a “static” environment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Action space: extensive</th>
<th>Action space: narrow</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Duration of housing</td>
<td>Long</td>
<td>Middle/short</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level of independence</td>
<td>High:</td>
<td>Low:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Good physical condition</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• High economic, social, cultural capital</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social integration</td>
<td>Relatively low in the neighborhood; outside high</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Engaged in useful weak ties</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dependent on contact opportunities in the neighborhood or even immediate living environment (relatives)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Few strong ties</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Typical transport means</td>
<td>Individualistic: car ecological: bike</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Typical milieu</td>
<td>Upper milieu: established, post-materialists</td>
<td>Mainstream milieu: middle class, consumer-oriented basis</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
By turning to the more intangible aspects of mobility among our interview partners, we are going to widen up our introduced scheme by installing a middle category. This category captures interview partners with a functional relationship towards their mobility and the space they are living in. The dynamic process of placing is going to be described by the names of the three empirical types: the “top dogs”, the “transient” and the “modest”. Typical residents can be allocated to all three groups. The first segment of interview partners, the “top dogs”, can be most often found among long-term residents and people describing themselves as quite established citizens of Salzburg. The second group, the transient, is most often represented among students, staying in their area only during their time at university, or even having moved a lot during those 4-5 years of studying. Young families, who have just recently moved because of a growing family, can also be found in this second group. The last group, the modest, can be found among citizens who are behaving relatively modestly or even defensively in the public space. Migrants appear quite often in this group, but the interview material also contains examples of women, elderly or economically weak persons, reporting on situations of inconvenience or feelings of unwantedness in daily city life:

“I am walking there with my buggy and my children, which needs some space of course, and people behind me keep shouting ‘Faster, faster…” (woman, 27, primary education, Pakistan, Schallmoos, 221-222)

Not surprisingly, this group reports mixed feelings about their attachment and quality of life in Salzburg. This woman reacts to these assaults by stating that she wants to drive by car as soon as she gets a driving license. Some of our interview partners “adapt” and reduce their social life to the closer social environment or undertake only necessary trips, others clearly state frustration but still are downplaying dangerous traffic situations:

“I am really feeling inconvenienced in such situations [car drivers ignoring cyclists right of way, ED]. I have nearly had an accident twice at this junction (laughing). I mean two times in four years – that’s not very dramatic. But to me it is really problematic when car drivers are not taking care and just ignore you.” (woman, 31 years, university, Austria, Parsch, 329-333).

By stating the feeling of being “ignored”, this woman also addresses the more or less subtle mechanisms of taking over space and repulsing others. This can lead to the perception of space as “exclusive” for certain groups. This picture might even become a self-fulfilling prophecy when picked up by the media: labeling certain places in the city as “deprived” might also influence the perceptions of their inhabitants. In comparison to this group, the “top dogs” show up with very strong attachment towards the city and their district. Newcomers are carefully scrutinized with skepticism. If perceived to be necessary, subtle or offensive distinction towards new groups is undertaken by the “established”:
“In my opinion it is necessary that certain detached locations should be protected from new buildings by the city council (…) I am defending myself individually by planting trees the moment I get to know that a new building is going to be erected nearby. And if you are visiting my place now, you are not going to see anything, because of the huge and tall trees I have been planting over here.” (man, 68 years, university, Parsch, Z. 49-53)

Some kind of dilemma can be observed in the group of “top dogs”: egalitarian values like tolerance and open-mindedness meet resentments or at least skepticism, which can be observed in statements using the imperative like “we have to involve ourselves more in our multicultural neighborhood (…) we have to build bridges over there” (woman, 42 years, university) or “perhaps I should use the bus several times a month in order to get in touch with the common people” (man, 68 years, university).

It has to be emphasized that skepticism about changing environments and regressive notions of space are not exclusively stated by elder interview partners, but also by worried younger ones. Fears about losing the “exclusiveness” of one’s own place of living are distributed among all age groups and are a matter of social status. Nevertheless, this statement of an elder respondent reflects best, what the “established” are moaning about:

“Ahm, yes, I am thinking that Parsch is not receiving the same reactions by the public any longer. In past times people acknowledged: ‘Wow, great, you are living in Parsch!’” (man, 68 years, university, Parsch, 100-101)

In between the two rather emotional groups of respondents, a middle group of functional attachment can be found. The “transient” are planning to stay in their area just for the foreseeable future. Therefore they value convenient infrastructures, e.g. short distances to university and to leisure facilities. Hedonism, individualism and pragmatism can be associated quite often as representative value patterns among this group. Some of them have already moved several times and do not appear to have intense relationships towards their living environment. Since they are spending considerable time outside their home areas, they do not state many sentiments towards their districts. They perceive their environment synchronously, living in the here and now.

Corresponding to the social milieus of our respondents, places of favor can be identified easily: while the first group consists mainly of traditional milieus of high social strata and prefer cultural areas in the city, the second group, “transients”, more often prefer natural areas. Interestingly enough, our third group once again refer to cultural places as a sign of their wishes for social upward mobility.

