

Women-Only Transportation: How “Pink” Public Transportation Changes Public Perception of Women’s Mobility

Amy Dunckel-Graglia
SUNY Stony Brook

Abstract

It is well documented that women often face sexual harassment and violence during their daily commutes, particularly in countries with extreme levels of gender inequality. A popular reaction to this problem is to issue women-only transit services. Despite this growing trend, we know very little about it. Looking at the case of Mexico City, this study examines, analyzes, and evaluates women-only transportation, focusing on the roles of culture and public opinion. Drawing from both qualitative and quantitative data, it finds that the violence women face in public transit leads them to always opt for women-only services, encouraging local policy makers to increase their numbers. Local feminist groups have advanced this system by arguing that violence in regular public transit is gender discrimination. Consequently, they have positioned themselves as administrators of women-only transportation, using it as a campaign to defend women’s equal right to urban mobility.

Introduction

It has been well documented that women’s fear of using public transportation causes them to modify their travel behavior (Loukaitou-Sideris 2008; Schulz and Gilbert 2000). Feminist groups argue that real and perceived violence, constrain-

ing women's mobility, is a form of gender inequality embedded within the public transit system (Garibi et al. 2010; Valentine 1992; Wade 2009). In order to ensure women's security and equal rights to mobility, transportation alternatives have been implemented or are currently being implemented in dozens of cities across the world, including Rio de Janeiro, Brazil;¹ Lahore, Pakistan;² Jakarta, Indonesia;³ Dubai, UAE;⁴ and Tokyo, Japan.⁵ This paper looks at the case of women-only transportation in Mexico City in order to shed light on this growing phenomenon, paying particular attention to how the public views the use of women-only transit services as a resolution to issues of gender inequality.

Women-only transportation provides a unique opportunity to return to an older discussion on the relationship between the architectural design of urban transit and women's fear of traveling. Primarily based on theories such as Oscar Newman's defensible space theory (1972), which states that spatial design is directly related to levels of crime, scholars have examined the effects of environmental changes on women's fear of traveling. This line of reasoning has led to research, for example, on the effects of adding cameras or better lighting in public transportation in order to improve women's commuting experiences (Loukaitou-Sideris 2008). However, after major critiques arose in the 1990s by feminist geographers on the ability to "design out fear" (Koskela and Pain 2000), the current general thought on women's mobility is that changing the physical design of transit systems will have little to no effect on reducing women's "feelings of fear." Their conclusions were drawn from years of empirical data showing that fear is the outcome of gendered social and power relation rather than actual crime (Bondi 2005; Koskela and Pain 2000; Pain 2001; Valentine 1993). These findings moved transit scholars away from studying the relationship between "transportation design alternatives" and women, instead concentrating on riders with special needs, such as those with cognitive or physical disabilities (Carmien et al. 2005; Turkovich et al. 2011; Wu et al. 2011).

This paper argues that the global emergence of women-only transportation is a symptom of larger gender inequalities in cities, particularly surrounding issues of women's mobility. It focuses on how public transportation limits women's equal access to urban resources (Amedee 2005; Blumen 2010; Crane 2007) and how this problem is being addressed by issuing transportation alternatives for women. In the case of Mexico City, real violence and crimes against women using public transportation cause them to modify their travel behavior, reinforcing their role in the household. Women-only subway cars, buses, and taxis were launched as a

measure to keep women safe, hoping that it would also increase their participation in urban life.

While scholars have addressed the issue of women's security in public transit (Blumen 2010; Hsu 2009; Loukaitou-Sideris 2008), as of today, no study has examined women-only transportation as a solution to this problem. This paper draws from three years of ethnographic research, a public opinion survey among women riders, and 250 online comments by Mexican citizens on the issue of women-only transportation. It analyzes how violence in public transportation has led to the implementation of women-only transit in Mexico City, and how both men and women in Mexico view this transportation alternative as a solution to the cultural problem of violence against women. Specifically, this article looks at the relationship between women and Mexico City's public transit system, focusing on 1) violence and 2) public opinions on violence and women's equal right to urban resources.

Research and Design

The first portion of this paper contextualizes the emergence of women-only transportation, drawing on statistics on violence against women in public transportation, gender inequality in urban mobility, the ascendancy of feminist thinking, and legal reforms.

The second portion analyzes empirical data on women-only transit systems in Mexico City accumulated over a period of three years. Both qualitative and quantitative methods were used, including 5 structured interviews with key decision makers responsible for implementing women-only and "pink" transportation, 7 informal interviews with women commuters, 3 informal interviews with men who are decidedly against "pink" transportation, a short survey among 125 women who routinely use women-only transportation, and 250 comments posted online in response to the launching of "pink" transportation.⁶

The survey was designed to accumulate the following information from women riders:

1. What are women's attitudes towards public transportation?
2. How often and for what reasons do they choose women-only transit over mixed transportation?

