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‘Seeing Like a Citizen’: Rethinking City Street Transformations Through the Lens of Epistemic Justice

Edited by
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Introduction: Streets, Planning Knowledges, and Epistemic (in)Justice

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Streets are the backbone of urbanism. Yet, apart from foundational work during the ascendancy of the automobile age (Jacobs, 1961), sustained attention to their role in urban public life has only recently returned. The COVID-19 pandemic and climate crisis have multiplied calls to rethink what city streets are for, beyond their current dominance by private cars. Street space reallocation and place-making initiatives, often using temporary and/or experimental approaches such as 'tactical urbanism', are taking place in significant numbers worldwide (Landgrave-Serrano et al., 2021).

Enlarging the car-free space available for public life can generate social, environmental, and health benefits, and thus it is often taken for granted that experimental street transformations are politically progressive (Kębłowski et al., 2019). Yet behind the currently popular narrative of the street being "for people rather than cars", the question of "for what people?" looms large. There is growing debate about the implications of tactical street transformations for social justice, with attention to the diversity of publics participating in relevant processes, and how radical or emancipatory the politics at play really are (Smeds & Papa, 2023; Verlinghieri et al., 2023).

This Interface brings together five essays by scholars of spatial and transport planning, as two closely related but often siloed fields, that critically reflect on ongoing street transformations. This Introduction expands on two issues: first, why we think 'seeing like a citizen' is currently undervalued in planning for streets, and second, what we mean by epistemic justice and how this concept differs from other ways of thinking about socially just planning.

'Seeing Like a citizen': Citizen Knowledges About the Street

Streets are in many ways the quintessential social infrastructure of neighbourhoods. Since being taken over by automobiles, they have, however, mainly been seen as infrastructure for mobility, planned by expert engineers to facilitate traffic flows by taming the rest of street life (Prytherch, 2021). This focus on rationalising and formalising the street in the quest for efficiency and economic productivity can be understood as a 'seeing like a state' perspective (Scott, 1998) – a state epistemology that recurrently fails to recognise the complexity of streets.

During the last two decades, convivial street life has again become celebrated in all its richness of lingering, socialising, playing, and trading – we call this placemaking perspective 'seeing like a designer', after the design epistemology of architect Jan Gehl (2010) that it exemplifies. Although this perspective conceptually positions citizens' use of streets at the centre, it does so through the eyes of the urban designer: another genre of expert whose professional epistemology privileges aesthetic judgments and quantitative evidence over citizens' accounts of lived experience (Smeds & Papa, 2023). It also universalises 'people' as a category of street users by erasing differences in social identity between individuals (Krivy & Ma, 2018). This continued rationalism of the 'designer' perspective is perhaps unsurprising, since influential Global North design firms (e.g. Gehl Studio) became oriented towards winning state contracts for placemaking projects and established a strong influence on municipal visions for streets across cities globally (McCann & Mahieus, 2021).

As dominant planning epistemologies for city streets, both 'seeing like a state' and 'seeing like a designer', have meant that the plurality of ways of 'seeing like a citizen' have been sidelined. The intimate knowledge that citizens have about the physical design, institutions and web of social relations that make their street work (Jacobs, 1961) is often only background noise, rarely contributing to recurring but often vague discourses about well-being, prosperity, and

sustainability. Many examples of citizen perspectives can be derived from grassroots movements engaged in tactical reappropriations of streets (e.g. Hou, 2010); equally, we know that the advocacy of activists is not necessarily representative of broader local populations (Zavestoski & Agyeman, 2015). There exists a plurality of alternative citizen epistemologies regarding what the street should be for, held by a diversity of individuals.

This Interface explores this plurality across different geographical contexts. We see the tendency to undervalue 'seeing like a citizen' as a normative issue and seek to dive more deeply into which particular citizens' knowledge is deemed credible by state planning institutions, by drawing on the concept of epistemic justice.

Why Think About Epistemic (in)Justice?

Most transport planning research has adopted a state-centric focus on distributive justice (e.g. Creutzig et al., 2020), with only a notable few exceptions (e.g. Legacy, 2016). Feminist theorists have long argued for the need to look beyond distributive justice to consider procedure and recognition within public decision-making (e.g. Young, 1990). Recent work on citizen participation has followed in this vein (e.g. Vitrano & Lindkvist, 2022), however, few mobility scholars have engaged directly with the concept of epistemic justice (e.g. Sheller, 2018; Smeds et al., 2020).

Within spatial planning research, there is an established tradition of thinking about procedural justice and the value of citizen knowledges (Monno & Khakee, 2012). As a specific concept, epistemic justice has appeared on the agenda recently, for example in Beebeejaun's (2017) critique of how gendered and racialised identities play out in participatory planning processes, which we introduce below.

In a basic sense, the question of epistemic justice can be understood as 'whose knowledge counts' in interactions between citizens and planners. An epistemic justice lens responds to calls for a shift from state-centric to society-centric conceptualisations of transport justice: from ensuring a fair distribution of access to transport services, to a broader engagement with citizen knowledges and ideas percolating within society regarding just forms of mobility (Karner et al., 2020; Verlinghieri & Schwanen, 2020).

Similarly, thinking about epistemic justice can help nuance the notion of procedural justice as discussed in participatory planning research. As Beebeejaun (2017, p.3) puts it, participatory planning debates focus on "the politics of presence", which we refer to as 'who is in the room': are the citizens participating in public consultations numerous enough and representing a diverse enough range of social groups? For example, how many women of different ethnic backgrounds are represented in a planning exercise. Beebeejaun (2017, p.3) argues this focus "can act to underplay the epistemic injustice that women face based on their gender", such as the deeper structural factor of how (minority ethnic) women's knowledges continue to be marginalised because they are construed as irrational and overly emotional.

This focus going beyond 'who is in the room' is, in our view, the key added value of epistemic justice as a concept: it brings foundational issues regarding knowledge formation and articulation to the fore. To this, we can add the attention paid to how the intersecting social identities of individuals shape 'whose knowledge counts', beyond notions of group-based participation.

Prejudice in the Credibility Economy of Planning

An important starting point for this Interface is Miranda Fricker's (2007) theorisation of epistemic justice (similarly to Beebeejaun but originally inspired by Sheller, 2018). In particular what Fricker (2007) calls 'prejudice in the credibility economy', which captures injustice in which citizens' knowledge is deemed credible by state planning institutions: some citizens are afforded an excess of credibility, whereas others suffer from a credibility deficit based on prejudice about their social identity. This is an intuitive concept which speaks to a long list of established social prejudices "such as the idea that women are irrational, blacks are intellectually inferior to whites, the working classes are the moral inferiors of the upper classes" (Fricker, 2007, p.23). Although 'Diversity, Equity & Inclusion' policies have arrived at the table of many planners, this does not mean that today's representatives of state planning institutions are not influenced by less overt forms of prejudice. Systemic race- and gender identity-based discrimination within society will inevitably be reflected within planning (Thomas, 2020); even though such credibility deficits are in many cases caused by non-deliberate instances of subconscious stereotyping, they are nonetheless often harmful and fundamentally unjust (Fricker, 2007).

Fricker (2007) distinguishes between two types of epistemic injustice: testimonial injustice and hermeneutical injustice. The former occurs during interactions where a planner gives a citizen's testimony on a certain issue, e.g. about their lived experience, a deflated level of credibility due to prejudice about their identity of citizens across intersecting categories of identity such as gender, race and class. This testimonial type of injustice relates to 'what is said in the room' in moments of planning participation, where a planner perceives that a citizen's knowledge claims are not credible. The latter hermeneutical type of injustice occurs prior to such moments of participation, where gaps in society's tools of social interpretation (e.g. for understanding black women's experience) put a citizen at an unfair disadvantage with respect to their capacity to make sense of their own social experience and thus formulate a testimony in the first place. In other words, societal structures shape 'what happens before entering the room'; most Western education and planning systems privilege a white, male way of seeing and speaking the world. Citizens have varying capacities to articulate their experience of planning in a way that is perceived as intelligible and credible because they have varying access to the conceptual terminology and communication styles that resonate with the epistemology of state planning institutions (Fricker, 2013). This interrelation of whose knowledge counts (what citizens') and what knowledge counts (conceptual content and style) is key.

