Title: Text/ground comparison of housing for automobiles

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This paper aims to give an outline of the methodology applied to the study of the parking phenomenon as a rare intersection of infrastructure networks, land use in metropolitan regions and technological mobilities. It starts with a discussion of urban planning legislation, and the power of its textual futures to reveal and conceal. Introducing attention to the acts of reading, interpreting and translating guidelines brings us closer to a notion of narrative. With the help of four primary case studies, I propose to treat an investigative process as a physical and textual conversation with the field.

Introduction:
Occupied Future

The plan is always an intention, a desire to be something else. Urban planning documents express general political ambitions of what the city should be, how it should look like, operate and appear in the media. To put this vision forward with the agile precision, the city is turned into a highly responsive entity to tune and alter according to a publicly accepted logic of development. In such a case, even if they skilfully pretend to be neutral, legal futures by articulating intentions bring into existence a distinctive normative universe of spatial variables. However, it is not only strict metes and bounds that find their way into legislative frameworks. We can see that how the urban futures in the planning documents become loaded with fantasies, aspirations, and fears, persuasively designed visions and cultural imaginaries (Maze, 2016, p.37). In this process, a system of rules and regulations develops into "the narratives that are the trajectories plotted upon material reality by our imaginations" (Minow, Ryan, Sarat, 1995, p. 96). These narratives hidden in the legal texts require interpretation. As Ann-Linh Ngo writes in the editorial of the issue of ARCH+ dedicated to the materiality of the law: "Laws merely indicate the basic direction; in the concrete instance, they must be applied, they must be interpreted" (2016, p.3). They conceal and reveal, they say important messages in between the lines and move dazed between ideas. In other words, the plan's ambiguity is its mysterious strength that largely lies in the balance of two main components – empirical measurements based on anthropometric data, and aspirational visions of the city to come. Their seamless interdependence gives them both authority and plasticity. It is in the process of articulating feelings and intentions that plans come up with futures that can invite us for further exploration.

Using this perspective, we can notice urban legislation offering a glimpse into the future field of the settlement and making it present in the present. By challenging a modern western perception of time being linear, the plans create temporal confusions and collisions. This unique relationship with time allows planning documents to avoid seeing and acting towards the future as outside. As they test a direction and a singularity of the temporal axis, they turn themselves into propositional feelings and start to exist outside time and space as "vibes towards the unattainable, a lure for feeling" (Parisi, 2013, p. 238).

Reading Plans:

Four Cases

In this line of thinking, the "past" textual futures emerge as a unique repository of values. They reveal and conceal, just like any other conversation partner. Therefore, a meaningful conversation with the field is both physical and textual, since the field itself can be reduced neither to the collection of prescribed and accidental artefacts nor the visionary plans. Such sort of fieldwork aims to distil a meaning out of seemingly abstract and predictive numbers and text on paper and compare these prescriptions to a present situation on the ground.

Due to the context-bound nature of the phenomenon of parking that is hard to carve out of the urban conditions a research method of explanatory case studies is the most suitable. This allows to combine and relate to each other a wide range of evidence of different character.

Among the sources of evidence that is needed to address the initial research questions of how parking planning, management and legislation can influence urban form one can find:

1. city planning documents, such as city- or countrywide general strategic frameworks, zoning codes, planning ordinances, parking requirements;
2. archival records, such as statistics on the density of residents, units and vehicles, records of the volume and location of parking infrastructures, images;
3. architecture drawings;
4. informative interviews with planners, architects, city officials, researchers, residents;
5. direct site observation;
6. information on current offers from real estate webpages and mobile applications for parking, its availability and price.

Along the way of collecting such diverse data sets, a research project develops a strategy of a "combination of pattern-matching and time-series analysis" (Yin, 1994, p.118). This approach meets the needs of thinking through the relationships between "independent and dependent variables" (1994, p.118) to establish logical models for further discussion.