Table 3: Intangible aspects of mobility: Self-Concept as actor/actress in the public space and transport system – dynamic spacing and relational order

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>“top dogs”</th>
<th>“transient”</th>
<th>“modest”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strong appearance</td>
<td>Neutral appearance</td>
<td>Weak appearance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Typical residents</td>
<td>Owners of houses and flats; the “Established”</td>
<td>Students growing and shrinking families after relocation</td>
<td>Tenants, migrants but also women, the elderly, those of lower social strata</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perception and usage of district and city</td>
<td>• Very positive narration</td>
<td>• Functional narration</td>
<td>• Adaption or opposition to circumstances</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Strong emotional attachment</td>
<td>• Functional attachment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Synchronous notion</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
• Regressive notion of space/spatial development, seeking law and order
• Egalitarian values meet resentments towards newcomers
• Favoring cultural places in the city like Mirabell Palace and Gardens, old town

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Local knowledge</th>
<th>Much local knowledge</th>
<th>Little local knowledge</th>
<th>Particular local knowledge: knowledge about relevant infrastructure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Appearance in public space</td>
<td>Defending, arguing, dissociating</td>
<td>Rational users of infrastructure, calculating</td>
<td>Adapting, modest behavior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appearance as traffic participants</td>
<td>proactive; flexible planning of journeys/routes</td>
<td>Functional; spontaneous planning of journeys/routes/possible</td>
<td>Defensive; journeys/routes are planned</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mobility orientations</td>
<td>Individualistic, independent</td>
<td>Individualistic, hedonistic</td>
<td>Social, secure, predictable</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to the length of time they have lived in their area, the three types might exhibit different levels of local knowledge. While the “top dogs” can rely on quite a lot of local knowledge, the third group shows up with very particularistic and specific local knowledge. In this sense, it has to be questioned when local knowledge becomes exclusive and whether its proponents are open-minded enough to include new views. The group of “transient” people is reported as having the least local knowledge, when being asked to say something about their district:

“Ahm, I haven’t thought about it that concretely up to now… what I am thinking about Schallmoos... Ahmm, I don’t have any strong or intense relationship to Schallmoos... ahmm, it is really hard to say... or to evaluate... I think it would be much easier for me to say something about other districts.” (man, 29, student, Schallmoos, Z. 32-36)

The appearance of these three groups in public space is related to their self-esteem and self-concept. While the first group is presenting themselves in a rather proactive manner, the group labelled “modest” is behaving in a defensive way. When asking the “modest” about their relationships in their neighborhood, they stated several times “we have no problems with our neighbors”, which underlines their aim is not to attract negative attention. This behavior discourages the modest from setting up a social network within their residential area. Last but not least, these parameters also create an influence on mobility patterns and mobility orientations. While the “established” or “top
dogs” are able to plan their journeys flexibly (due to their ability to choose between various means of transport), the “modest” have to plan their journeys/ routes/ itinerary accurately. The middle group perceives mobility most often as a means to an end and therefore has a functional relationship with mobility. Younger respondents in particular, i.e. students, are also able to perform journeys/ routes/ itineraries quite spontaneously. While the first two groups can be characterized by an individualistic mobility orientation (getting everywhere any time and enduring no restrictions), the last group has sometimes no other choice but to travel with public transport/ mass transportation which implies that they will have to coordinate with others. Remarkably, the group of the “modest” realizes the obligation to gather information about traffic infrastructures, while the other two groups show up with a “laid-back-mentality”, since their travel habits are relatively routinized. This attitude is best reflected by a statement of a woman who generally cycles or drives her own car:

“Actually the city train is also quite good for traveling, but it’s not of much use to me if I have to know the schedule first.” (woman, 50 years, university, Maxglan)

5 Conclusions & Outlook

We focused on tangible and intangible factors regarding mobility styles and mobility orientations of urban citizens in a case study conducted in the city of Salzburg. Secondly we have been interested in the appearance of such mobility patterns in public space and the consequences of unequally distributed opportunities for being mobile.

Spatial structures, mobility infrastructure and collective mobility practices seem to be fields were social inequalities become visible and tangible. Besides subtle mechanisms of distinction, these structures and the resulting mobility patterns are signs of relational orders. We distinguished between newcomers and established inhabitants – which in combination with dissimilar milieus – show up with unequal abilities to place themselves in public spaces. Since the established people engaged in important weak ties (due to their higher mobility and social status), they are also able to do more lobbying for their interests in the public space or even to engage in “defending” their area against newcomers. Bourdieu (1985) has discussed this elite phenomenon by comparing various levels of social, economic and cultural capital which can be observed by various forms of habitus and distinction. Subtle mechanisms of distinction, by avoiding certain areas or certain means of public transportation, lead to the perpetuation of social inequality in spatial settings. Löw (2001) has discussed this problematic phenomenon by arguing that repetitive behavior leads to the institutionalization of structures of inequality. This group of better off, long-term residents – we called them the “top dogs” – possesses deeper local knowledge and therefore has additional power to participate in local development and structures. An inclusive city management has to be aware of this fact and should value long-term local knowledge, but also open doors for new needs of and initiatives by short-term residents.