In essence, Fricker theorises what we already know: the extent to which citizens are taken seriously by planners and 'speak the language' of the state is unevenly distributed across society because of differences in social identity. This sheds light on how socially just planning is not only about the procedural issue of who participates – 'who is in the room' – but also about the epistemic politics of 'who says what in the room' and what knowledge capacities different citizens have 'before entering the room', in the context of structural prejudice in the credibility economy.

Contents of the Interface

Focusing on street planning debates in New York City, Havana, Barcelona, Montréal, and Santiago, the five essays in this Interface address the following questions:

- What prejudice in the credibility economy can be observed? Whose knowledge is deemed (non-)credible, and why?

- What types of knowledge (data, communication styles, reasoning) are privileged by state planning institutions, and what capacities do different citizens have to produce these?
- What approaches to research or praxis could advance epistemic justice?

[Insert Figure 1]

Figure 1. ArcGIS Online website showcasing the case studies through multimedia StoryMaps, available at https://arcg.is/r8r5H.

The case study contexts are introduced on a website accompanying this Interface: https://arcg.is/r8r5H. This open-access resource enables public engagement with the Interface's research, but also highlights the rich empirics underlying it, with 'StoryMap' webpages providing a multimedia case narrative for three of the essays. We invite readers to explore these StoryMaps via the hyperlink above or the links embedded within the Figure captions of the respective essays below (Smeds; Kocsis; Connolly & Polgar).

Only some of the Interface's essays engage directly with Fricker's theory (Smeds; Kocsis; Manaugh & Waygood), which, as rooted in moral philosophy and Western feminism, is only one of many addressing epistemic politics. Scholars thinking from the Global South have developed lines of inquiry regarding epistemological challenges for decolonisation, with one essay in particular (Kocsis) highlighting such work. Other contributions (Castañeda; Connolly & Polgar) draw on debates regarding epistemology within planning theory. Yet all the essays focus on how citizens position their knowledges vis-à-vis state planning institutions and offer contributions that resonate with the broad concept of epistemic justice as introduced here. We hope they will inspire new thinking on socially just planning at this time of wide-scale reconfiguration of urban street space – not just away from car dominance, but also from public space to commodified space (Smeds; Kocsis). We reflect on themes emerging across the essays in the Conclusion to this Interface.

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Citizen Epistemologies as the Driver of Public Plaza Equity in New York City

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Inequitable access to open public space has been debated for decades in New York City, as a high-density context where much of the city's land surface is taken up by streets dominated by motor vehicles. In 2008, a new era in the city's public space provision began with the launch of the NYC Department of Transportation's Plaza Program, focused on the creation of new pedestrian plazas fashioned from street space formerly dedicated to traffic. By 2017, the Program had expanded from one to over 70 plazas city-wide and continues to operate using a 'tactical urbanism' approach with temporary materials like paint and planters. Drawing on fieldwork conducted in 2019 (Smeds, 2021), this essay describes how citizens' epistemologies surrounding Diversity Plaza in the Jackson Heights neighbourhood became a key driver for the reform of NYC's Plaza Program towards greater public space equity. Based on this case, I argue that citizens' struggles for epistemic justice can pave the way for realising greater distributive and procedural justice in transitions towards post-car cities.

Since the 1980s, debate on public space in NYC has focused on distributive justice: disparities in the spatial distribution of high-quality spaces between higher-income and lower-income neighbourhoods (Weisz & Woodner, 2017). Due to austerity politics following the city's 1975 fiscal crisis, the maintenance of sidewalks, plazas, and green squares became increasingly privatised through contracting-out (Krinsky & Simonet, 2017). Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) began managing public spaces using funding raised from local property owners and mastered complex negotiations with NYC government to develop self-sustaining financial models for maintenance and regeneration; for example, through signing agreements with the City to allow revenue generation from commercial concessions like private events and food vending (Madden, 2010). The higher the property values in a neighbourhood, the more baseline funding a BID can raise, and the more it can expand its organisational capacity for generating further revenue. Over time, this created a situation where affluent parts of Manhattan – compared to lower-income neighbourhoods in Brooklyn, Queens, and the Bronx – became home to many more well-resourced BIDs providing a greater range of high-quality

services (Gross, 2013). Privatisation thus exacerbated NYC's pattern of distributive injustice in public space access. It is widely acknowledged that at its root, this pattern was driven by growing procedural injustice: a gap in the financial and organisational capacity of BIDs across different neighbourhoods to run the political, legal, and business negotiations with city government and commercial actors that were needed for public space management under the privatised regime.

The above diagnosis of public space inequity became mirrored in the debate regarding NYC's new Plaza Program. The Program relied largely on an application-based process where the selection of plaza locations was based on the initiative of 'community partners' (including BIDs and other non-profit organisations), and the co-funding of plaza management by these partners was crucial to the Program's city-wide expansion (Janoff, 2018). Unsurprisingly, the NYC Department of Transportation (NYC DOT) received fewer applications from lower-income neighbourhoods, given that partners were required to be formally registered non-profits that could organise and pay for maintenance, events programming, and managing contracts for commercial concessions (Urban Omnibus, 2015). The bureaucratic and inflexible nature of the Plaza Program thus further institutionalised distributive and procedural injustice with respect to NYC public space (Gehl Studio & JMBC, 2015).

Identifying uneven financial and organisational capacity across civic actors is undoubtedly important for diagnosing plaza inequity in NYC. Yet, thinking through the lens of epistemic justice sheds light on more fundamental issues regarding the status of citizen knowledges in planning. We need to consider that an underlying structural issue involves what Fricker (2007) calls 'prejudice in the credibility economy': that some citizens' knowledge suffers from a lack of credibility in the eyes of planners due to prejudice based on social identity, which results in testimonial and hermeneutical forms of injustice (as discussed in this Interface's Introduction). What I find useful about Fricker's theorisation is how it draws attention to the intersectional privilege of individuals. A priori, behind every collective advocating for a community's interests, there are people with particular social backgrounds giving testimony and with certain hermeneutical capacities for identifying and articulating those interests.

I argue that the prospect of equitable outcomes from NYC's Plaza Program should not only be understood through a procedural framing regarding which organisations have the capacity to participate in the Program. This ignores the epistemic issues at stake: the capacity of

representatives of lower-income communities to articulate and advocate for place-specific needs – specifically a type of Program that would work for them, rather than the capacity to meet the demands of the municipally mandated Program process. As the case of Diversity Plaza illustrates, plaza equity also depends on the capacity of individuals in a multicultural city and systemically racist society to advocate for their 'citizen epistemologies' in ways that win them credibility in the eyes of the state.

Diversity Plaza has evolved into a symbol of Jackson Heights as one of NYC's most culturally and ethnically diverse neighbourhoods, with large Latino and South Asian populations. The pedestrianised plaza was created in 2012 when NYC DOT closed a stretch of Queen's 37th Road to traffic to solve safety issues, without substantive public consultation or dedicated resources for maintaining the new space. A citizen coalition called Friends of Diversity Plaza (FDP) formed in response, with the mission of organising programming that would showcase the potential of the plaza and convince NYC DOT of the need for further investment (see the StoryMap linked under Figure 2 for details of the case). As Diversity Plaza was adopted into the Plaza Program, negotiations between FDP and NYC DOT revealed contrasting epistemologies that we term 'seeing like a citizen' and 'seeing like a state' in the Interface Introduction.

The City's planners saw the new plaza as 'chaotic' and plagued by littering and 'vagrancy'. They perceived the way in which local immigrant merchants communicated their grievances about the street transformation to be unorganised and unclear. NYC DOT's perspective was that these issues would be solved by a partner organisation that could coordinate local actors and manage and co-fund the plaza as a formal public space in line with the Plaza Program model. In contrast, FDP celebrated the informality of the space for spontaneous political and cultural gatherings (meetings, festivals, protests) and campaigned for homelessness services to be offered on-site. With the support of local merchants' organisation Sukhi NY, FDP organised businesses to contribute in kind to cleaning and events. However, FDP contested the requirements of the Plaza Program. Not only did FDP argue that it lacked the organisational capacity to meet the requirements as a volunteer-run coalition in a lower-income neighbourhood, but FDP also insisted on (i) its right to maintain an informal and democratic way of organising, instead of becoming a formally registered non-profit partner as mandated by the City, and (ii) the need for increased municipal funding, instead of any commercial revenue generation.

