



Just mobility, transport and urban infrastructures – stories on inclusion and exclusion

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At the beginning of the 2000s, the conventional transport planning paradigm was challenged and had to give way for a different understanding of mobilities. In the ground-breaking book *Mobilities* (2000), John Urry introduced the new mobilities paradigm, where the understanding of movements went far beyond a static and calculative problem formulation (Kebblowski and Bassens, 2018) of moving something from A to B. The initial work by Mimi Sheller and John Urry (2006) opened up a totally new understanding of society and its embedded movements, not only of people and goods, but of information, economic transfers, resources, non-human actors and digital connections. By adding a historical perspective to the present understanding of these movements, a wider understanding of the implications of movement related to (in)justices, violence, racism, and colonial practices, came to the surface (Sheller 2003).

Verlinghieri and Schwanen bring together different perspectives on justice and also include the technological development of finding mobility solutions which focus on individualized and technologically innovative solutions targeting specific groups and places, something Karen Lucas, in the interview below, is discussing:

The developments also relate to the uneven consequences of austerity urbanism (Peck, 2012) on everyday mobilities and sociotechnical innovations in transport. The question here is not simply who will benefit when and where from the development and expansion [...]. It is just as much if and how [such] innovations will be co-opted by vested interests and elites or rather reshuffle existing socio-spatial stratifications and change discourses about rights, responsibilities, and opportunities with respect to transport and mobility “

(Verlinghieri & Schwanen, 2020).

The covid 19 pandemic is a recent example of the injustices connected to mobility. Not only have lower income people been submitted to the risk of being infected by using public transport as their only means of transport, the decrease in ridership during the pandemic has also resulted in fewer trips available, due to cuts in daily services by transportation agencies because of the reduced number of travellers (Monahan & Lamb 2022).

Recently, there has been an increased interest in analysing issues of transport justice from a philosophical and normative perspective. An important contribution is made by Karel Martens who discusses transport planning based on principles of social justice with inspiration from philosophers such as John Rawls and Michael Walzer (Martens, 2012, 2016). The Capability Approach, originally developed by Amartya Sen (1992) and Martha Nussbaum (2000), is currently one of the most influential theories of justice and it has also been applied within the area of transportation (Ryan, 2018). Functioning and capability are two of the key concepts with the Capability Approach. Functioning is what people actually are or do, such as being a parent or working as a police officer, while a capability is an opportunity to choose a certain functioning. In Nussbaum's version of the approach, she describes it as a minimal requirement for justice that each and every individual is guaranteed a threshold level of the following ten capabilities: 1) life, 2) bodily health, 3) bodily integrity (which includes the ability to travel freely from place to place), 4) senses, imagination, and thought, 5) emotions, 6) practical reason, 7) affiliation (to have relations with relatives and friends), 8) other species, 9) play, and 10) control over one's

environment (Nussbaum, 2000).

A key concern within many of the normative theories of transport justice is to guarantee a just distribution of accessibility to individuals and groups. However, this focus on accessibility is problematized by Sheller who argues for a more comprehensive concept of mobility justice. Besides questions about accessibility and distributive justice, such a concept should also be concerned with questions about deliberative and recognition justice. We should focus our attention also on questions of who is included and excluded from decision-making and transport planning. Questions about recognition are crucial as decision-makers should acknowledge the importance of community members' participation and respect their contribution. Sheller claims that the concern for recognition and procedural justice leads beyond a narrow focus on transportation and accessibility, as it allows for other relevant issues to be acknowledged, such as questions about the environmental impacts of oil drilling, and oil and gas pipelines. Moreover, a comprehensive theory of mobility justice should question Eurocentric frameworks and be open to contributions from non-Western worldviews and epistemologies (Sheller, 2018). The distributional perspective has also been criticized by scholars such as Iris Marion Young who claim that instead of starting in the issue of distribution of goods, the analysis should start with concepts of domination and oppression (Young, 1990).

The contributions to the special issue reflect different aspects of the political and scholarly debate on transport and spatial justice. The first four articles discuss questions of transport justice from different angles. The article by Joelsson, Balkmar, and Henriksson addresses young people's public mobilities in the light of the concept of citizenship. It is based on an interview study of young people living in so-called socially disadvantaged areas in Swedish cities. The respondents experience public transport as expensive and the high-cost functions as a barrier for young people's access to public space. Joelsson et al. argue that limited access means that the young people in their study are denied important aspects of citizenship, even if they enjoy their formal rights as citizens. They conclude that putting a price on public transport further exacerbates the inequality of mobility and contributes to the existing social divisions.

