

**THURSDAY, 21 April**

**10.50 - 12.10 Parallel Sessions**

**Gender issues in public transport (part 2)**

*[Tramway — Ground floor]*

Convenors

Monika Maciejewska (Vrije Universiteit Brussel)

Oriol Marquet (Autonomous University of Barcelona)

**Sonja Ruud, The Graduate Institute of Geneva**

***Navigating professional responsibility and personal risk: experiences and perceptions of safety among female railway personnel***

Railway accompaniment personnel in Luxembourg's (newly fare-free) public transportation system play a crucial role in ensuring the safety and security of train users. Often the only representatives of the railway agency present in train compartments with passengers, they are tasked with responding to crises and attempting to avert or de-escalate interpersonal conflicts between users. Many also describe a function of making sure that passengers "feel" safe – a complex and highly relational job requiring the careful navigation and management of affect. Though in theory gender-neutral (all accompaniment personnel are responsible for the safety of all passengers), personnel's accounts of their work reveal clear gendered dimensions of this relationship. On the one hand, women and girls are frequently constructed – by male and female personnel alike – as the objects of protection from men who are perceived as potential threats. On the other hand, many female accompaniment personnel relate feeling unsafe or uneasy themselves vis-à-vis male passengers, particularly when working alone late at night. These perceptions are based on lived experiences in workers' personal and professional lives. Awareness of the heightened risks posed to women in public spaces is compounded by regular exposure to gendered insults and harassment and sometimes even physical assaults experienced on the job. For some, the COVID pandemic intensified such experiences of harassment, mirroring the increase in domestic violence documented in private spaces during confinement. This paper explores the unique position of female accompaniment personnel working in the Luxembourgish national railway agency, foregrounding their own narratives about their work. Drawing from ethnographic research conducted over the past three years, it examines how these women juggle a sense of professional responsibility for guaranteeing passengers' safety with gendered and embodied feelings of personal risk.

**Anna Plyushteva, University of Oxford**

**Sherin Francis, Jacobs\***

***Feminist transport appraisal?***

In this paper, we discuss our on-going industry-academia collaboration, which draws on intersectional feminist perspectives to engage with, and rethink, the ways in which transport infrastructure appraisal deals with transport exclusion. While UK transport appraisal guidance explicitly requires the promoters of new transport schemes (typically, local government agencies) to consider the impact on disadvantaged groups, in practice there are limited tools available for identifying specific disadvantaged groups, and quantifying their ability to benefit from new transport schemes, or tackling the barriers which prevent them from doing so.

As a result of its collaborative ethos and public engagement focus, our project involves both theoretical innovation and the development of a methodology to be used as part of transport

infrastructure appraisal practice. Our specific focus is on the economic barriers to accessing transport schemes, notably unaffordability, and the uneven ways in which they impact different disadvantaged groups. We present an expanded definition of economic barriers drawing on intersectional perspectives, and illustrate it with the use of a case study. The Pennine Reach rapid bus link is a 5-year old public transport scheme in Lancashire, UK. Running in and around the town of Blackburn, the bus service operates across some of the most and least deprived areas in the North of England. Working in collaboration with Lancashire County Council, we examine how a focus on intersecting economic barriers provides insights on the impact of the Pennine Reach bus link on transport inclusion, and what the implications are for ethnic minority women in particular.

**Sandra La Rota, University of Antwerp**

***Reflections of a short documentary competition: "Between the countryside and the city: stories of rural women's transport"***

In the Latin American context, in the Andean region, when addressing the issue of public transport, we cannot only talk about women, we must talk about rural women. Not only because they are major users of the system, but also because of the long travel times involved. This is what the numbers said. But we wanted to understand what was beyond that, what was behind the long journeys of rural women. We chose art as a tool that allowed us to see beyond, to see the humanity behind the numbers. From January to October 2020, together with the house of Ecuadorian culture, cinecyclo Ecuador, GIZ (Technical German Cooperation) and Grupo FARO (a local think-tank and NGO) in the province of Tungurahua in Ecuador, we held a short documentary film competition entitled: "Between the countryside and the city: stories of rural women's transport". I will present the methodology of the contest, some fragments of the documentaries, as well as main reflections made in roundtables with rural women of Tungurahua and experts on the topic during the contest.

**Irene Lofthouse, LJM and Hull Universities (UK)**

***Murder, mothering and mobility: gendered private emotions disrupt voyages***

Intersectionality means women's use of public transport has been made extra difficult if they are members of a minority culture, if the period of transit is long and arduous, and if they are caring for dependents. This presentation addresses the question: how do emotions generated by the use of particular public spaces -- large colonial ships -- impact on 'captive' travellers and even lead to murder and suicide? Ships are seen as heterotopic liminal spaces and regulated conveyances. Front stage, civility is usually hegemonically stage-managed. But private emotion can burst forth from backstage and create a disruptive public melodrama for all involved. There is a brief introduction to Indian ayahs' (nannies) paid voyages on late 19C colonial liners. Then the session becomes two brief, specifically-devised plays.

Play 1 is inspired by the case of Ayah Abbott on the *Violette* from Sri Lanka on in 1885. Seemingly in a rage with her elite white employers, this brown subordinated woman flung her five year old charge out of the porthole, and threw herself after the girl. Fatally. White passengers condemn disloyal barbaric natives.

Play 2 reverses the racial balance and changes the period to the 1950s. The situation is Liverpool docks railway station. A low-status white Irish woman straight from a cattle boat comes into social collision with an elite pregnant brown Nigerian woman arriving on a liner. Deviser Irene Lofthouse bases this on her Irish mother's experience of gendered racial discrimination during transit.

These plays are presented as video monologues.