

THURSDAY, 21 April

9.00 - 10.20 Parallel Sessions

Gender issues in public transport (part 1)

[Tramway — Ground floor]

Convenors

Monika Maciejewska (Vrije Universiteit Brussel)

Oriol Marquet (Autonomous University of Barcelona)

Ferya Ilyas, The New Institute

Mridula Garg, SEEDS

Travelling with insecurities: Gendered experiences in South Asia

Buses in Karachi are notorious for sexual harassment of women. Everything goes and there's no accountability. But they are also the most affordable means of transport; hence accessible to those who need it the most. On the other hand, we have Delhi metro from across the border - the poster-child for women's safety in a city infamous for gender-based violence. But this safety comes at a cost - high fares, arbitrary exclusion of people and things, and constant surveillance.

Our ethnographic work in these two South Asian cities reveal that safety - protection from bodily harm - is only the tip of the iceberg when it comes to women's mobility. We argue that the violence women are subjected to in a certain space and time (public transport in this case) is not a standalone incident but is a continuum of violence, fears, threats, discriminations, inequalities, precarities, prejudices and biases, that they experience in different aspects of their life. We call them insecurities and they can stem from a wide range of reasons: loss of livelihood, political victimisation, systemic racism, inadequate or no shelter, polluted environment etc.

People embody multiple insecurities and travel with them. They simultaneously produce, amplify and even challenge them through their everyday experiences of moving in the city. We argue that focusing on the narrow concept of safety to improve women's mobility can strip a place of its publicness; and that working with the multiplicitous concept of insecurities can be more befitting for an inclusive and feminist city-making.

Carine Assaf, KU Leuven

Christine Mady, Notre Dame University-Louaize

Dress or trousers? The female practice of using public transport in Beirut and Brussels

As females who have experienced the use of public transportation in Lebanon and different European countries, we present this paper to examine women's trajectories of walking along streets to arrive at public transport stops for different modes, specifically the shared taxi or bus. We present two cases from Beirut and Brussels to explore the positionality of women in this everyday life experience in the two cities and their public spaces. Our paper aims to emphasise the strong relation between streets as public spaces, and the shared vehicles representing a continuation of that public space in time. The investigation starts with an overview of the contextual cultural, socio-economic and urban planning implications for city streets, and major historical events that have affected both cities. Arriving at the present time, we address issues of safety based on the design and planning of streets and public

spaces, perceptions of security while getting into and being in the vehicle, cultural differences in interacting with the driver and other riders, and the journey experience until arriving at one's destination. In addition to secondary data analysis, the paper is based on the authors' participatory observations over the period of three years between 2018 and 2021 in both cities, which was documented by taking notes and photographs during their trips. The paper concludes that women's use of public transportation in Beirut and Brussels are equally related to the design of the streets as well as the attitudes, perceptions and values associated with gender roles in public spaces in city centres but also in peripheral urban areas. Further investigation is required to establish a framework for investigating this relation in other cities.

Louise Sträuli, Tallinn University and Université Libre de Bruxelles
Experiences and practices of care mobilities in a fare-free public transport system

The ongoing research explores daily mobility experiences and practices in the urban region of Tallinn (Estonia). The abolition of ticket prices for all registered city residents in 2013 gave way to academic interest on quantitative changes in travel behaviour, underlying political-economic rationales or lessons for policy-making. However, little research has focused on the impact of the fare abolition on individual mobility practices or gendered elements of public transport use (Cats, Susilo and Reimal 2017; Hess 2017; Kębłowski, et al. 2019). Thus, this research aims to fill this gap by analyzing the social impact of fare abolition with a particular focus on mobilities of care. This concept, coined by transport scholar Sánchez de Madariaga (2013), offers a methodologically innovative tool and framework to recognize, measure, and visualize travel patterns, and an alternative to the prevailing concept of "compulsory mobility", which often reduces main public transport uses to what is considered as economically beneficial activities for educational purposes or paid labour. Based on the concept of care mobilities, this fieldwork employs a mixed-method approach for qualitative research with participatory elements. At the center of this are participants (currently a number of fifteen; predominantly female) that use public transport on a regular basis for care purposes, which includes journeys resulting from domestic and care tasks, such as accompanying other persons (children or people in need of care), shopping for daily needs, household management, organization or administrative errands (Sánchez de Madariaga 2013). Following semi-structured interviews, the participants fill in travel diaries complemented with photographs (Magnus 2019, McIntyre 2003). The experiences shared through these diaries are subsequently discussed and analysed in a focus group. So far, the research has provided valuable insights about the gendered dimensions of care responsibilities, the (in)accessibility of public transport for mothers or the relevance of fares, respectively the absence thereof, for accessing places and services within the city. Although an analysis of the results is currently still outstanding, I wish to present insights from this research at the PUTSPACE conference in the session "Gender Issues in Transport: Is Public Transport a Women-Friendly Place?". The aim of the research is to combine insights from the case study in Tallinn with a broader conceptual reflection on daily practices and experiences of care mobilities. Inspired by a growing scholarship on gender and mobility the research links questions of gender relations to spatial and temporal organisation of human activities, accessibility and appropriation of public and private spaces, including public transport (Law 1999, Cresswell and Uteng 2008).

Morgan Campbell, University of Leeds/Institute for Transport Studies
Change, Please: Exploring the work of women bus conductors in Bengaluru

The purpose of this presentation is to illustrate a process of agency claiming among women bus conductors in Bengaluru, India through their work on the city's public buses. By focusing on the micropolitical encounters and relationships that women bus conductors navigate in

their daily work, I frame their work as a enabling a more inclusive, mobile public space and an alternative 'smart' solution to addressing issues of both gender-based exclusion and gender-based security in public transport.

These findings are based on a three-month, participatory research project involving 10 key women bus conductors as well as their larger network of female conductors and male bus drivers. Research began with two strands of qualitative questions. First to understand if and how being a woman affected a conductor's ability to perform her duties. For example, did passengers treat these conductors differently from male conductors? How and why? The second part was to understand if and how the presence of women conductors leads to a more inclusive space inside the bus, for women passengers in particular.

Pallavi Gupta, University of North Carolina Chapel Hill
Thinking Beyond Passengers: Women Cleaners in Railway Stations

Clean Railways, an off-shoot of Clean India policy, that was launched in 2014, is now in its second phase and aims to ensure cleanliness in railways stations. Based on data from ethnographic fieldwork with cleaning workers at railway stations in India and analysis of policy documents on the subject of cleanliness, my presentation sheds light on women cleaners in railway stations.

'Thinking Beyond Passengers: Women Cleaners in Railway Stations' argues that the pursuit of cleanliness has deepened the marginalizations experienced by women cleaning workers within the precincts of railway facilities, many of them from Dalit and indigenous communities. In doing so, I draw attention to the maintainers of transportation.