The article by Mohall also discusses questions of transportation and socioeconomic inequalities, based on a case study of the public transportation system in Clayton County, US. It describes how the closing down of the public transport system in Clayton County in 2008 and its reestablishment in 2014 affected the Black majority population. The study concludes that the current transportation system is, of course, vitally important for the residents in the county as a presupposition for having relatively easy and cheap access to jobs and health care. At the same time, Mohall points out that being mobile is often not a question of choice, as many residents have to spend several hours on trains and buses in order to reach their jobs. The right to mobility should also be combined with a right not to be mobile, which requires a major transformation of cities — possibly also of the economic system.

The article by Eriksson and Melin discusses accessibility, which is both an important concept in the scholarly debate on transport justice and in policy documents on

transportation. It is based on a study of policy documents from the region of Uppsala, Sweden, as well as with interviews with civil servants and politicians in the region. The authors find that it is mainly the accessibility of disabled individuals that are considered in the policy documents, as well as the interviews. Other groups, such as socioeconomically disadvantaged groups, young people and women, are also mentioned, but less frequently and in less detail. The respondents often have vaguer idea of what it entails to consider the accessibility of these other groups. The focus on people with disabilities can partly be explained by organizational factors. It is prescribed by the Swedish Public Transport Act, which requires such a focus in the central steering documents of the regional public transport authorities. Thus, all the civil servants at the Department of Traffic and Society on the regional level bring that perspective with them, which makes it well-integrated into their work. Civil servants at the Department of Regional Development are more concerned with the accessibility of other groups, but they have less direct influence on transport policies and planning.

Henriksson and Hvidt Breengaard analyse the vulnerability of cyclists in the current mobility regime. They develop a notion of care in the context of mobility that not only concerns individual care trips, but the whole of the transport system. From the perspective of ethics of care, Henriksson and Hvidt Breengaard discuss for whom the transport system is designed. They argue that the vulnerability of cyclists is hidden by three dominant narratives: that cycling is “natural,” that cyclists are “neutral,” and the high value put on “speed and efficiency.” The narrative that cycling is natural and safe obscures the fact that some cyclists experience cycling as dangerous, while the narrative about the neutral cyclists hides the fact that people who cycle with children or who are disabled have other needs than cyclists in general. Finally, the fact that the transport system is made for the speed of cars leads to high risks for cyclists, which often are ignored. Henriksson and Hvidt Breengaard conclude that the current mobility regime is characterized by structural violence and a lack of care for vulnerable groups.

The two last papers concern the relationship between infrastructure and justice. The contribution by Hansson discusses the design of infrastructure from a justice perspective. Using his methodology of a go-along with a woman in a wheelchair as a point of departure, the article discusses how the material design and maintenance of streets limits the access of people with disabilities. With the help of assemblage theory, Hansson clarifies the ways in which this design impacts disabled people’s right to take part in the city. He argues that assemblage theory helps us to see urban areas in new ways by increasing our understanding of how different elements are connected. It can have a political influence by destabilising the ruling assemblage that builds a certain form of infrastructure.

The article by Tran and Hyeong discusses waiting practices and waiting territories. They start with the observation that modern transport planning is based on the assumption that waiting time is unproductive. Therefore, transit places are designed to be only temporary spaces for moving on to actions elsewhere. However, it is becoming increasingly acknowledged that waiting spaces also are important spaces of interaction. Based on empirical studies of waiting practices in bus stops in Malmö, the paper analyses

how waiting places are produced through waiting practices by employing the perspective of territorial production and how place becomes accessible to different user groups in the city. Tran and Hyeong conclude that waiting places in general, and bus stops in particular, should not be considered as standardized technical fixtures, but as urban public space. They should be designed to allow for different forms of territorial production by different groups of people.

Finally, Karen Lucas, professor in human geography at the University of Manchester and prominent scholar of the social inclusion and justice field of transportation and mobility planning share her views on the present situation and what challenges needs to be addressed to produce a society where people become included have access to everyday important destinations.

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