This survey was given to 125 members of our target audience, defined as female riders of public transportation in Mexico City. The participants were randomly selected using a convenience sampling approach. Around 20–22 participants were

selected across 6 different transit points throughout the city, including bus and subway stops.

Additionally, 250 open-ended comments—posted on online newspaper sites by Mexican citizens on the issue of women-only “pink” transit—were coded and incorporated into the analysis of public opinion. These comments were taken from over 15 different news articles from one of Mexico City’s largest papers, *El Universal*. The comments were posted between the years 2007–2011 and covered the city’s decision to implement “pink” taxis and “pink” buses. It should be clarified here that “pink” transportation was issued after women-only subway cars and buses had already been established. “Pink” transportation is one of several modifications made to the public transit system. These modifications were largely implemented by feminist organizations within the government, with the goal of reducing gender discrimination in urban mobility, a point that will be clarified later in this paper. As the local news covered the emergence of “pink” transit, hundreds of readers posted comments, vocalizing their opinions on issues of violence and discrimination in public transportation. These opinions were coded (see Appendix I) and used to measure the general public’s feelings towards women-only transit and women’s mobility in Mexico City.

While three years of ethnographic methods allowed the accumulation of thick descriptive data on the situation of public transportation in Mexico City, there were weaknesses in some of the other data techniques used. First, it was extremely difficult to conduct formal, structured interviews. Despite several modifications to the interview format, informants were far less inclined to discuss their opinions openly when the interview was structured. For this reason, there are very few formal interviews and, instead, a large portion of the ethnographic data came from three years of observations and hundreds of short conversations conducted on buses or subways or in taxis. Second, the survey of 125 women riders was administered only to clarify some of the findings from the ethnographic data. Therefore, there are several weaknesses in the survey technique used. Particularly due to time and financial constraints, the survey was given to only 125 people, using convenience sampling instead of random sampling. With the convenience sampling, the data were analyzed through cross-tabulations in order to explore potential patterns among public transportation, safety, and gender. Those data do not, unfortunately, allow for generalizable conclusions.

To summarize, the combination of comments, statistical data, and interviews allowed the analysis and exploration of a specific urban context from which

women-only transportation emerges and a look at public opinions on using women-only transportation as a solution to the problem of gender violence.

Historical Context

There is a lingering perception in Mexico that women are household figures and not public ones. Olcott (2005) captured this sentiment well in her book that shows the history behind the public/private divide that kept women revolutionaries out of the public political scene once Mexico had established its independence. She quotes the ruling party's newspaper from 1931:

But while she prepares herself and organizes herself, we men prefer to continue ceding our seats on the buses, finding the soup hot in the household *olla*, and listening to the broom dancing under conjugal songs, than to hear falsetto voices in Parliament or to entrust the suffragist ballots to poetic hands (p. 5).

It is within Mexican women's continuing battle over the public/private divide from which the following two themes are understood: 1) violence against women in public transportation and 2) the use of women-only buses and subways.

Spatial theorists emphasize "the culture of a place" when analyzing social phenomena (Castells 1983; Lefèbvre 1991; Soja 1996), particularly how each place affects the behavior of individuals differently. Understanding the household as a "woman's place" and public transportation as a "man's place" helps explain the levels of violence towards women in buses, taxis, and subways, as well as how women are expected to behave during their daily commutes. According to feminist geographers, public and private spheres are very often defined as "feminine" or "masculine" spaces. Therefore, when a place becomes labeled as masculine it normalizes "masculine behaviors" within this space, such as sexual harassment and violence towards women (Koskela and Pain 2000), and forces women to adapt to the situation. Public transportation is the gateway to urban public life, which has long been considered a man's place. Taking into consideration the gendered nature of the public/private divide, as well as the high levels of violence against women that occur within this space, the public transit system in Mexico City is considered to have a hyper-masculinized culture.

The culture of public transportation in Mexico City has two major repercussions for women. First, it makes urban mobility something that is entitled to men and

not women. Second, it normalizes masculine behavior, making the violence against women a “woman’s problem.” Take the following quotes as examples:

- “I don’t think the behavior of men is normal,” a husband and father of daughters explains. “It is wrong how they treat woman. And I don’t treat women like that at all. But the fact is that they do, and it is very dangerous to be traveling alone or when it is dark, and women know that it is dangerous, so if they get hurt, it’s their fault. You wouldn’t wear a miniskirt at 2AM down a dark alley, would you?”
- “The first thing you should do before you get into the taxi is look at the plates,” a female informant explains regarding how a woman should behave in order to keep safe. “If you are wearing a skirt or a low-cut blouse, make sure to cover it with a sweater so as to not draw too much attention, and have the money ready to pay so that you can get out and get your change. And last, don’t go anywhere until the taxi has pulled away. These tactics work most of the time.”⁷

Here, we see how violence and harassment against women is considered “normal,” “inherent,” and “unchangeable.” Women, therefore, are responsible for recognizing the situation and modifying their behavior accordingly.