The contrast between the state's and citizens' perspectives can be analysed using Fricker's concepts. There was testimonial injustice as contestations by the Jackson Heights community were not initially deemed credible by planners, and as there were initially no local organisations deemed as credible partners. There was hermeneutical injustice in that the community's way of seeing the plaza as a political and cultural space that should be publicly funded and informally run – rather than a 'liveable', privatised, and commercialised space – was not understood. The intersecting socio-economic, cultural, and immigrant identities of Jackson Heights community members played a role in both these injustices.

Ultimately, FDP's advocacy for their 'citizen epistemology' won over the municipal machinery. Diversity Plaza was chosen as a pilot location for the Neighborhood Plaza Partnership (NPP), an initiative by NYC's philanthropic community to test a new model where plaza partners in lower-income neighbourhoods (including FDP) received dedicated support. NPP's philanthropic funding was only sufficient for two-year operations. By 2015, however, NYC city government had effectively institutionalised NPP by establishing a new 'OneNYC Plaza Equity Program', which for the first time provided dedicated municipal funding for lower-income neighbourhoods. This constituted a significant step towards public space equity in NYC, because it broke with the four-decade governance trajectory of increasingly privatised co-funding and co-management by recognising that public space is a public good – and that citizens should have a role in defining that publicness.

As of June 2023, NYC DOT continues to manage the Plaza Equity Program at 30 locations. The eligibility rules for partner organisations have been relaxed, allowing less professionalized and formal organisations to participate. Most importantly, the Program introduced remedies for epistemic injustice. NYC DOT strengthened its capacity for working in more informal ways with community groups, employing staff dedicated solely to supporting 'lower capacity' plazas. This corresponds to Fricker's suggested remedy for testimonial injustice: strengthening the capacity of planners to recognise and correct for (subconscious) prejudice towards diverse citizens. Hermeneutical injustice was remedied through greater recognition of the natures and needs of plazas in diverse, lower-income neighbourhoods. Diversity Plaza's multicultural and 'vibrant' transformation is now celebrated within NYC DOT and among the city's politicians (Figure 2).

[Insert Figure 2]

Figure 2. Discover more about Diversity Plaza's transformation through this multimedia StoryMap: https://arcg.is/1Wr09q1.

One version of the story is that it was NPP and NYC DOT staff's successful lobbying of senior NYC city government officials that was crucial to the establishment of the Plaza Equity Program. I argue that ultimately it was FDP's tactics to advocate for the epistemology of Jackson Heights citizens concerning Diversity Plaza that catalysed city-wide progress on plaza equity. First, the leaders of FDP gave a powerful testimony in a NYC City Council hearing about public space equity from the perspective of racial justice – rather than in the language of planners. Second, FDP's leaders strengthened the hermeneutical capacities of the Jackson Heights community by creating processes of collective sense-making regarding Diversity Plaza's challenges and potential, thus creating a new vocabulary that NYC citizens could draw on in their advocacy. In this sense, it was citizen efforts to advance epistemic justice that paved the way for realising distributive and procedural justice gains for NYC plaza equity.

This essay has shed new light on the epistemic dimension of public space (in)equity in NYC, where long-standing debates have focused on distributive and procedural justice. Reflecting on this case, the potential of Fricker's (2007) theory of epistemic justice for emancipatory praxis can be enhanced by greater attention to structural change. Fricker's theory focuses on interpersonal interactions between 'hearers' (state institutions) and 'speakers' (citizens), and accordingly on the individual's 'work on the self' to grow testimonial sensitivity and hermeneutical capacities. However, I agree with Langton's (2010) argument that advancing epistemic justice requires not only such *individual* remedies, where planners become more virtuous or citizens become more skilled, but also *structural* remedies in planning. I have shown that in NYC, advancing epistemic justice ultimately relied on two structural remedies. First, increased state funding that enabled planners and communities to collaborate on progressive place-making programmes, and second, a citizen collective who carved out the time and space to question dominant neoliberal planning epistemologies and formulate their own vocabularies and visions of meaningful public space. Individual leaders played an important role, but the political power of their citizen epistemology stemmed from collective lived experience in Jackson Heights.

To conclude, I address New Yorkers in recognising that the Plaza Equity Program only marked one step on the road to addressing structural injustice; for example, NYC's newer Open Streets Program continues to pose challenges for racially diverse and lower-income communities (Transportation Alternatives, 2021; Design Trust for Public Space, 2022). Diversity Plaza itself is not a paragon of urban diversity in the sense that there are tensions among different community factions or 'publics' within the neighbourhood (Misra, 2022). While the Plaza Program reforms were path-breaking in terms of public space governance, truly transformative change requires new approaches to addressing existing epistemic injustice, including forms of citizen-led planning participation that can build solidarity across intersectional lines to dismantle systems of oppression.

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“La Esquina De Mi Casa”: Epistemic Justice, Incommensurability, and Planning Practice

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Epistemic injustice results from epistemic privilege without reflexivity. Fricker’s (2007) concept of hermeneutic injustice can help planners understand how they exercise epistemic privilege and guide them to become reflexive in ways that reduce epistemic objectification. Fricker’s concept highlights how planners’ epistemic privilege derives from the legal, material, social, and cultural privileges afforded us as professionals with advanced educations, a status often obtained thanks to the relative social and material privileges we enjoyed to begin with. A path towards a planning practice rooted in epistemic justice rather than *noblesse oblige* would be enriched by greater attention to the work of postcolonial theorists, specifically Schutte’s (1998) use of alterity and incommensurability. With empirical examples from my work on youth and public space in Old Havana, Cuba, I illustrate how the knowledge of local youth is excluded from the designs of planners through class and culture politics. As Old Havana’s streets are remade for economic productivity, tourist-friendly decisions are prioritized while the lived experiences of citizens are disregarded.

Old Havana is a UNESCO World Heritage Site with a complex history of imperialism, and a key site in Cuba’s post-socialist transition. As a result of the Office of the Historian of the City of Havana’s (OHCH) efforts to increase heritage tourism through the promotion of its colonial history, this residential ghetto once abandoned to the poor, has “become a site through which economic value is generated through enclosure and commodification of both space and culture” (Kocsis, forthcomingB). The tensions arising from the changing material relations with public space, in rapidly touristifying Old Havana, provide ample opportunity to explore Schutte and Fricker’s concepts.

Using art and performance methods (Kocsis, forthcomingA), I worked with a group of teenagers (who call themselves ‘the muchachos’ [kids]) to explore their experiences of the current economic/spatial transition. Due to severe underhousing, most of their waking lives take place in the neighbourhood’s streets and squares, spaces essential to the area’s touristification. How the muchachos describe their experiences in places like “la esquina de mi

casa" [my street corner] demonstrate two hermeneutical challenges, one of which Fricker (2007) labels hermeneutical injustice and one of which, following Schutte (1998), I identify as a case of hermeneutical incommensurability.

Cuban philosopher Ofelia Schutte's (1998) work on cultural alterity brought existential-phenomenological and poststructuralist concepts of incommensurability and alterity into conversation with feminist theory to address the power dynamics of cross-cultural communication. She highlights the prejudices involved in communications between members of dominant and subaltern cultures. Key for planners' pursuit of epistemic justice is the idea that a healthy conception of *the other* occurs when we recognize *the other* as different from ourselves while decentring ourselves in acknowledgement of our own experience of this difference (Schutte, 1998: 54). We gain value from such alterity, Schutte (1998) argues, when we embrace the enlightening impact such decentring can have on the quality of our interpersonal communications. As opposed to perceiving a mismatch in meanings – a communicative incommensurability – as a deficit to be overcome through more robust translations, it can be an opportunity to expand our epistemic perspective. The ontological reflection demanded by incommensurability can help planners identify how their epistemic privilege limits whose knowledge they consider valid and what prejudices they employ in making those determinations.

One significant impact of Old Havana's touristification on local youth is their dispossession of public space, as squares and streets are enclosed into patios for expensive restaurants and sanitized for tourist use by custodians from the OHCH (Kocsis, forthcomingB). Businesses serving locals are replaced, leaving the muchachos with no option but to spend their free time in these streets and squares, where increasing enclosure makes them feel unwelcome (for details, see StoryMap linked under Figure 3).

[insert Figure 3]

Figure 3. Explore the muchachos' perspectives of the street through this interactive StoryMap https://arcg.is/5Xje4.

