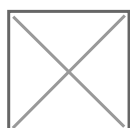




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## **The analysis of cycling protest movements in North America: Mexico City, San Francisco and Vancouver**



Submitted by [Forum Vies Mobiles](#) on Tue, 04/19/2022 - 15:31

État du projet

Finished research

Visuel

Vancouver bikes

Activer

Désactivé

Niveau de profondeur

Balise H2 + H3

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Désactivé

Date

Tue, 04/19/2022 - 15:21

Date du début

Tue, 04/19/2022 - 12:00 - Sat, 04/01/2023 - 12:00

Présentation longue

Contact : Christophe Gay

Covering over 30,000 kilometres, from Ushuaia to Vancouver, Matthieu Gillot cycled up the Americas. During the first part of his journey he studied cycling mobilisations in South America and this has already been the subject of an article on our website, presenting the case of Santiago de Chile. The second part of his journey covered North America and was an opportunity to conduct a field survey intersecting three cities with strong identities: Mexico City, San Francisco, and Vancouver. This research made it possible to study cycling movements in these three cities and to compare

their demands and modes of action, particularly in relation to the cultural, urban (geography, public space, etc.), historical and political characteristics of each.

Fig 1 b.JPG Overview of each city's context In each city, Matthieu Gillot conducted interviews with key actors in these mobilisations. A wide variety of cycling activists were interviewed: members of collectives, mechanics, protest organisers, mobility researchers, etc. The interviews were supplemented by an analysis of documents and visual materials produced by these movements (flyers, logos, posters, etc.) and by participant observation with the subjects during the mobilisations. This enabled him to distinguish different mechanisms in these mobilisations, according to their individual types of demands (linked to cycling, the environment, gender, etc.), how conflictual they were, where they occurred (in the public space or not) and the target audiences

## **Imposing a power struggle: mobilisations for cycling and the environment**

The first forms of mobilisation were created outside of any legal framework. Still present in the three cities studied today, their demands are primarily aimed at the right to travel safely in the city. Participants use a tactic called "Corking," which involves a few cyclists blocking traffic on secondary roads so that the entire Critical Mass can pass through red lights freely and without interruption. The movement's original slogan is "We don't block traffic, we are traffic." The protesting nature of the Critical Mass movement is reflected in logos with a raised fist or making reference to it. Fig 2.png Logo of Critical Mass in San Francisco Fig 3.JPG Logos of "Ni Un Repartidor(a) Menos" in Mexico City These movements, that demand the right to cycle safely, occupy public space with varying degrees of conflict. Some movements encroach on the space reserved for cars (Critical Mass, Bike Party), shout slogans (La Otra Movilidad), or even cause material damage (Viernes de Furia). In Mexico City, where infrastructure is still inadequate and there is significant traffic violence, the protests are more conflictual than in San Francisco or Vancouver, where serious accidents have decreased since the 1990s. For example, in Mexico, the workers collective of delivery riders (bicycles and scooters) called Ni Un Repartidor Menos (Not One Delivery Rider Less, that can also be feminised), was created following the death of a delivery worker, José Manuel Matias Flore. The same goes for "Viernes de Furia" (Fury Fridays), created on November 20, 2020 in support of Mario Trejo, a delivery worker who was hit by a truck. Like the Critical Mass, Fury Fridays is a movement that gathers in large numbers, looking to create conflict, mainly with

motorists who are parked illegally on cycle lanes. These movements can also be accompanied by environmental demands, such as promoting cycling as an alternative to cars, especially in a city like Mexico City which is regularly affected by significant pollution peaks, or during the first cycling mobilisations in 1992 in Vancouver where groups of cyclists wore gas masks on Clean Air Day. Today, mobilisations in Vancouver mainly aim to protect the old growth forests.

## **Fighting discrimination: the convergence of struggles**

The Critical Mass' mode of action, which is conflictual in the public space, enables certain movements to use cycling as a way of fighting against discrimination (LGBTQ+, feminist, ecological, racial). In San Francisco, for example, the Safe Street Rebel collective organised the Queer Pride Slow Ride during Gay Pride in 2022. Black Girls Do Bike, as its name suggests, takes the same approach, highlighting black women from the outskirts of San Francisco by offering to "share positive images of women and their bikes to assert that black girls do indeed ride bicycles." Their outings in the public space seek visibility rather than conflict. Fig 4.png Cycling movements are also joining national protests. Hundreds of cyclists joined the Black Lives Matter movement on June 5, 2020 in San Francisco, for a George Floyd Solidarity Ride. In Mexico City, there is a focus on the issue of women's safety in the public space. For International Women's Day, feminist cycling groups go out en masse in the streets, wearing green headscarves (a symbol for the right to abortion) and purple headscarves (a feminist colour), seeking greater visibility and not conflict, and participants respect the rules of the road. In Vancouver, where women feel more secure, demands include LGBTQ+ issues. The Chill Rides Vancouver thus present their bike outings as "[...] a safe and inclusive space for cyclists," based on the observation that "cycling has historically been dominated by cisgender and heterosexual men. As a result, there are plenty of spaces for these cyclists, but fewer spaces for others."

## **Creating the conditions for dialogue: legal action without occupying the public space**

Some cycling movements focus on promoting cycling in a less confrontational way and through dialogue with authorities. Their aim is to change public policy in favour

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Ecological transition

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