



Contents lists available at [ScienceDirect](http://www.sciencedirect.com)

Energy Research & Social Science

journal homepage: www.elsevier.com/locate/erss



Original research article

Mobility justice in low carbon energy transitions

Caroline Mullen*, Greg Marsden

Institute for Transport Studies, University of Leeds, United Kingdom

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received 3 August 2015
Received in revised form 26 March 2016
Accepted 30 March 2016
Available online xxx

Keywords:

Mobility
Justice
Inclusion
Pollution

ABSTRACT

Mobility systems raise multiple questions of justice. Work on mobility justice and policy often treats different elements of the debate separately, for example focussing on environmental justice or accessibility. This is problematic as it can privilege policy solutions without a full view of the winners and losers and the values implicit in that. Using analysis of current policy, we investigate how mobility justice can reconcile its different components, and find two major consequences. First, is doubt about the justice of the existing policy approach which tries to tackle transport pollution primarily through a shift to low emission vehicles. This approach privileges those with access to private vehicles and further privileges certain sets of activities. Second is a need to reassess which basic normative ideas should be applied in mobility justice. Work on mobility justice has tended to appeal to conceptions of justice concerned with access to resources including resources enabling mobility. These conceptions say little about how resources should be used. We show that avoiding stark inequalities means collectively thinking about how resources are used, about how we value activities involving mobility, and about what sorts of goods and services we create.

© 2016 Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

1. Introduction

Whether or not they are explicitly recognised as such, normative ideas are embodied in policies, policy tools and actions influencing transport. Tied up with their explanations of how transport does or could work, are assertions about what is valuable (for instance time, cost, safety) and assertions about how value should be achieved or sought, and sometimes about what constitutes reasonable expectations (for instance, polluter pays, fare subsidy, operator profit). Increasingly there is recognition of the justice concerns associated with mobility and transport. This includes justice questions raised by difficulties some people face in moving around, whether that is moving around neighbourhoods, or over long distances. Further, it involves justice concerns associated with impacts of Transport, and the often uneven distribution of those impacts. There is now work on multiple aspects of what we might call mobility justice, including on matters such as accessibility (e.g. Refs. [46,47,53,59,69]), affordability [54], safety (e.g. Refs. [72,101,102]), greenhouse gas emissions [51,75], health impacts of pollution [55], and land take for infrastructure (e.g. Ref. [22]).

Often, and with some reason given their complexity, work has focused on one or other of these aspects. We argue that this tendency to focus separately on different aspects of justice has limitations which can be far greater than a matter of scope, and that addressing this has two major implications for mobility justice. First, considering aspects of justice independently can lead to a failure to consider how solutions to one problem might impact other justice concerns. Second, reconciling multiple aspects of mobility justice prompts a reassessment of theories of justice or fairness implicit in many of these normative debates. In particular, there is a very strong normative tradition of placing value on individual choice. This tradition has unpinned ideas of justice within transport policy. This paper critically engages with this approach, showing how this framing of value can undermine basic ideas of mobility justice because it tends to arbitrarily privilege some choices, and preferences of some groups of people. Given this, we contend that sustaining basic ideas of mobility justice requires direct consideration of substantive questions of value.

The mobility we consider in this paper is primarily that concerning movement of people and sometimes goods, but without reference to questions such as citizenship. In this use, 'mobility' is broader than 'transport' is often taken to be. Mobility in this context includes the norms, expectations, laws, communications and competences which influence the transport system (see Ref. [8]). It also includes movement other than 'trips', such as walking to a neighbour. Nevertheless, the term mobility also covers a range of

* Corresponding author.

E-mail addresses: c.a.mullen@leeds.ac.uk (C. Mullen), G.R.Marsden@its.leeds.ac.uk (G. Marsden).

matters which extend beyond those we discuss in this paper, such as migration.

In the next section we outline theoretical notions underpinning mobility justice, including ideas of how people's lives matter, and why therefore mobility and other social and economic arrangements affecting people's lives should also matter. Then, we investigate different aspects of mobility justice and the potential tensions and resolutions for addressing these aspects through a case study around the transition to low emission vehicles. By drawing in a more holistic set of concerns we explore how this approach to tackling pollution issues can create social exclusion and disadvantage both for those without access to vehicles and for those who struggle financially to run a vehicle. In the face of this, we begin to explore how different approaches to reducing pollution, involving mobility systems less reliant on private powered vehicles may be more promising at reconciling different aspects of mobility justice (cf. [46]). It is in examining the potential of these approaches for settling tensions in mobility justice, that we engage with choice based theories of justice, and then examine the case for collective thinking about values and what sorts of activities should be accommodated, enabled and curtailed. Whilst such an approach is potentially politically contentious it is clear that embedded within the status quo are a range of implicit assumptions which if codified explicitly would also be contentious. This approach is new territory in discourses on mobility justice, but has roots both in transport studies (e.g. Refs. [2,67]), and in approaches in political philosophy which ask "what sort of society" we should have [12,49,78]. The paper concludes by briefly discussing approaches to decision-making for a more just mobility system, taking account of both the impacts of Transport, and of the ways in which different activities are supported or constrained by provision for mobility.