The muchachos' dispossession of streets takes place physically and symbolically. At times, spaces important to the muchachos are occupied by tourists, at others, the muchachos are made

to feel unwelcome or threatened by custodians, business owners, or police in anticipation of how their presence could affect tourists. This change in the muchachos' experience of their streets is unaccounted for in planners' decisions, as their experience does not count in the economically rational plans for tourism development. The occupation of these spaces by tourists hoping to experience the local flavour of Old Havana displaces the very creators of this culture, forcing them to find new places to hang out.

Old Havana is marketed through the very street life tourism displaces, particularly the popular culture of Afro-Cubans which commonly includes Santería, the syncretistic practice of Catholicism and the Yoruba religion. While tourists often seek contact with Santería, posing with OHCH-licensed Habaneras dressed as Yoruba priestesses, purchasing replicas of ceremonial jewellery made of sacred peony seeds, or paying Santeros for private rituals, many complain, in blogs, online reviews, or on the street, about the barbarism of animal sacrifices deposited on street corners – a key component of the same religion. Schutte's (1998) concepts can help us differentiate between the forms of epistemic injustice involved in the creation of Old Havana's new spatial imaginary, specifically, how different peoples' knowledges determine what constitutes appropriate use of the street.

Schutte's (1998) alterity illuminates our own limited horizons through an acknowledgement of difference, including asymmetries in access to and control of resources resulting from social, cultural, or legal statuses. The concept of alterity forces us to acknowledge *the other* as not only that which is outside of us, but also as that within us which decenters what Schutte (1998: 54) calls "the ego's dominant, self-enclosed, territorialized identity". Schutte (1998) brings the postcolonial attention to the regulative power of narratives of identity to the micropolitics of communication between people who occupy social or cultural roles that are valued unequally, highlighting the ability of narratives to determine who we are, who others are, and the value attributed to each of our knowledges. This resonates with Fricker's concern for the role of prejudice in testimonial injustice and encourages us to expand our understanding of such discrimination beyond how we view *the other*, to include how we understand and value our ourselves. This shift in perspective allows planners to consider their role in reproducing epistemic injustice, specifically how they exercise epistemic privilege in their work. In the case of Old Havana, widening the scope of whose knowledge is credible, whose experience is valid, would allow OHCH's planners to better balance the tastes of consumers with the rights of citizens by understanding the impact of tourism on local culture, the engine of said tourism.

Essential to epistemic privilege, Schutte (1998: 56) is concerned with the ability of the dominant speaker to reduce the importance or complexity of any "residue of meaning" they fail to understand; a principle she labels 'cultural incommensurability'. She refers to the dominant speaker's privilege to bypass any strangeness in *the other's* speech, or to subsume anything outside of their frame of reference under an already familiar category. Such behaviour not only reduces the empirical value of the content, but also forces *the other* to "be knowledgeable in the language and epistemic maneuvers of the dominant culture", creating what postcolonial thinkers label a split subject (Schutte, 1998: 60). Incommensurability asks us to appreciate the richness of multiple, often disjunctive, temporalities and fields of perception without subsuming these into existing hierarchies of knowledge in which the 'rational scientific' surpasses the 'local folkloric'.

Fricker's concept of hermeneutical injustice, "a gap in collective hermeneutical resources [which] impinges unequally on different social groups" (2007: 6), is important for communities aiming to create a collective sense of coherence around a complex topic in order to enable collective action. For planning practice rooted in epistemic justice, we must differentiate between cases in which this gap exists, and cases in which the hermeneutical resources used to make sense of an issue are incommensurable with the epistemological tradition of the hearer, because they challenge its hegemony. In the case of the muchachos, both occur, and disentangling them is key to ensuring their experiences are accurately reflected in the knowledge made about their community.

The muchachos experienced hermeneutical injustice. The prioritization of state investment in spaces of tourism value over spaces important to locals results in uneven spatial transformation in Old Havana. While, during interviews, the muchachos consistently identified the impacts of the dispossession of public space on their lives, they could not label the processes through which it occurred at the level of national economic policy or global geo-politics. Nor did they identify the connections between policy choices, economic changes, and the spatial transformation they experienced. In this case, the muchachos' experience appears to confirm a lack of comprehension of the intentionality of the policies and investments, that this spatial transformation has been purposefully created; a hermeneutical gap compounded by the imposition of an official discourse that promotes these changes as universally beneficial, and the repression of opposition in a way that "impinges unequally on different social groups"

(Fricker, 2007: 6). Despite experiencing the most negative impacts of this transition, the muchachos have not been included in any planning processes and, in speaking to us, were initially hesitant to express critique of the process, as they accepted the discourse that any investment in their community must be a blessing, the positive impacts of which must eventually trickle down to them, even if they had not done so yet.

[insert Figure 4]

Figure 4. Streetscapes drawn by the muchachos show a Santería sacrifice beside the lamppost (top left) and overflowing garbage containers with odour lines in the middle.

The muchachos also experienced alterity resulting in hermeneutic incommensurability. In our research, using creative methods that allowed the muchachos to express themselves in their natural registers and vocabularies, we epistemologically privileged their situated knowledges and modes of communication (Kocsis, 2023), creating space for this alterity: both opportunity and safety to communicate and reflect without becoming split subjects. Through storytelling, images, and neighbourhood tours, we allowed the muchachos' concerns to surface authentically instead of limiting our focus to the issues we originally considered most significant.

In discussions of their neighbourhood, the muchachos demonstrated a clear understanding of the state's abandonment of their community at the individual level, in terms of their daily encounters with refuse in the street. The narrow streets of unrestored parts of Old Havana are often crowded by overflowing garbage containers, unemptied for weeks. While hot, week-old garbage contaminates all the senses, stepping on a beheaded chicken – a product of a Santería ritual – provokes a more visceral reaction from most pedestrians. Both garbage and sacrifices appeared frequently in the muchachos' representations of the spaces in which they spent their free time (see Figure 4).

The muchachos expressed acceptance and understanding of the needs of adherents of Santeria to conduct such rituals which is often explained away by outsiders as a product of Santeros' inferior civilization or education (Beliso-De Jesús, 2015). The muchachos expressed a clear understanding of the political motivations for the state's negligence of their community, as manifested through unreliable or insufficient garbage collection, and evaluated it as purposely

harmful, while they saw sacrifices as ‘normal’, even important. Schutte’s (1998) alterity is useful for understanding how the cosmological frame of Santería, which constitutes an important part of residents’ knowledge systems, even those who do not adhere to the Yoruba religion, may create knowledge that is incommensurable with what an outside hearer can understand. The muchachos’ experiences of the spatial transition of Old Havana’s streets, what most matters to them and what most harms them, does not match the economically rational plans for tourist friendly spaces. Incommensurability insists that despite this mismatch in perceptions, such knowledge must be valued by planners and incorporated into decision-making, as opposed to discriminated against or devalued as a mere gap in hermeneutical resources.

Through our research process, the muchachos identified that their challenges went far beyond the low hanging fruit of spatial design and involved their political treatment in the social and economic transition of the city. Schutte’s (1998) concepts of alterity and incommensurability can help planners apply Fricker’s (2007) concern for epistemic injustice to their work by illustrating how epistemic privilege plays out in the micropolitics of communication between people occupying different social positions. Epistemic privilege allows planners to define the terms of the conversation and determine the boundaries of valid knowledge. Being aware of, honest about, and committed to correcting this epistemic privilege is key to planning practice rooted in epistemic justice. Trusting citizens’ intimate knowledge of their streets and valuing the full range of experiences that make up street life can help spatial planners embrace the beautiful complexity of these important spaces.

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Transformational Tactical Urbanism Requires Epistemic Justice

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In most Global North cities, streets are ruled by rationalism, primarily seen as being for the efficient movement of goods and passengers. While this view arguably peaked during mid-twentieth century highway-oriented Modernist planning (Jackson, 1987), calls from local residents for validating alternative uses of public rights-of-way in their neighborhood streets still often lose out to abstract goals embedded in travel demand models. When debates about the use of streets arise, the credibility of those who call for alternatives to the status quo is questioned precisely because they make visible dimensions of public life that are not rooted in efficiency and economy – they prioritize epistemologies rooted in experience and perception. In other words, calls for alternative uses of streets have a transformational intent because they seek to alter the status quo by including goals other than efficiency and economy. Thus, in the name of furthering transformational change in cities, we ask: How can an expanded understanding of the types of knowledge that are relevant to planning streets overcome resistance and bring about transformational change?

