

Abstract

Riding with the advocates, mobility justice, LA's (Bike)space

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This article studies issues of social justice in what I call the (Bike)space of Los Angeles. To describe it, I chose to use a multi-method approach in which I immerse myself in it by 1) mapping it as a kind of conceived space; 2) interviewing people about it to get at their perceived space, and; 3) experiencing it through mobile ethnography and mobile methods as a lived space – in which my own embodiment offers just one situated perspective amongst others.

Using GIS and descriptive statistics I mapped a conceived space of car-based violence in which young Black and Indigenous People of Color (BIPOC) suffer a disproportionate amount of car-based violence that is justified by the system of automobility and media representations that apportion the blame to the victims. Riding with the advocates in their lived space and interviewing them allowed me to discover a perceived (symbolic) space that imbued in me an affective attachment to place, to the city of Angels. Spatial Justice became Mobility Justice; Thirdspace, or my perception of it, changed through the sense of belonging to the imagined community of bike people.

Reflexive participation allowed me to highlight the motivations of some of the leading advocates in the city which are rooted in grievful personal histories of loss to car-based violence and discrimination. Identity and embodiment are linked to political representation (vertreten), whereas technical representations of knowledge (darstellen) are more legitimate than others. I argue that this leads to a kinopolitical struggle for the production of space between the actors involved. Community organizations want to be represented in decision-making spaces and bring resources to their communities while planning firms want to recruit planners of colors that have embodied legitimacy with their communities.