In this “struggle” for spatial resources and placement, car users are clearly at an advantage when comparing the unequal distribution of space on most streets. Therefore, and because of the still high social evaluation of cars, it is not surprising that nearly all of our interview partners would prefer to go by car, if they had the freedom of choice. The car is still valued very highly among our respondents in terms of a useful, convenient, fast, flexible and even quite cheap means of transport. Concerns
about the environmental consequences because of increased traffic have only been mentioned in two out of 37 interviews. Even when preferences about cars are not that clearly stated by our interview partners, the associated attributes like an all-time flexibility and independence are valued very highly by them as is generally the case in contemporary individualistic societies. Therefore (economic) restrictions that might limit mobility are addressed only very subtly by our interview partners. To be dependent on the immediate environment, due to e.g. economic restrictions, physical limitations or language skills, does not fit into the overall picture of an active, resourceful individual in a global world of consumption. Therefore it seems to be important to add some attributes to the classification of Dangschat and Segert (2011). For clarification, we highlighted the added attributes in table 4 in bold letters.

Table 4: Additional results to the relationship of milieus and mobility preferences

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Milieu segment</th>
<th>Milieu</th>
<th>Preferences and Aversions towards specific mobility styles and modes of transport</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Upper Milieu</td>
<td>Established</td>
<td>(+) comfortable, fast</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Post Materialists</td>
<td>(-) laborious, crowded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young Milieu</td>
<td>Modern performers</td>
<td>(+) spontaneous, intensive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Experimenter</td>
<td>(-) boring, inefficient, inconvenient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hedonists</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mainstream Milieu</td>
<td>Middle class</td>
<td>(+) predictable, prestigious</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Consumer oriented Basis</td>
<td>(-) insecure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traditional Milieu</td>
<td>Conservatives</td>
<td>(+) simple, sociable, cheap</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Traditionalists</td>
<td>(-) impersonal, expensive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rural-dwellers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Besides the importance of attitudes and values to describe milieus, more manifest indicators like economic background became important in our analysis. These observations lead to the supplement of “cheap” and “expensive” as important requirements for choosing a means of transport in the table above.

The inclusion of the heterogeneous group of “migrants” and their families in such life style schemes is a rather problematic task. Nevertheless, our interview partners from Turkey, former Yugoslavia, Estonia and Pakistan can all be classified, at the highest, as being in the traditional or mainstream milieus. Aspirations for upward social mobility can be derived from preferences for prestigious objects (cars) or places (cultural areas in the city). Some interview partners emphasize the high quality of living in their area and therefore no cues for a lack of satisfaction at a manifest level of the analysis reveal. Their appearance in the public space, as well as their traffic behavior on the other hands side give evidence for sometimes mere adaption towards circumstances. Defensive and modest behavior and a weak self-concept for claiming one’s own space in public lead to a “vicious circle” of repulsion. Urban planning is asked to meet these challenges by supporting those groups with sufficient infrastructures (broad pavements, a good cycling infrastructure, efficient and convenient public transport), not least due to the fact that these traffic modes are more environmentally-friendly than others. By valuing such modes of transport a boost to the self-concept of these participants might also arise. Mobility – as has been discussed by the WHO definition of quality of life – is a key resource in terms of guaranteeing social integration and participation in contemporary society. Although some of our respondents are adapting to limited mobility opportunities and engage with a vital social network in their immediate environment, the
consequences for the so called very important “weak ties” have to be questioned. Since these groups (migrants, elder people) are also quite often affected by a first and second order digital divide (Donat 2008), it is doubtful whether new technologies could fill this gap of a limited physical action space.

Our approach of using semi-structured interviews was very effective in examining hidden factors of mobility behavior and mobility orientations. Nevertheless, at some points of the analysis it guided us back to very basic determinants of social inequality like different structures of economic, social and cultural capital. While quantitative designs and focus group methods are rather prominent in mobility studies, we need more insights into the deeper and complex argumentation structures of travel mode choices. Perhaps there is no other field in urban or spatial sociology where relational orders in space can be observed in such an obvious way as is the case with mobility studies. Due to the constant placing and movement of objects, humans and, as Urry (2006) stated, locations, the method in use must also be sufficiently flexible in order to analyze constantly changing relationships. Undoubtedly, qualitative methods are very appropriate for such analysis. Nevertheless, more long-term studies have to be conducted to allow for sustainable results in this field. The research on migrants’ mobility behavior is still in its infancy and only a small number of studies have been conducted in this interesting population up to now. Once again, our research has shown that social and geographical mobility cannot be separated. Research on environmental issues like traffic behavior should no longer been seen as a luxury but as a field addressing vital social inequalities and challenges.

References