The contemporary practice of tactical urbanism that began in the early 2000s is, in part, an effort to create such transformational movement by chipping away at the view that streets are primarily places for the efficient flow of vehicles. Tactical urbanism refers to physical changes to city space that normally have strategic visibility (Gadhano et al., 2014); are temporary and low-cost; and can be iteratively reconfigured to respond to changing conditions (Lydon & Garcia, 2015). For example, tactical urbanism interventions have involved painting street surfaces and adding movable furniture to create new plazas that direct street space away from cars, as was the case with a section of Broadway in Times Square, New York City. The tactical urbanism approach has also deployed civil disobedience to claim car parking spaces for pedestrian uses, as with the "Parking Day" initiatives around the world (Herman & Rogers,

2020), which temporarily transformed parking spaces into public parks, green spaces, or interactive installations. Another approach to tactical urbanism in streets has been “parklets”, first introduced in San Francisco, which are seasonal public gathering spots constructed out of removable materials on top of the street in areas that are ostensibly for car parking (Birdsall, 2013).

While tactical urbanism focused on streets has developed a coherent short- and medium-term model that gets around institutional inertia, doubts remain as to whether the practice of tactical urbanism has met up with its transformational aspirations (Littke, 2016; Brenner, 2017). After completing a tactical intervention, various medium-term options are often pursued (Silva, 2016), such as making interventions more permanent (e.g., Times Square), continuing debate over whether the space should be for cars (e.g., Parking Day), or introducing cyclical changes that habituate new uses (e.g., parklets). However, these medium-term options usually seek legitimacy by proving to decisionmakers that they, for example, improve traffic flows or increase property values. As a consequence, they are often reduced to actions for furthering one-dimensional, rationalist goals through incremental alterations to street space. This means that despite moving away from the car-bias, these choices still reflect prevailing epistemological trends in contemporary street planning. Achieving transformational change through tactical urbanism would require a more direct engagement with the plural forms of knowing the city and the associated diversity of goals for urban space, stepping beyond the limitations of current practices (Ziervogel et al., 2022). To demonstrate how tactical urbanism might accomplish this, we look at how a transversal method of planning has evolved around an increasingly broad-based agenda for street transformation within Barcelona’s Superblocks (translated from *Superillas* in Catalan) program.

Toward Transformational Tactical Urbanism in Barcelona’s Superblocks

Barcelona's innovative urban planning approach, renowned for its focus on social equity and ecological sustainability, is exemplified by the Superblocks program. Launched in 2016, this urban planning initiative involves closing sections of city blocks to private car through-traffic, allowing only local car and transit use in the closed-off streets (see Figure 5). The vacated street space is then repurposed for uses that enhance social and ecological functions in the city (e.g., new civic, play, and green spaces). The repurposing deploys a familiar set of tactical methods

for transforming street rights-of-way, including painting streets, adding seasonal infrastructure, and using visual cues to challenge people to see something other than parking as the "right use".

[INSERT FIGURE 5]

Figure 5. Explore the detailed story behind one of the Superblocks in the Poblenou neighbourhood at this StoryMap webpage: https://arcg.is/0uvrPH.

Despite the technical advancements in transport planning that come with routing traffic away from interior blocks, the real innovation of superblocks lies in the evolution of its goals. The Superblocks program was initially driven by top-down municipal governance, with very little bottom-up influence. Its implementation remains orchestrated by the City's administration, but has come closer to the grassroots approach that proponents of tactical urbanism often emphasize. Thus, it demonstrates how the important link between bottom-up measures and top-down planning can move forward within this context (Steil & Connolly, 2009).

The Superblocks concept has existed for many decades as a way of improving air quality through reduced car use and it was piloted through implementation in some Barcelona neighborhoods (e.g. Gràcia, El Gótico) beginning in the 1990s. Building on these prior efforts and a long tradition of pedestrianized public rights-of-way within *Ramblas* throughout the city, the current push for Superblocks started with a somewhat haphazard launch in the Poblenou neighborhood (see the StoryMap linked under Figure 5 for the details of this case). At the time, the new Administration led by Mayor Ada Colau had inherited the program from the prior Mayor, Xavier Trias. Superblocks were a highly visible element of Trias' top-down, pro-development environmental agenda and the Colau administration decided to implement it without much additional community input. This quick launch caused some residents to feel like changes were being imposed without their consent, which caused pushback (Zografos et al., 2020). That pushback sparked an evolution toward a broader-based, more inclusive set of planning goals that seeks interventions along large "axes" within the city, rather than in small targeted places. It also now includes the development of more permanent green spaces, improved cycling infrastructure, and public transportation to support the transition away from car-centric urban form.

The big shift from the initial Superblocks launch has been a move on the part of the Administration and civil society boosters including neighborhood associations, housing

activists, and accessibility advocates away from a one-dimensional motivation of development-friendly environmental benefits associated with reduced cars. The shift has been toward a more transversal incorporation of goals for improving public life across a wide spectrum of intersecting social and ecological challenges. For example, the effort became one way of providing infrastructure that supports class-based differences in how play happens across the city (Pérez-del-Pulgar et al., 2021). Superblocks also became a way of offering a healthier city for older and physically vulnerable groups (Mueller et al., 2020). An equity justification also developed for Superblocks through a targeted effort to generate positive impacts that respond to specific gender-, age- and ethnicity-based inequities (1). This intersectional lens has become important to the justifications for moving forward with Superblocks and lies at the heart of the move toward more transversal governance of the program across multiple parts of the city government including transportation, ecology, youth, gender, equity, and engineering agencies. In brief, Superblocks evolved over time away from a business-friendly environmental initiative that leveraged the visibility of tactical interventions toward a program with embeddedness in a wider spectrum of citizens' perspectives on "what the street is for". These perspectives led to more street installations meant to enable unstructured play, physically protected spaces for pedestrian movement targeting areas with concentrations of old and young people, and more active transportation options with high public visibility to account for safety. These wider perspectives on why street space matters, apart from moving vehicles through, expand beyond a one-dimensional view of environmental benefits, which ultimately gets translated into instrumental financial and efficiency benefits, toward a more transversal view rooted in experience and perception that responds more to combined social and ecological wellbeing. In following this path, the program exposes some of the great multiplicity of starting points for knowing what a street is for that are normally hidden by the singular epistemological starting point of rationalism.

Bringing the Hidden Dimension into Play

When Peter Marcuse (2017, p.46) defined transformational planning as "combining doing what can be done now with raising what should be done in the future," he described a process that is not far from the general motivations driving the contemporary practice of tactical urbanism. But Marcuse (2017, p.46) also offers a perspective on why doubts have been raised. He writes, transformational planning "involves bringing out the hidden dimension of the alternatives underlying the one dimension of the actual. And then shaping the actual and realistic goal so

that it points in the direction of the hidden dimension, the ultimately desirable, and makes them visible – puts them into play, even if they are not currently implementable."

Transformation requires continually bringing into play the "hidden dimension" comprised of those epistemologies that are not given credibility within the procedures for deciding how urban space is organized and constructed. If a one-dimensional future alternative for streets rooted, for example, only in an environmental justification for reducing the role of cars due to the instrumental benefits it provides, is put forth as *the* alternative, then it necessarily subdues other alternatives based in other epistemologies. As a result, this one-dimensional alternative can be constrained within short- to medium-term incremental interventions. This is the case because such interventions can easily target a substantively narrow goal, but as the substance expands, the extent of intervention also must expand.

As they have evolved, Superblocks in Barcelona are rooted in a wider set of motivations that express social and ecological goals at once through integrated actions across several city agencies. At the tactical level, the program relies on well-established methods commonly employed in various street interventions. These techniques are not the source of novelty in the program. Rather, the transformational impact of the program lies in its ability to introduce a richer spectrum of perspectives for valuing urban space – it arises mostly because the administration of the program leans toward epistemic justice within the city.

Notes

(1) FEMPUBLICBCN (2021) Video testimonials available at: FEMPUBLICBCN - Barcelona Lab for Urban Environmental Justice and Sustainability (bcnuej.org)

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Children as Undervalued Contributors: Whose Voices are Heard in Active Transport Interventions?