2. Mobility, transportation and conceptions of justice

It is rarely, if ever, possible to simply read off from a description of a situation to an account of what should be done. There can be little dispute that a situation is bad (for instance, deaths on the roads), but much greater disagreement about justifiability of measures to reduce deaths—consider arguments about reducing speed limits, about strict liability [32], and so on. Some investigations of mobility justice draw on specific, and different, theories of justice (e.g. Refs. [53]). Others do not apply any particular theory, but instead implicitly appeal to general notions of fairness or equality [55,36]. Given this diversity of approach it would be meaningless to describe one theory which underpins work on mobility justice. We can, however, outline some basic notions which will be compatible with many of the arguments on mobility justice, and which while under-determined, distinguish these arguments from other normative approaches such as libertarian approaches (e.g. Ref. [60]). These notions will help ground the debate in the rest of this paper, giving some basis for addressing questions such as 'equality of what?' (e.g. Refs. [9,14,80]), or what collective responsibility do we have for one another? These basic notions are:

- i Beginning from the assumption that each person matters (morally) as much as any other: so their life matters, and their ability to make something of their life also matters [35,38,39].
- ii There is a societal responsibility to make political, social and economic arrangements which reflect this assumption that each person matters. This has been described as showing equal concern [25,35,38,39]. The societal obligation also falls on each person, so that people have some responsibility to accept limitations for the benefit of others [59].

- iii Treating people 'as equals' is not necessarily the same as 'equal treatment,' as treatment as equals may require taking account of people's differing needs and contexts ([24], p. 68).

These ideas are compatible with theories falling, broadly, within major and frequently contrasted branches of political and moral philosophy, including liberal egalitarianism on one hand, and virtue ethics and communitarianism on the other. The former is based in a tradition which has been, and to a large extent remains, dominant in western philosophy over the last two centuries (see Refs. [48,25]) however the latter which has a far longer history, has been regaining prominence in recent decades (e.g. Refs. [1,48,99]). Very broadly, for liberal egalitarians, justice must have concern for the distribution of ability or power a person has to exercise choice about the way in which they live (see Refs. [25,56,77]). This requires concern for distribution of resources and conditions, so:

"government must assure all citizens a decent level of income, housing, education, and health care, on the grounds that those who are crushed by economic necessity are not truly free to exercise choice in other domains" ([77], p. 58)

Some of the motivation for this focus on choice (within and beyond egalitarian theories) stems from distrust of the idea that society should constrain individualism. This position is found within some political opposition to authoritarian government (e.g. Ref. [4]), and also within some struggles against discrimination where choice and individualism are adopted as a response to social repression, such as social expectations that women remain in their place—in the home and out of public life (see e.g. [100]). As such, there is an obvious appeal to liberal theories of justice.

In this context, the more recent advocates of communitarian and virtue ethics theories, have tended to frame their arguments as responding to apparent deficiencies in the 'choice' based liberal theories. It may be helpful to outline two strands to these arguments. First, critics of 'liberal choice' point out that the conception of choice in those liberal theories is one which assumes that people can make a decision as if in a vacuum, unencumbered by context, such as social norms, partial and value laden perceptions of the world, and even psychological influences (see e.g. Ref. [48]). This, they argue is an implausible idea of the way in which people act, and think about acting. People exist, and form their sense of self, in relation to the world (and society) in which they live (see e.g. Ref. [99]). Further, our understanding of the world is partial and distributed in the sense that no one person is omniscient, and is value laden in relying on contestable and changing theories (scientific, social and so on) to make sense of the world [6,88]. The context in which people make their choices, is one which is situated, with multiple influences, and this frames both actions and decisions about actions (or choice). Second, the 'choice' based theories of justice tend, it is argued, to present 'choices' or options to people which appear unfair. This sort of argument is commonly made in relation to those liberal theories which justify large economic inequalities, for instance, theories which assert that redistribution is unjust on the grounds that it interferes with people's choices about the way in which they use their property (e.g. [60]). However the objection can also be levelled at liberal egalitarian theories despite the concern that those theories have for making social and economic arrangements in which everyone has access to (some level of) resource. One difficulty is that their focus on individual choice, does not allow for adequate (or fair) accommodation of social values. For instance, choice based theories are criticised by feminist virtue ethicists on the basis of the way in which they treat care giving. While recognising that 'choice' based egalitarian theories would require that resources are provided for care (since some people need care to be able to exercise choice), they argue that this commodification does

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/6557999>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/6557999>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)