



To: Place Directorate

From: Adrian Davis

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Subject: Essential Evidence on a page: No. 158 The Just City: Equal entitlement

Top line: Just transport policies consider inequalities in terms of access or exposure to risks, based on an underlying principle of 'equal concern'. This principle proposes that an individual's entitlements are limited by the equal entitlements of others, and that capable individuals have responsibility to provide for others.

How urban space is distributed is a question of power. To date many western cities have developed as car dominant settlements reflecting the power of elites and lobby groups. Yet, many cities in the world seek to establish more sustainable urban transport systems with a view to reduce accidents, congestion, air and noise pollution, and to improve social interactions, liveability and amenity values.¹ Negative outcomes of transport systems are widely acknowledged, and there is political consensus in the European Union and elsewhere that urban transport systems need to be redesigned to become more environmentally and socially sustainable. Public transport systems, cycling and walking are generally understood to have important roles in sustainable urban transport designs while motorized transport is seen to cause many of the problems associated with transport systems.²

A recent paper identifies from the literature that there is a considerable paradox between stated political ambitions to create more sustainable urban transport systems and persistent realities of urban infrastructure development in favour of the least sustainable transport mode, the car.³ Using the concept of justice theory researchers note that in most western cities, transport systems benefit only a portion of traffic participants, while putting considerable burdens on others, as well as residents and society as a whole. Conceptually, 'transport injustices' can be identified within three dimensions: exposure to traffic risks and pollutants, distribution of space, and the valuation of time. Exposure of traffic participants, residents and the general population to accidents, distress, noise, emissions of harmful substances, unpleasant smells, as well as the impacts of climate change, is a key issue of injustice in transport designs with environmental, social and economic effects.

Findings from assessments of many cities are that pedestrians and cyclists are identified as the most adversely affected, along with children and populations living close to major roads. It has also been widely noted that women's different experiences of mobility and accessibility are largely neglected.⁴ Where notions of justice pervade transport planning, this may influence power structures, and provide an argument for the development of more sustainable transport systems. Justice theory, it is argued, provides sufficiently powerful arguments in order to overcome the dependence on the car and to achieve sustainable mobility.

¹ Eg 100 Resilient Cities <http://www.100resilientcities.org/cities#/-/> accessed 17th February 2017

² Banister, D. 2005. *Unsustainable Transport: City Transport in the New Century*. Routledge, London.

³ Gössling, S 2016 Urban transport justice, *Journal of Transport Geography*, 54: 1-9.

⁴ Eg Root, A. Schintler, L., Button, K. 2010 Women, travel and the idea of 'sustainable transport', *Transport Reviews*, 20(3): 369-383.