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Streets and public space are used by a variety of people with a wide range of expectations and desires. We argue, using the lens of epistemic (in)justice, in which a key underlying tenet is one's "capacity as a knower" being questioned or diminished by those in power (Fricker, 2007, p.44), that children are a marginalized group in transport planning whose voices are typically neither heard nor valued. This essay addresses the questions: What is lost when children's voices are left behind? What can children tell us about their experiences and perceptions of the built environment which can inform more appropriate interventions? We argue that children are denied access to participating in the planning power structure and decision-making processes through the pathways of testimonial and hermeneutical injustice (Fricker, 2007) by being labelled 'non-experts' as well as a result of how planning processes are designed. We further reflect on our own research practice in North America and Japan and propose ways to engage with the expertise of children to understand how cities and streets can be redesigned to reduce car dominance.

The inclusion of children's needs and capacity to travel are, for most intents and purposes, ignored in transport planning (Davis & Jones, 1996; Matthews & Limb, 1999). In general, children are more likely to use active modes of travel and to travel in their local area compared to adults (Tavakoli et al., 2022). Children have also historically used and played in local streets as these locations were near their homes, allowing parents to feel that they can safely allow them to play (Huttenmoser, 1995). These experiences make children 'experts' in the local built environment. Allowing children to use such spaces also increases their connection to their community (Waygood et al., 2022).

However, children's understanding and lived day-to-day experience of using street space differs from and is often at odds with 'traditional' transport engineering paradigms (often

focused on the economically productive commuter). To justify new infrastructure investment, for example, cost-benefit analyses are often conducted with the benefits primarily assessed in terms of travel-time savings (Mackie & Nellthorpe, 2001; Donais et al., 2019). Engineering metrics are primarily focused on motor vehicle travel (e.g., "level of service"). This generally leads to faster and higher volume traffic essentially making children's independent travel an unrealistic option (Amiour et al., 2022), effectively taking away their right to inhabit public space, while the dangerous adult use of motor vehicles in streets remains protected and unquestioned (Jones & Boujenko, 2009).

The adult-focus is deeply embedded in our transport system in sometimes invisible ways. For example, while children are one of the groups most likely to walk, the calculation for pedestrian crossing time is based on an adult's walking speed (e.g., the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices recommends 3.5 feet per second, (USDOT, 2009, p.497). Further, when local interventions are proposed, children's input is rarely sought with the assumption being that adults can speak for them. Yet adults do not experience these streets in the same way: they are often of different height, have different objectives when it comes to travel, have different levels of experience, and are treated differently by other street users. For example, observations of pedestrian crossings in some locations found that cars were more likely to stop for adults than children (St-Louis & Waygood, 2015). Furthermore, Scott (2000, p.99) finds that there is often a "very large gulf between parental observations of their child and a child's perceptions".

Underlying epistemic injustice means that children as a group are labelled 'non-experts' and excluded from the planning process using the argument that they do not know as much or might not understand complex issues concerning street design. Adults in general (as an overall group) however are not excluded because they are non-experts, demonstrating that it is group identity and not expertise which is used as grounds for exclusion.

In the domain of transport, more research is conducted with adults (including specific subgroups such as the elderly) than with children. As mentioned above, one possible reason for this is the widespread prejudice among adults about the ability of children to contribute with 'valuable' information. This illustrates an example of testimonial injustice in the perceived lack of credibility of children in the eyes of adults. For example, adults, including other researchers and those on university ethics committees, often question whether children can complete surveys or whether their answers "can be trusted". One of us has conducted complex and

involved surveys with children (Waygood et al., 2017). In one such study, travel diaries were used for two weekdays where children aged 10-11 from different schools and from different social (?) classes completed detailed information for each trip on the previous day (Waygood & Kitamura, 2009). In contrast with widespread assumptions, the survey provides evidence of the honesty and accuracy of children as research participants. The analysis showed that children were accurate in their use of various trip measures such as the number of minutes between a train transfer, the minutes to walk to school, the sequence of modes in a trip (including access to public transport and the egress time to the destination, which adults often neglect), and the number of trips in a day. Furthermore, children admitted when they were unsure and would often ask questions to ensure that they were correctly interpreting the question (as we visited the schools to conduct the surveys). It is worth noting, in contrast, that when conducting online surveys with adults, it is not uncommon to have to discard over 20% of responses due to poor quality or illogical responses. In such a perspective, the participation of children through schools can be very democratic (in the sense that all children have the possibility to participate; though parents may limit their children's participation by not signing consent forms either intentionally or simply forgetting to). It is hard to imagine a context where all adults of a neighborhood would have a real opportunity to participate.

How then can children's voices be better incorporated into research and planning? As our practice shows, first and foremost researchers must include children in research. Planning practice lacks protocols to include children and through the highly structured nature of institutional processes, prevent children's participation (Carroll et al., 2017). Getting approval from University ethics boards to include children as research participants is more difficult than when working with adults. One barrier is related to needing additional training for the members of the ethics board. In our experience, ethics approvals have had to be sent to another institution for approval, further complicating and lengthening the process. While protecting children is obviously a top priority goal, if this process means that children are not consulted and the end product is not, as a result, beneficial to their health, we might conversely be causing more harm than good. Perhaps we need to change how we look at this ethics question; rather than the ethics procedure limiting access, it should actually seek to break down the barriers to including children's input and participation. What if, instead of limiting the amount of research which focuses on children, ethics boards asked why children would *not* be consulted and that having the proper capacity to communicate with children is the researcher or practitioners' responsibility, rather than a reason to not consult children. A similar notion was proposed by

Davis and Jones (1996) writing on public health, suggesting that society could have Ombudspeople and children's rights officers to help overcome this lack of participation and help empower children.

Methods exist to elicit quality information for children. As Matthews and Limb (1999, p. 68) write, "(r)ather than assuming children know less than adults we suggest that they may know 'something else'". For example, "best practices" in the field include 'walk-along' interviews and being physically present in the field. Eliciting how children feel about a place can identify problems hidden to an adult's perspective. Children may lack the experience to elaborate conceptual ideas or solutions, but they are capable of contributing if taken to the sites and given support.

In both planning and research, spending time with children, listening to them, and getting them to present their ideas can be valuable means of capturing their input. Cognitive mapping is another potentially effective method, though this might be limiting as drawing is a skill that not everyone has. Writing, in turn, is related to skills such as spelling and grammar that can limit freedom of expression. These examples highlight another dimension of hermeneutical injustice whereby children's potential lack of knowledge of certain accepted or expected ways of expression limit their engagement with the dominant power structures. Thus, having children present their own ideas verbally to decision makers can help remove one layer of adult interpretation and possible distortion.

As Diana Studer, a professional with expertise in child-friendly public space design, observes, children have the capacity to understand complex ideas and to see through current planning paradigms. The following quote inspires our own research practice to genuinely engage with the viewpoints of children:

"*Children can make profound observations about how space should be used without formal training in design*. Intuitively, they understand the need to activate a space, the concept of budgeting, historical references, and the shortcomings of current designs. *Listening to them speak, one wonders how adults could have been so shortsighted to build what they did and expect it to work. These children knew better, naturally*." (Studer, 2021, emphasis added).

The epistemic injustice done to children impacts us all, leading to a less just world. Valuing these expert voices is the first step in redressing this harm.

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Making Sense of Cycling: Technification and the Production of Activist Knowledges

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Over the past three decades, cycling activism has proliferated across Latin American cities, giving way to a trans-local movement that frames the bicycle as part of the solution to a number of urban challenges, including transportation planning and justice, resilience, and alienation. This involves the production of a shared common sense: knowledges, discourses and practices that dispute car-centred urban planning and position the bicycle as the "correct" vehicle for the city – one that is conducive to reclaiming streets for people and "human scale" mobility, away from cars.

This essay builds on fieldwork with cycling organisations conducted between 2018 and 2019 in Santiago (Chile). While there exists a diverse pool of cycling activist organisations in Santiago, here I focus on one group, *Vive la bici*, comprised by mostly young-to-middle aged men and women of middle income, some of whom have an extensive trajectory in cycling activism. I draw on Manuel Tironi's (2015) "modes of technification" to discuss how these activists produce and mobilise knowledge. Inspired by the Science and Technology Studies (STS) tradition, Tironi critiques radical planning's celebration of "local" knowledge, which he claims upholds knowledge asymmetries since it rests on the assumption that lay knowledge (*metis*) is fundamentally different from technical knowledge (*episteme*), where the latter is the sole domain of certified professionals. He points to the political strategies deployed by citizens' organisations that effectively blur such epistemic distinctions, and names these strategies "modes of technification".

