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Urban mobility crisis and the marginalisation of cyclists

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Traffic and Roads

Urban mobility crisis and the marginalisation of cyclists

A just city is often connected to the right to the city, which includes the right to use public spaces. This right is often limited in different ways, for example through privatization of public spaces, through surveillance or through the design (see for example Allan 2006 or Degen 2008). One marginalized group in the public space is bicyclists. The public spaces in today's cities are planned from a modernist perspective, which favoured motorised traffic, whereas bicycle traffic was heavily marginalised in urban transportation planning. The marginalisation of cyclists in many cities around the globe raises questions about the right to the city and the right to public space. This paper analyses the power relations that are built into today's infrastructure and that marginalises cyclists whereas at the same time favours motorised traffic. These power relations have resulted in an urban mobility crisis with congestions, pollution and social injustice as a result. The conflicts between motorists and cyclists are an outcome of modernistic planning and economic structures. Modernist planning provided an infrastructure that facilitated fast and efficient movements for motorists, whereas the economic structure of the fordist production system and the capitalist societies produced more and more motor vehicles and lobbied for better infrastructure. The production of cars for the broad mass also forced planners and transportation researchers to develop planning solutions in order to handle the rapidly increasing car traffic, which marginalised cyclists even more. Highways and infrastructure for motorised traffic was highly connected to the vision of a modern urban landscape where high-speed cars move people from their homes to work. This is also analysed in the paper.

If it would be preferred I would be open for different forms of presentation than traditional paper presentation, for example discussions.

References

Allen, J. (2006) Ambient Power: Berlin's Potsdamer Platz and the Seductive Logic of Public Spaces. *Urban Studies*, Vol. 43 (2)

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