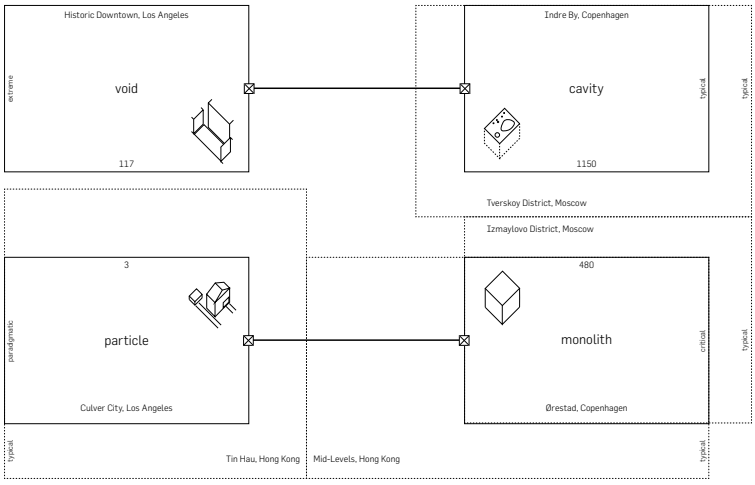

Figure 1. Key case studies

Central to the case study structure are four primary locations/sites/illustrations: two of them located in Copenhagen and two in Los Angeles (fig. 1). At the root of each of them lies a territory driven policy superimposed on an existing urban structure and laced together by actions of developers, architects, planners and residents. To investigate a diversity of legislation and its shaping power the cases chosen after a preliminary selective analysis represent different typologies of parking facilities: an underground "concealed" parking and a surface parking lot, a free-standing garage and an individual garage of a single-family house with an adjacent driveway. The research is structured as two comparisons - each time between two sites in two different cities, two different mobility contexts - and adorned with several descriptive cases to illuminate specific angles. These embedded units are used for replicating similar conditions in different locations and help in explanation building at the single-case level (Yin, 1994).

Figure 2. Surface parking lot in Downtown, Los Angeles

To start an analysis with probably the most familiar visualisation of car storage, we take a look at a surface parking lot in Historic Downtown of Los Angeles, which was practically abandoned from the late 1960s till the 1980s (fig. 2). But thirty years prior that parking lots were "part of an erosional pattern" of American downtowns (Jakle, p.96). The demolition of buildings to accommodate an increasing number of stationary automobiles intended to solve problems with congestion, curb side parking and help in competition against new suburban commerce. These new asphalt open spaces were straightforward and utilitarian - they were seen as "land banking", sanitised and ready for new development. A wide spread demolishment of deteriorated historical buildings mobilised preservationists and planners resulting in the draft of the original Adaptive Reuse Ordinance (1990). This policy concerned specifically downtown buildings in a commercial or R-5 (high density) residential zone constructed before July 1, 1974, and extended possibilities of their conversion. Most importantly it relaxed the parking requirements for an eligible building if it were converted to dwelling units, joint living and working quarters, guest rooms in hotels or a combination of them. No new parking spaces were required with existing ones had been reserved for residential tenants or turned public. The intent was to create a dense "24-hour city" with mixed commercial and residential uses, improve air quality and reduce vehicle trips. A few decades later a strikingly successful result is hard not to acknowledge, but it came with a price - a rise of land prices by as much as 400% since the early 2000s. Additionally, most of the suitable buildings have been already reconfigured, and highly skilled contractors are required for this kind of transformations. In this climate, ground-up developments on the former surface parking lots greatly

outnumber conversions.

Similarly, a large public square in central Copenhagen, Israel Plads (fig. 3), has been a surface parking lot for over 50 years before undergoing a recent renovation. Cars were placed underground in a three-level structure - as part of the city-wide parking strategy introduced in 2005 - and the surface was turned into a recreational landscape. More than a thousand car places allowed to remove a corresponding number from the city streets in proximity to Strøget pedestrian promenade, Nørreport train station and a neighbouring food market. An approach of consolidating automobile storage and, therefore, allowing shared use of the spaces throughout the day along with diminishing operation costs and promoting walking is a widely accepted urban strategy. One might consider looking at the changes in land use and density of activities, housing units, residents, vehicles, and vehicle trips to get a more nuanced picture.