Government agencies for the promotion of women’s rights have recognized that violence against women in public transportation is preventing them from breaking traditional gender barriers. In fact, a spokeswoman from INMUJERES—the federal institute for gender equality and equal opportunity for women—stated that “because women are responsible for dropping off and picking up the children, grocery shopping, and having part-time jobs, the average woman’s commute is two hours longer than that of a man’s. Yet, women face more violence in public transportation than any other group.”⁸

In response to the deeply-embedded gender inequality in the public transit system, INMUJERES has been a major force behind the implementation of women-only public transportation, arguing that the violence women face is not normal, but rather a form of gender oppression. In a study supported by INMUJERES, Garibi et al. (2010) note,

Among all public spaces, public transportation is the place where women must face the greatest levels of violence. It represents a grave problem of discrimination that limits security, freedom to travel, and mobility for

women in urban spaces, all of which affect their capabilities and opportunities for success (p. 12).

Although women-only transportation had been implemented in 2002, administrators of the program were beginning to realize that it had little effect on reducing violence against women and, therefore, changing women's urban equality. In 2009, in partnership with the National Board for the Prevention of Discrimination, INMUJERES conducted a study on the violence against women in public transportation in Mexico City. They found that 9 out of 10 women will have been a victim of some type of sexual violence in her lifetime. In 2008, 8 out of 10 women had been a victim of sexual crime, 43.8 percent having suffered 4 or more violent situations and 10 percent having suffered 7 or more (Garibi et al. 2010). Using these startling figures, they built a new campaign that openly criticized public transportation in Mexico City as a place that routinely disempowers and demobilizes women. They demanded that women-only transit programs be strengthened and redesigned, arguing that simply issuing a few subway cars and buses was not going to change the deeply-embedded culture that supported violence against women.

As part of their strategy to change women's mobility in Mexico City, INMUJERES targeted two systems: judicial and transit. The first thing they did was to paint all women-only transportation bright pink, turning it into a public campaign for women's rights and equal mobility. In addition to issuing fleets of bubble-gum pink buses and taxis, they also created a program called *Viajemos Seguras* (We Women Travel Safely). The program established monitoring stations throughout the subway system, encouraging women to report any form of harassment. Additionally, they maintain billboards, posters, bumper stickers, and more throughout every type of public transit in Mexico City. Each announcement has the title "*Es nuestra derecha a viajar sin miedo*" ("It is our right to travel without fear") with a toll-free, 24-hour hotline number below it to report harassment. *Viajemos Seguras* acts as a feminist institution within the transit system, overseeing all issues concerning women and urban mobility in Mexico City. It monitors levels of violence against women, gathering and reporting all gendered crimes that occur in public transportation, data that previously had been unavailable to the public.

In addition to implementing *Viajemos Seguras*, in 2010, in celebration of Mexico's Bicentennial Independence, INMUJERES launched a city-wide transit line called Athena, named after the Greek goddess of war, courage, and independence. All Athena buses are bright pink, and each has a historical woman painted on the side, giving special tribute to her pivotal role Mexico's political and economic history.

The “pink-afying” of women-only transportation has become the principal means by which INMUJERES is attempting to change public perception on women’s role as public figures, arguing that women are equally entitled to urban mobility.

In addition to redesigning the public transit system and making it more pro-female, INMUJERES needed to legally establish that violence against women in public transportation was a form of gender discrimination, denying women from equal access to urban resources. They demanded that legislators amend old laws that guaranteed a person’s equal right to urban resources, specifying in the new ones that public violence against women was a direct violation of this law. Before the amendments, sexual harassment in public transportation was considered a non-discriminatory misdemeanor, like pickpocketing or public disputes. However, by attaching sexual harassment in public transportation to laws that guaranteed a person’s equal right to urban resources, INMUJERES shifted the view on violence against women, making it an issue of institutionalized discrimination. In total, nearly 20 laws were amended, and the new reforms were publicized throughout the country to ensure that both men and women understood that sexual harassment in public transportation is an institutionalized form of gender discrimination.⁹ A woman is not to be blamed nor held responsible for any violence she faces during her daily commute.

Table 1. Reported Criminal Activity in Mexico City Subway System, January 4–September 30, 2008–2010

| | All Reports Attended to in Viajemos Seguras Booths | Cases Dealing Specifically with Sexual Abuse | Cases Dealing with Other Crimes | Arrests/Charges Brought Against Offenders |
|------|---|---|--|--|
| 2008 | 314 | 291 | 23 | 117 |
| 2009 | 311 | 273 | 32 | 124 |
| 2010 | 225 | 197 | 23 | 13** |

Note: It should be noted that these statistics were posted in 2010. Therefore, it is likely that pending charges and arrests were not included, which could explain the low figure reported here.

