Cycle Mobility as object of governing: Visibility and social equality

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Introduction

› Many cities target cycle mobility
   – As solution to rising problems of health, safety, environmental, congestion, space

› Need for green urban transitions – urban transport a real challenge
   – Banister (2011): Sustainable mobility
   – Tentatively challenges the dominance of the car in urban space

› Objective:
   – How is social equality integrated in and affected by cycling policies
   – How is the way cycle mobility is made visible impacting social equality
Overview

› Introduction

› Analytical framework: Governmentality
   Becoming visibilities
   Urban environmental equality

› Cycling and social equality in CPH
   visibility in representations and affordances

› Tentative conclusions
Analytical framework: Governmentality

Foucault: Governing of and through rationality affecting mentality and selves

- Institutionalised in modern governing – idealised population groups renders the social governable – contested & normalised
- Represented in policies through concepts, images, numbers, models and other decision support tools
- Forms of knowledge, forms of governable selves
- Numbers are perceived as evidence – persuasive in politics
Analytical framework: Becoming affordances

Deleuze: Visibilities vs sayings

- Beyond the representational – non-representational divide
- Situated and always becoming
- Cultural practices and urban spaces
- Visibilities are epistemic as well as experienced and lived
Analytical framework: Urban Environmental Equality

Wim et al (forthcoming): interaction between equality and environmental issues in an urban context

- Amenities of environmental phenomena
- Risks linked to environmental problems
- Access to decision making on the interface between environmental policy and social equality policy
Equality in CPH cycle policy

Representations

- Bi-annual cycle account: indicators of CPH cycling city and numbers on e.g. study-work trips, experience of safety, satisfaction with infrastructure
- Traffic modelling: modal share – cycling relative to other modes
- Cyclists (mobile subjects)
  - Calculated: according to distance travelled and purpose
  - Represented in images: everyday people, families, suits – in flow, non-problem situations
- Hidden divide to socially deprived groups
The vision Community Copenhagen 2025

Cycling in 2 of 6 overall goals: 50% of study/work trips on cycles. 70% of Copenhageners are satisfied with parking options.

dominating images pictures cycling introduction: green urban space with cycling + two everyday women in front of bikeki
Equality in CPH cycle policy

› Cph vision - Responsible citizens:

"Environment is the greatest motivation for saving resources, and its good business"
Henning Andersen, Director of environment, TDC A/S

› Affordances and sense scapes starting to be recognized in urban cycle policy –
– E.g. the green cycle track
– transport behaviour – experiences of safety
Very (!) preliminary conclusions

- Particular socio-imaginaries of who cyclists are and what they desire are favoured –
  - social equality as indicator of the progress in cycle policy is not represented in cycle accounts or the dominating models

- Social equality is by absence made invisible in cycling policy
  - In calculative practices of making cycle mobility a known object of governing
  - In images representing cycle mobility as CPH identity, practice, culture
  - Contrasts less cycle friendly cities with higher level of activism
Very (!) preliminary conclusions

› In a surplus cycling city as CPH a positive image of cycling is favoured

› Motivates and stimulates identification with being a cyclist and belonging to the cyclist culture
  – But cycling subjects represented in images, numbers and ways of producing cycle knowledge does not include sensitivity social equality
Very (!) preliminary conclusions

› The cycling subjects, the cycling numbers, the cycling calculations makes social equality a non-problem

› Contrasts that in health (e.g. obesity), educational (e.g. reform of public schools), housing (e.g. ghettos), urban neighbourhoods (e.g. South Harbour), welfare policy (e.g. distributive taxation) social equality issues are targeted
Thank you

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