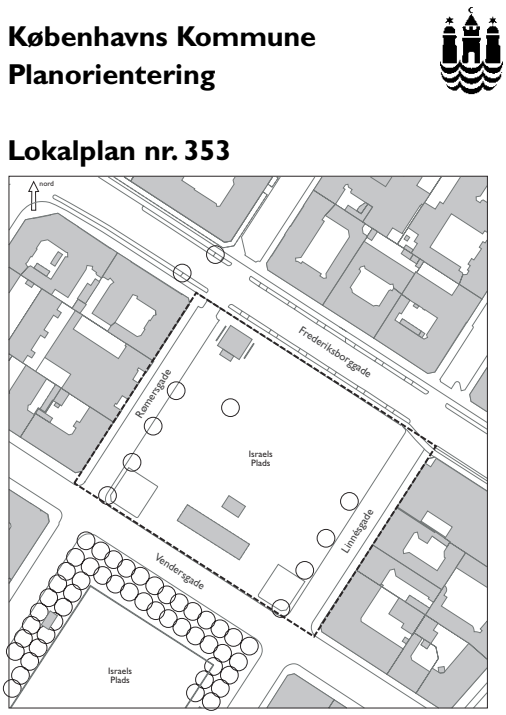

Figure 3. Local plan 353 for the development of Torvehallerne market in Copenhagen , next to the underground parking

Both of the above-described cases are centrally located parking facilities: one of them is an extreme case of a disappearing typology due to introduced policies, and another is a typical case of "hiding" and consolidating the storage of vehicles. The current investigation is an assessment of their effect on the surrounding territory regarding land use and density, their role in a neighbourhood mobility system, and a role of privately-owned parking operations and management companies - Joe's Auto Parks and QPark. Additionally, there is an embedded descriptive case of a centrally located courtyard in Moscow, where paid curb parking was introduced only in 2011. Pricing strategy and removal of the spaces made inner courtyards a valuable asset that residents defend by instilling physical barriers to guard a public space. This example is meant to enrich the discussion of managing the spill over effect that is inevitable in the early stages of parking reforms.

A second couple of primary cases reflects the treatment of automobile storage in transit-oriented developments (TOD), located within the radius of 800 meters from public transit and planned

according to notions of high-density and mixed-use. These ideas manifest themselves in Mountain Dwellings in Ørestad district in Copenhagen combining a multi-level parking garage for 480 cars and a layer of 80 apartments on top of it (fig. 4). It is one of six free-standing parking structures intended to consolidate vehicles of both residents and employees of the Ørestad area, that has a backbone of excellent public transit reaching Copenhagen Airport and Central Station less than in ten minutes. The modernist approach of planning the new linear town along the metro line and privately developed individual buildings come under heavy criticism for producing a low-quality urban space. In its current form, the site under investigation combines two identities: a shared, consolidated and mixed-use development in proximity of the Metro stop; and penthouse apartments equipped with individual gardens and no possible views of neighbours. In a way, it becomes a translation of the single-family house area situated across the street into a dense environment of Ørestad. A current analysis can be seen as a critical case of a still existing need to provide a possibility of living a car-dependent "suburbian" lifestyle even in the middle of the densest development in the most bike-friendly city. Similar challenges can be seen in new housing being built in Mid-Levels area of Hong Kong or a periphery zone of Moscow. It is of great interest to use these examples for illustrating how the needs of a middle class to own and store a car nearby are being met under different geological, legislative and economical conditions.

