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Immobility, a factor of spatial injustice?

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Mobility, which is more and more valuable in contemporary urban societies, has also strong effects on the reinforcement of social inequalities. In recent years, this observation has led to public policies that tend to improve access to urban mobility, which concerns both changing place of residence and commuting. These policies, which have been applied in North America and several European countries, are based on the same postulate: segregation goes hand in hand with unequal access to mobility and this results in spatial and social confinement for those caught in this situation. This confinement makes it difficult to find work and to participate in social networks that are effective in terms of social integration. Our paper discusses this postulate with reference to the academic literature and to policies concerning residential mobility and urban commuting. It aims at showing that mobility can be problematic when it leads low-income households to give up resources based on social networks and proximity. In this regard, spatial justice does not necessarily rely on access to mobility.