

**THURSDAY, 21 April**

**14.40 - 16.00 Parallel Sessions**

**Surveillance, Public Space and Public Transport**

*[Tramway — Ground floor]*

Convenors

Merlin Gillard (Luxembourg Institute of Socio-Economic Research / Vrije Universiteit Brussel)

Corentin Debailleul (Université Libre de Bruxelles)

Nicolas Bocquet (Université Catholique de Louvain / Université de Genève)

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***Surveillance in Brussels public transport: an exploratory assessment***

In Brussels, the largest owner of video surveillance cameras is the regional public transport operator: the STIB-MIVB which aims at using 15,000 cameras by 2025. The SNCB-NMBS for its part has recently announced its intention to use facial recognition and is currently facilitating its roll-out by integrating it in the design of its refurbished stations. Meanwhile, the networks of these two major players in Brussels mobility are used every day by plenty of individuals who are largely unaware of the surveillance in place. Moreover, video surveillance is not the only way to collect personal data concerning public transport (PT) users. MOBIB travel cards also allow to collect a number of personal data and have also been widely criticised for not being sufficiently secure and jeopardising individuals' privacy. In addition to these two methods of collecting personal data about users, public transport regularly works with operators to model people's movements, based on their telephone data. A technology that is increasingly used to monitor people's movements, just like footfall analytics, which is becoming more and more widespread and about which very little information is broadly available until now.

In order to explore how the logics of surveillance are articulated in the context of Brussels PT, we want to highlight the actual collection and use of personal data: what kind of data is collected by which actors? How is this data used and for what purposes? With whom is this data shared? How long is this data kept and where? From a methodological point of view, our presentation will be based on an exploratory work that consists in a triangulation of sources (official documents, press, and semi-structured interviews with stakeholders). We will also make requests for access to our own personal data to see what access is possible as a daily user of the PT infrastructure. Empirically, this work will therefore provide a first overview of surveillance practices within the Brussels PT.

**Merlin Gillard, Luxembourg Institute of Socio-Economic Research / Vrije Universiteit Brussel**

***Policing Fare-Free Public Transport spaces in Luxembourg: exploring policies and discourses***

Luxembourg has introduced full fare-free public transport (FFPT) in 2020. This change in the fare policy has regularly sparked concerns regarding the safety of passengers on the public transport networks of the country. According to these voices, FFPT would increase vandalism and the presence of homeless people in public transport (PT) spaces. Indeed, without the need to control tickets, other motivations for exerting (social) control in PT are

emphasized. In light of these elements, this communication is interested in the security policy in these spaces, in its justifications, and in the debates around it.

The policy of policing PT in Luxembourg is organized as security assemblages involving different policing groups (employees of PT operators, private guards, police) and technologies (CCTV). These assemblages are deployed to different degrees depending on the space or the PT operator considered. Besides these rather vertical forms of surveillance, the role of passengers as policing actors is rarely highlighted by policy-makers. In contrast, the presence of private guards in the neighbourhood of the main train station has been the topic of a large public debate, but this was not the case for guards involved in watching the train station and the trains themselves, although highly visible. This calls attention to the different perceptions and discourses on public spaces, whether they are streets or spaces dedicated to public transport.

Through the critical analysis of discourses of different nature but coming from sources seen as legitimate (press articles, politicians' declarations, policy documents, semi-structured interviews), I explore what values underline the security policy in Luxembourg public transport spaces. Notably, I look at how users and visitors of PT spaces can be categorised depending on how they are perceived: passenger-clients or undesired visitors – and thus who is welcome or not in the public spaces of PT.

**Ferya Ilyas, The New Institute**

**Mridula Garg, SEEDS**

***From Gaze to CCTV Camera: Public Transportation Surveillance in South Asia***

Delhi Metro, a modern transit system spread across the city with over 270 stations and a 370 km-long network, relies heavily on surveillance for its smooth functioning, including ensuring safety - especially of women. Given the role of the metro in Delhi's attempt to enter the league of the so-called 'world-class cities' where people have access to 'modern' amenities and women are safe, CCTV cameras have become synonymous with women's safety - so much so that Delhi has the most cameras per square mile in the world.

How does insertion of a surveillance technology at such a massive scale shape and change interactions in public transport? To understand this, we contrast the experiences of metro users with that of commuters in Karachi buses, where surveillance is more lateral - a peer-to-peer, non-technological, unintentional surveillance carried out by individuals over other individuals.

Irrespective of the mechanics, surveillance exerts power that defines, encourages and rectifies the actions and behaviours of individuals considered disorderly (e.g. 'lower class', 'migrant' men harassing women in Delhi metro) or inappropriate (women in Karachi buses who don't fit the mould of an ideal Pakistani woman). Our research reveals two contradicting responses to this omnipresent surveillance in Delhi metro and Karachi buses: an 'angry' woman who puts on a demeanour to ward off unwarranted gaze in the bus and the 'individuated' metro user who can relax in the train thinking that the larger public is being watched.

**Helena Atteneder, University of Tübingen, Institute of Media Studies**

**Bernhard Collini-Nocker\*, University of Salzburg**

***Tracking (on) the train – the surveillance logic of commuters in public transport - perception, normalisation practices and adaptation***

For a large number of workers, regular commuting - whether daily or weekly - is part of their normal work routine. Commuting can be seen as a special form of mobility in which public transport becomes a "space of the in-between", in that it is public on the one hand, but at the same time combines professional and private practices. In order to make the best use of time on public transport, some of the work that normally happens in the office or at home is shifting to the train. Most work processes nowadays require a stable WiFi connection or access to reliable mobile internet or a stable mobile phone connection.

Commuting is therefore subject to its own surveillance logic, which can be described on the following levels: on the level of social interactions with other people on the train and a corresponding adaptation and/or normalisation of behaviour and practices, on the level of data traces offered in public transport apps (in the form of tracking and real-time travel information) and in the form of data traces left via public, unsecured WiFi hotspots on the train.

In this setting, we investigate the surveillance potential of commuters who regularly travel longer distances by train. We explore the fundamental questions of how commuting on trains can be conceptualised as a "space of the in-between", to what extent commuters in this setting perceive and evaluate surveillance, what data traces are permanently left behind, and who our mobile networked devices really „meet“ without our knowledge.

With a combination of qualitative interviews with commuters and a technical capture of the data streams during a train journey with different measuring instruments, we provide answers to the questions.