Figure 4. The Mountain Dwellings by BIG, Copenahgen

To characterise landscapes of car dependency, it is inevitable and essential to look at the plots of single-family houses in Los Angeles - the city with the highest density of parking spaces in the world (Shoup, 2005, p. 162). But when it comes to residents, its metropolitan area is also significantly denser than the New York or Chicago, probably due to the small size of the plots and a large number of family members in low-income neighbourhoods. In a situation of a severe shortage of housing, Los Angeles City Council adopted an Accessory Dwelling Unit Ordinance (ADUO) that allows homeowners to rent an already existing guest house, a smaller unit within a home or a converted garage. This becomes possible with an increase of maximum allowed size, an elimination of sprinkler requirements, a reduction of setback distances but most importantly a reduction of parking requirements in proximity to public transit. Garage apartments are supposed to introduce an almost invisible horizontal density and a more demographically diverse population to typical residential neighbourhoods. To conduct an in-depth examination of this paradigmatic case of a gentle transition, we will turn to Culver City elevated light rail station - one of the stops along the Expo line connecting Downtown to Santa Monica (figure 5). New TOD guidelines (fig. 6) promote

the transformation of the surroundings into a walkable area with ground floor level supporting commercial uses. But immediate surroundings are vast tracts of land dedicated to the single-family housing with potential for garage conversions. The ADUO can have a substantial formative effect in such areas and allow us literally to move from housing cars to housing people. As another example, we can take a brief look at a Dragon Centre Housing Complex in Tin Hau, Hong Kong, built in 1989 as a part of Urban Improvement Scheme and in compliance with minimum parking requirements. This extreme illustration of the densifying possibilities is useful in a discussion of the ratio between the urban space dedicated to vehicles and their owners.

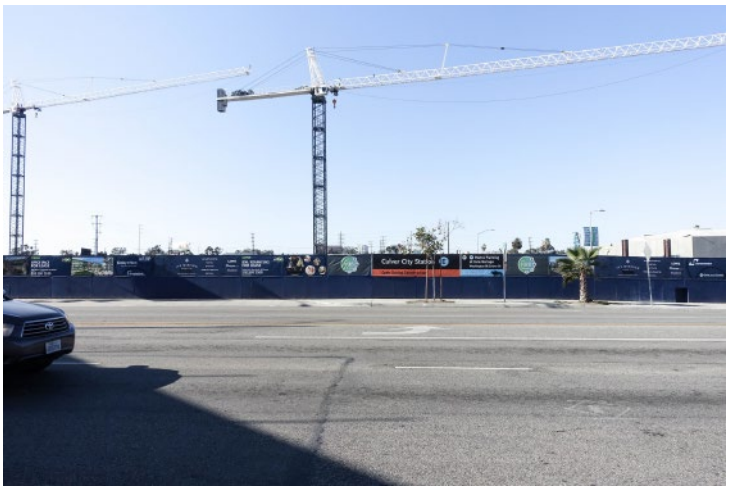

Figure 5. The future Culver City Station of Los Angeles Expo Line

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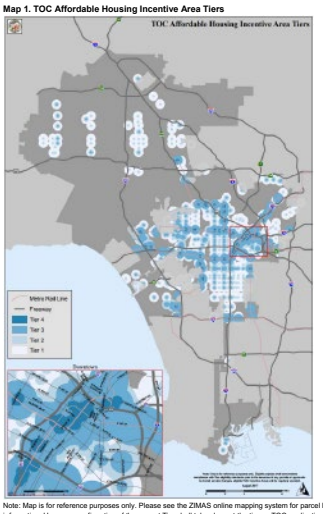

Figure 6. The areas with the biggest potential for Accessory Dwelling Unit developments, Los Angeles

Above described two primary cases demonstrate different approaches to combining the dream of an individual living and individual transportation with contemporary demands of living in compact communities served by public transit. What is essential for a current study is a role of spaces for car storage in this process? How can it be rethought and reconfigured in line with current demands?

Four primary case studies demonstrate an array of possibilities of parking infrastructures and their regulative legislation to change the land use and demographics, give space to additional housing and allow to preserve historical developments. Painting far-reaching consequences of such seemingly mundane infrastructural spaces prompts productive thinking about both spatial and non-spatial problems of a traditional city.

