

Dis/En/Abled mobility: Mobile labour and (in)justices in access to mobility

Mobility is a fundamental prerequisite for everyday life in all kinds of spatial patterns. While cities are often portrayed as hubs of movement and accessibility, rural regions are increasingly shaped by a growing necessity for mobility as public services and infrastructures continue to decline. At the same time, all spaces remain deeply dependent on mobility to sustain work, care, and social life.

Yet, what frequently remains hidden is where, how, and whose mobility is enabled. Put differently, who is mobile for whom—and at what cost—so that others can move faster, farther, or more conveniently across spatial scales? What spatial disparities characterize access to mobility? Mobility services and infrastructure are neither evenly distributed, nor just in the ways they are built and used. Rather, mobility systems are produced, maintained, and enabled by political decisions and the labour, time, and bodies of others, while mobility itself also depends on individuals' capabilities and resources.

This session therefore foregrounds frictions and tensions in the provision of and access to mobility services and infrastructures, drawing attention to the often invisible labour, spatial arrangements and social relations that are the backbone of mobility provision systems. From bus drivers who enable everyday accessibility, to platform-based delivery cyclists and couriers whose work is an integral part of cities' transport logistics, mobility is continuously produced. In rural contexts, access to essential services, beyond those available locally, often depends on community-based, informal, and private transport provision. All of these mobilities are essential but frequently undervalued, precarious, and unevenly recognized. Whilst questions of accessibility and mobility provision have given rise to new approaches to urban planning, they are even more acute in rural areas, where being mobile is even more a necessity.

In this session we want to critically explore the intersections of who is mobile, by whom mobility is enabled, and resulting socio-spatial inequalities and injustices. We invite contributions that examine not only mobility practices themselves, but also the hidden power relations, inequalities, and dependencies embedded in the (re-)production of mobility systems. In doing so, the session seeks to contribute to ongoing debates on mobility justice (Sheller, 2018) and mobility poverty (Lucas, 2016) across different spatial scales.

We welcome empirical, theoretical, and methodological contributions. Topics may include (but are not limited to):

- Frictions and tensions in the provision of and access to mobility services and infrastructures
- The production of mobility and its entanglement with social, political, and economic conditions, and its differentiated beneficiaries
- Disadvantaged groups and areas rendered vulnerable to questions of provision and access to mobility systems
- Accessibility and the (in-)formal arrangements of mobility provision as outcomes of mobility systems across different spatial contexts

We, the Urban and Mobility Geography group at Karlsruhe Institute for Technology (KIT), are planning this session as an in-person session. To submit your proposal, please send your paper title and abstract (of up to 250 words) by Friday, 20th February, to urbanmobility@ifgg.kit.edu. Please also let us know your contact details, affiliation, and any accessibility requirements.