This essay focuses on how cycling activists work to make knowledge-claims about the bicycle as a vehicle that "makes sense" in the city. This involves considering their knowledge-practices (Casas-Cortés et al., 2008), relationships with other actors with a stake in "knowing the city", and how these relationships aid in producing knowledge that is deemed credible and valued by political and technical elites. This discussion challenges theorisations of epistemic justice that rely on a sharp division between episteme and metis (e.g., Sheller, 2018; Untokening Collective, 2017). While such proposals typically seek to elevate the lived, experiential

knowledge of marginalised actors, they rest on a purified reading of knowledge-production where technical and non-technical elements are clearly distinguishable and ontologically distinct. More useful for advancing epistemic justice is a perspective that recognises episteme and metis as entangled and distributed across complex networks of actors. I draw on this proposal to show how cycling activist groups assimilate technical expertise in their organization, frames and problematizations, and in the generation of issues.

To make knowledge-claims about the bicycle, the latter must be "tamed" as an object of knowledge and framed in a way that "makes sense" in the city in order to advance demands for infrastructure and pro-bicycle public policy. This can be achieved in various ways, but one which lends particular credibility to activists' knowledge claims is through measurement, calculation, and standardisation (cf., Latour, 1999).

Since 2008, *Vive la bici* has been staging the Measurement of Efficiency by Mode of Transport (MEMT) race, which defines several points of simultaneous departure across the city and a single destination to compare modes of public and private transport at peak hour according to time, speed, cost, and emissions – the constitutive elements of "efficiency" according to this organization. Over the years, the race has expanded to other cities in Chile (e.g., Curicó and Concepción) and elsewhere (e.g., Salta, Argentina; Ambato, Ecuador; Lima, Peru) through the networks of Latin American cycling activism. Comparative tactics between and within cities help create a 'common sense' shared across locales, and they lend robustness and credibility to the results. This is crystallised in a systematised results table as evidence that the bicycle is, on average, an efficient vehicle compared to other modes, and also when compared across different contexts; and it enable activists to draw conclusions such as rectifying the belief that the private car will take you to your destination faster, and across longer distances.

[insert Figure 6]

Figure 6. Santiago activists display a banner reading 'On the bike you would already be there' during the National Car-Free Day in 2018. Photo by author.

These knowledge claims rest not on an ontological or epistemological dispute, but are achieved through mobilising the techniques, language, and grammar of experts – that of experimentation, data collection, calculation, and systematization. The *epistemic mode of technification* (Tironi,

2015) entails that organizations position themselves as peers in relation to technicians – accepting the framework of the debate, assimilating their rationalities, speaking their language, and holding similar expert competencies; but also challenging their views on a technical basis through debates that unfold in mainstream media.

Yet, in order to produce and challenge technical expertise, activists forge networks and relationships across the State and academia. Such relations are crucial to how knowledge that is deemed credible and valuable is produced. Over the years, the growing complexity of this experiment means that conducting the MEMT demands a generous amount of work and distribution of labor. Devising the race, securing financial resources and institutional collaborations, recruiting volunteers, promoting the event, coordinating the measurement across locales, gathering the data, and representing and disseminating the results are only a brushstroke of the tasks involved. Here, a complex distributed arrangement of interorganisational collaboration and skill and knowledge sharing is brought into being, such that technical expertise is assimilated in the organisational field (Tironi, 2015). For instance, activists in Chile frequently fund their activities by competing in governmental funding programmes. Doing so not only requires skills and experience developed over the years or in other organisations, but it also positions activist organisations as credible and competitive urban actors who can demonstrate the competence required to secure a government grant.

In the process, multiple actors implicated in urban knowledge-production are drawn into the arrangement and imbue it with credibility: other cycling organisations, various universities, and the Ministries of Transport and Communications, and Science and Technology collaborate, and support the MEMT, in various ways. These strategic alliances are in part forged in efforts to show authorities the strengths and challenges of urban mobility *in situ* (Vive la bici, 2019), thus emphasising the role of experiential knowledge in cycling activism; and they afford an opportunity for learning and co-constructing knowledge about cycling and mobility. Doing so helps strengthen ties between actors with a stake in urban mobility and lends the experiment the credibility conferred by interorganizational collaboration, including formally recognized institutions of knowledge production.

However, some elements remain unspecified in this exercise of quantification and abstraction. It is not just vehicles that race, but *bodies with vehicles* with different affordances that are not differentiated in the MEMT. *Who* is racing is not made explicit, and “efficiency” remains an

abstract category that rests on neoliberal rationales of competition and the erasure of difference. This risks marginalising the knowledges of those actors whose everyday mobilities are not experienced as efficient or speedy, or whose mobilities are not easily grasped by the logics of quantification and standardisation. For example, in recent years, feminist cycling activists have challenged the hegemonic discourses of speed and efficiency as masculinised approaches to cycle activism, foregrounding instead issues of harassment, care, and belonging.

Yet, although the MEMT aims to produce a common sense drawing on the vocabularies and grammars of efficiency, the race unfolds in a context where activists are also concerned with the inequities (re)produced by automobility. The results of the MEMT show the private car to be faster than the bus but, within the public debate, activists frame this not as a triumph of the car, but as evidence that street space is unfairly distributed and ought to be reallocated to support public transport and active travel. These problematizations reflect what activists often point out: that the bicycle is an excuse to advance a new mobility paradigm that moves beyond transport and towards mobility, foregrounding how people inhabit the city in motion (Muévete Santiago, 2013). This vision includes a rejection of automobility, framed within a discourse of equity and a more democratic urban life. Producing new technical issues to be debated is what Tironi (2015) calls the *generative mode of technification*. Activists use the bicycle (as a technology and rolling signifier, cf. Hoffmann, 2016) to disrupt technical discussions and business-as-usual debates (Sagaris, 2014); and to mobilize new concerns and agendas for the urban transport debate, including issues of disability and access to the city, class inequality and segregation, and gendered mobility. That is, for activists, cycling makes sense in the city not just because it is an efficient form of transport, but because it is believed to be an equitable, just, and democratic form of mobility. As such, cycling ought to be allocated a greater share of street space to the detriment of automobilized space.

Considering activist knowledges, as I have done here, reveals the contingency of the expert/layperson divide and has implications for epistemic justice. There is an increasing recognition of the need to redistribute expertise and account for the ways in which multiple expert knowledges are brought into being (e.g., Whatmore, 2009). Some accounts stress the value of lay knowledge as "complementary" to traditional expertise and seek to incorporate citizens' perspectives into urban planning through participatory mechanisms. In contrast, I have reviewed some of the technification strategies deployed by cycling activists in Santiago that enable them to make and circulate credible knowledge claims on par with traditionally defined

experts. As Tironi remarks, “the technical and the political, the *episteme* and the *metis*, and the scientific and the experiential are often entangled in complex networks of knowledge circulation” (2015, p. 75). I have shown how such networks come into being, allowing cycling activists to become technical entities with the capacity to co-produce, and speak back to, expert knowledge. These networks allow activists to articulate a common sense shared across locales: cycling is an efficient and democratic form of mobility that should be prioritised in the allocation of street space.

However, one might argue, as decolonial thinker Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui does, that translating activists’ claims into experts’ grammars and vocabularies is a reflection of power’s “indication that it does not understand what a collective or a movement wants, seeks, or attempts to conquer, if it does not enunciate them according to power’s own rules of speech” (Gago, 2020, p. 175). Transport problems continue to be dominated by neoclassical approaches, often failing to engage with issues of socio-spatial inequality (Kębłowski & Bassens, 2017). In this sense, some of the claims mobilised by other activist groups tend to draw significantly less attention, become secondary or are marginalised in public debates and the spaces of decision-making. These include cycling feminist demands to the right to the city, issues of territorial fragmentation, migrants’ cycle-mobilities, or the structural inequalities that moved thousands of Chileans to the streets in late 2019, including a Plurinational Cycling Revolution that positioned the bicycle in relation to these grievances (Gillot & Rérat, 2022). Tironi’s modes of technification framework is helpful for understanding the entanglement of actors involved in transport knowledge-production; and for producing better accounts of urban activism that go beyond “contentious politics” and take activists seriously as experts and knowledge-producers. However, in employing Tironi’s framework there remains a risk of perpetuating the debate over city streets as solely technical and technified actors as the sole holders of credibility; rather than grappling with the deep political issues that surround urban cycling and the diverse knowledge-practices that animate claims not just for road space, but for a democratic, de-alienated and playful urban life (Castañeda, 2020).