Negotiation Through Speculation:
Measurements and Visions

When examining these sites and their environment-worlds of legislation, market and daily choices of citizens what comes into the foreground is both the seductive and comforting role of planning guidelines. Generally speaking, design as a discipline finds its basis in changing present conditions to preferred and more desirable ones. One of the easiest ways to communicate an alternative vision, as we have already seen, is through the narrative of the legislation. This is where the civil rights activist and scholar, Robert Cover, introduces law as a "bridge in normative space connecting (our understanding of) the "world-that-is" (including the norms that "govern" and the gap between those norms and the present behavior of all actors) with our projections of alternative "worlds-that-might-be" (including alternative norms that might "govern" and alternative juxtapositions of imagined actions with those imagined systems of norms)" (Minow, Ryan, Sarat, 1995, p. 176). In this way, legislative narratives that shape urban futures can hide professional values from explicit view. What is put into the spotlight instead is the system of measurable parameters? Bernardo Secchi underscores the two-sided nature of urban planning tales:

> Within this multitude of texts in fact I recognize two opposite phenomena: the first is the tendency toward a progressive reduction of the urban planning tale, toward its coding and bureaucratization; the second is the unexpected appearance, in a specific circumstance or place in the tale, of an expansion, an increase of its thickness and density, and its ability to introduce new and more complex meanings than those readily apparent (D'Ambros, Secchi, Zancan, 2010, p. 113).[1]

These two elements – measurements and visions - do not exist one without another; in their tension, they form a unique speculative device that operates between code and vision, fact and thought, reason and imagination. In other words, planning legislation is both vague and precise, prescriptive and propositional, it exists in a vast territory between these two polar opposites. However, these binaries should not divide the image of the world and instead allow those who are affected by plans to work constructively on matters of mutual interest (Solnit, 2006, p.99). If crafted thoughtfully, they can produce seemingly small disturbances that alter complex systems of decision making. Together they form a speculative device of urban planning that facilitates the practical investigation of the social world. As a well-functioning device, they can not operate in isolation. By definition, the device is "always in relations that are themselves always being reconfigured" (Lury and Wakeford, 2013, p.9).

What exactly does this discussion have to do with a planning document? At a fundamental level,

[1]An English translation of Bernardo Secchi's reply to the planner and theoretician Pier Carlo Palermo, who wrote a review of his book "Il raconto urbanistico" (1984).

regulatory framework can be seen as a repository of all sorts of relations that thicken possibilities and invite speculation. [2] The experience of these relations involves the transition between given potentials and unknown events (Parisi, p.235). This speculative transition, however, is not straight forward. Alfred North Whitehead compares the method of speculation to the flight of an airplane which starts from the observation and lands for the observation and in a process is "rendered acute" in the "air of imaginative generalisation" (Whitehead, 1978, p. 5). Ideally, a planning guideline prescribes fundamental building parameters and simultaneously offers a description of the new social realities to imagine, accept or decline and transform initially defined rules accordingly. It becomes an intricate thought experiment that opens to view the complicated variables of the future urban fields. These plausible futures do not even have to be realised to influence expectations. Their value lies in permitting to imagine opportunities and come to terms with previously not experienced reality.

Conclusion:

A current research project aims to couple the typological analysis of different parking phenomenon and their formative role in forming cities with the discussion of the method of speculation, applied to narratives – be it planning legislation, promotional videos, or critical fiction. Speculation and strategy become complimentary modes of transforming surroundings. The site-specific conditions and characteristics of each parking infrastructure dotted all over the world show a remarkable cohesion as much as diversity. From a confused whole of each of them, I am on the way to determining how to distinguish material and immaterial things that form this seemingly mundane matter of concern and matter of care[3] storing automobiles.

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[2] Luciana Parisi articulates how a speculative method coincides with both - the notion of abduction coined by Charles Sanders Peirce and further developed by Alfred North Whitehead; and radical empiricism of William James (p. 234).

[3] In his essay "Why Has Critique Run Out of Steam? From Matters of Fact to Matters of Concern" (2003) Bruno Latour advocates for a new kind of critic "who assembles" and "offers the participants arenas in which to gather" by engaging with matters of concern and caring for them.

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