Mobility justice: cycling territories and embodied geographies of pedalling

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Abstract

This paper seeks to better understand mobility justice with reference to the bodily sensations of cycling. Differential mobility is not just the result of gendered, classed and racialised social norms but are productive of these social hierarchies. We build on these arguments by asking the question: ‘Where does it feel right to ride a bike’? This paper takes up this challenge by drawing on Deleuze and Guattari’s notions of assemblage and territory. In this way, mobility justice is conceptualised as a process of territorialisation, reterritorialisation and deterritorialisation. Our analysis proceeds by offering three ‘portraits’ ‘from empirical materials gathered from a qualitative cycling project in the car-dominated small city of Wollongong, Australia. We argue that all road users are not equal, regardless of having the same formal status. Through an appreciation of the rhythmic qualities of spatiality, the paper charts experiences of the process of inclusion and exclusion from the road through cycling. Implications for mobility justice are discerned from the territories created by the affective intensities of different pedalling rhythms narrated as love and the possibilities of cyclists, to move-together, or not, in proximity with other cyclists, pedestrians and drivers.