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Conclusion: Toward Epistemic Justice Through Planning Streets and Public Spaces

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The well-known intellectual and activist, W.E.B. Dubois (1903) observed that the social history of black people in the United States was shaped in large part by a society that systematically reduced or removed the credibility of anyone with a black identity to shape public life as a way of enforcing subordination. He argued that a ‘double-consciousness’ developed as a result, wherein many black people were caught in a conflict between the desire for a self-realized sense of worth and the desire for perceived credibility within a society that left them to always look at one’s self through the eyes of others. Dubois identified the social and psychological fractures created by the less visible impacts of racist assumptions of lack of credibility and in so doing revealed the lasting damage that epistemic injustices imparted on the black population of the United States. This example stands as a powerful reminder of the ethical harms that are incurred by ‘prejudice within the credibility economy’ (Fricker, 2007).

One might imagine that the impacts of ongoing epistemic injustice derived from prejudices such as racism are acutely felt when you live in a city where you are made to constantly adjust to the preferences of others because their way of seeing the world is most valued in the rooms where planning decisions are made. When you have to make your public space conform to norms with which you disagree; when you are forced to move aside so that a tourist’s comfort level can be accommodated; when you must translate what you know to be true into quantified language in order to be heard; then you feel that epistemic injustice *underlies* the more often cited distributive, procedural, and recognitional forms of injustice in public decision-making.

Indeed, the essays in this Interface demonstrate how important what happens 'before you enter the room' is to questions of who has power in the rooms where decisions are made, regardless of the participatory or distributional equity procedures that are in place. For New York City's Plaza Program, an elevated role for citizen epistemologies beginning with the development of Diversity Plaza in Jackson Heights was the real driver of increased equity, beyond distributive outcomes, or more superficial procedural justice issues (Smeds). For Barcelona's Superblocks program, the transformational potential of tactical interventions depends mostly on prior recognition of a wide set of ways of knowing and valuing the public realm (Connolly & Polgar). For Santiago's bicycle activism, the question of how knowledge claims become legitimated is fundamental to the forms of activism that are adopted (Castañeda). For Havana's efforts to attract tourists, the search for more just outcomes requires dismantling a universalizing narrative that the changes are beneficial for all by making excluded youth residents aware of epistemological conflicts within planning for the historic center (Kocsis). This push toward broadening the epistemological basis of what is deemed 'beneficial' in plans, in fact, extends to the entire category of children (Manaugh & Waygood).

Taken together, these essays foreground the notion that distinct epistemological hierarchies within planning processes limit the capacity of plans to express social justice outcomes. They show the dominance of the 'rational', white, ableist, adult, male, middle-class perspective in planning. This is evident in the logic of efficiency and speed that has governed decades of street planning in Barcelona (Connolly & Polgar), in the systematic denial of children's and young adults' knowledge in planning methodologies (Kocsis; Manaugh & Waygood), and in the struggles of low-income immigrant communities in New York City to influence street redesign plans (Smeds). At the same time, these interventions invite us to consider how epistemic injustices are resisted and reiterated at the level of individual intersectional identities, beyond homogenizing groupings of individuals resisting a given plan. For example, they highlight how feminist activists are less credible than activist groups using technification strategies (Castañeda) or how individuals within low-income communities are heard differently depending on their ability to articulate 'appropriate' knowledges (Smeds).

By exposing the blurred boundaries between state and grassroots planning, between 'metis' and 'episteme' (Castañeda), the essays show also how resourceful individuals who are able to speak about their reality from their perspective (Smeds) can help open up spaces for articulating a vision for the street as 'seen by citizens'. The essays recognize the capacities of citizens who

are sometimes able to mobilize alternative ways of seeing with, against, and without the state by using credible vocabularies as a way of introducing new possibilities for the urban form. They use what is possible now to point toward what might be possible in the future. In doing so, they continue a rich tradition of exploring the multifaceted role of citizens in urban governance, focusing on the conditions 'before you enter the room' that shape the possibilities for social justice, and how these often set unrealistic requirements for citizens to act deliberatively within established bounds set by government agencies if they wish to shape outcomes.

By highlighting the complexities involved in reproducing as well as resisting privilege, the essays propose a constructive way forward for a praxis that advances epistemic justice. They represent a call to practicing planners who want to address the limitations imposed by the existing context of planning discussions by taking risks and trying novel approaches that transcend these limitations. Most importantly, this call to planners prompts them to ask, how are decisions about the justifications for planning actions shaping the types of interventions that are possible?

This prompt for planning practice is global and multi-scalar, and therefore must point toward different types of action within different local contexts. We see epistemic justice concerns within planning in the Global North and South – Barcelona, New York City, Havana, Santiago, Montréal; and at the scale of the individual, the organization, and the institution. In this way, 'seeing like a citizen' opens up conversations *across* scales and geographies, without seeking to transcend the specificities of the lived experience of place. Yet it may be that until the practice of planning penetrates the underlying conditions established by prejudice within the credibility economy, it cannot get around the frustrating sense that practical initiatives to engender social justice are repeatedly launched but injustices seem to still deepen.

Streets provide a rich site for seeing how the injustices created by epistemological hierarchy impact planning practice, and the groundwork laid here points toward several important pathways for future work. The transformation of streets – and citizens' role in such processes – requires planning to wrestle with the structural inadequacies that prevent planning systems from engaging productively with knowledges that are outside of planners' formal training. In Fricker's (2007) terms, this directs us toward a greater examination of the hermeneutical

deficiencies within planning. This may require asking uncomfortable questions about the future role and purpose of planning as an arbiter of social-ecological justice in cities.

The essays also contain an invitation for planners to continuously reflect on their positionalities, biases, and privileges. This work of humility requires inhabiting a sometimes uncomfortable position of co-listener and collaborator; a position which resonates with the 'virtuous hearers' that Fricker (2007) prescribes, but which cannot stop at recognizing one's own epistemic privilege – it must also redress the structural conditions in which these privileges are reproduced (Kocsis; Smeds). This means, for example, broadening the remit of street space governance to include a new range of disciplinary approaches and voices (Connolly & Polgar), seeing the street as a political, democratic, and cultural space (Smeds), or creating new research ethics processes that can accommodate the vocabularies of those who have, so far, been given little space in reimagining public life (Manaugh & Waygood).

Further work specifically focused on theory and methods is required in order to conceptualize economies of credibility in planning and unpick the relations between epistemic and distributional justice. This work extends beyond Fricker's (2007) theorization of epistemic justice. The essays here show that postcolonial theory, Science and Technology Studies, theories of transformational planning, and approaches from children's and feminist geography have much to add to any push toward incorporating epistemic justice in urban planning. Specifically, a useful synthesis would lie across the many efforts to make visible and mobilize the knowledge derived from different ways of knowing. The StoryMaps linked to essays in this Interface demonstrate one approach to making what is normally hidden more visible through digital tools, directly presenting citizens' knowledges through direct quotes, video testimonies, and co-created visuals. Much more work is needed to experiment with creative methods that enhance dialogue between researchers and citizens (Kocsis; Manaugh & Waygood), as well as self-reflection.

Examining planning for streets in this manner certainly follows from a longstanding critique. Jane Jacobs (1961) famously unmasked the planning profession, showing it to be one that ignores the epistemological views of the city that were outside of those taught within planning schools. She argued that the narrowed vision introduced by 'seeing like a state' was most acute when it comes to understanding the function of neighborhood streets. To speak back to the Interface's Introduction, in many ways, Jacobs' critique has been internalized within practice,

but mostly at the surface level of 'seeing like a designer' and recognizing the value of organic street life and what happens between community members and planners 'when we are in the room'. It does not yet extend to a deeper consideration of what happens 'before we enter the room' in terms of the ultimate credibility of citizen knowledge. We can see how the power of dominant epistemologies about the street persist, and prioritizing epistemic justice is thus an important theoretical foundation for future work seeking to reorient streetscapes.

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