Source: *Viajemos Seguras*¹⁰

While crimes against women do appear to be only slightly decreasing since the new reforms, the real effect of the “pink” transit campaign seems to appear in public opinion. As the following section demonstrates, using “pink” public transportation, INMUJERES is sparking a debate among riders that positions women as public figures and not household ones. This shift in perspective redefines the issue of vio-

lence against women in public transportation as an issue of gender discrimination and not an issue of normal city life that women must learn to negotiate.

Data Analysis

Contrary to popular belief that women fear dark, unlit, or empty spaces in public transportation (Hsu 2009; Loukaitou-Sideris 2008), this study found that women in Mexico City are fearful of being “a woman in public.” As mentioned before, because of deeply-embedded cultural values that promote women as household figures and men as public figures, women do not fear crime *per se*, but rather they struggle to become mobile, public figures. Therefore, sexual harassment on public transportation is an obstacle that they must face when breaking through these barriers. As the following quote demonstrates, rather than linking their fear to factors such as time of day, lighting, or criminal behavior in general, women often described their mobility as a struggle for gender equality:

If there wasn't so much machismo, if men cab drivers had never broke the law, if there wasn't so much inter-family violence generated by years of believing that men are the owners of women (allowed by those same women and by the Church, I can admit), we would not have to go to such extreme measures. Sadly, while many men continue seeing women as an object, without giving her the value or the respect that she deserves, we will continue creating these types of programs. And I do not bother wasting time reading the classic machismo comments that women drive badly. In my 10 years of driving, I have never had an accident, nor provoked one, unlike young men, taxi drivers, and microbus drivers, who I am sure are all men. When both sexes are respected, we will not need “pink” and “blue.”¹¹

Throughout this section, the data show a strong gender divide in public opinion towards women-only transportation. Where women see violence as an issue of gender inequality, men respond negatively, claiming that women are whining and demonstrating their inability to cope with “natural” difficulties that accompany urban mobility. In fact, 70 percent of the women surveyed explicitly stated that they fear the normal public transit system, linking crime in public transportation to issues gender. That is, women believe that the streets are safer for men because women are the target of sexualized crime.

Table 2. Safety Opinions of Women Transit Users

| | Agree | | Disagree | | Neutral | | Total |
|---|-------|-------|----------|-------|---------|-----|-------|
| | N | % | N | % | N | % | N |
| I feel safe in normal transportation. | 19 | 16% | 83 | 70%** | 17 | 14% | 119 |
| Taxis driven by women are safer than taxis driven by men. | 59 | 51% | 41 | 35% | 16 | 14% | 116 |
| Streets are more dangerous for women than for men. | 63 | 53% | 30 | 25% | 16 | 13% | 119 |
| Women-only transportation is safer than regular transportation. | 76 | 66%** | 25 | 21% | 15 | 13% | 116 |

N=Number of respondents

In general, women believe that their gender attracts violence during their daily commutes, and until this situation is changed, women should be given their own transit alternative. More than half (66%) of the women surveyed said that women-only transportation is safer. Among the 44 percent who did not unwaveringly agree with this statement, 48 percent made a special notation on the side of the survey saying that they disagreed only because they felt that women-only buses, and subway cars in particular, were not well guarded. That is, they believe women-only transit to be safer, but only if the men were forced to respect it. Some of these comments included:

- “It is still safe, even though sometimes men board the women-only sections and try to intimidate the passengers.”
- “It’s supposed to be for women only.”
- “There are many times when the women-only sections are not respected [by men].”

Because of the fast-paced nature of public transit, where people are coming and going very quickly, women see public transportation as an opportune moment for men to be aggressive towards them with little or no repercussions. Facing gender inequality, women believed that until the culture of men can change, the city is responsible to provide them with a separate transit system that allows them to commute safely and without fear and harassment.

Table 3. Use of Women-Only Transportation among Women Transit Users

| Used Never/Almost Never | | Used Sometimes | | Used Almost Always/Always | | Total |
|-------------------------|-----|----------------|-----|---------------------------|-----|-------|
| N | % | N | % | N | % | N |
| 30 | 25% | 29 | 24% | 60 | 51% | 119 |

N=Number of respondents

More than 50 percent of the women reported that they always take women-only transit. Among the 25 percent who stated that they never or almost never use women-only transit, half (51%) clarified at the end of the survey that a principal reason for not using it is because it does not circulate along their commuting route or that it is inconveniently located.

Men, on the other hand, do not see gender inequality as the root problem. Although their opinions are deeply shaped by gender views, they strongly emphasize that violence in public transportation is normal. In this sense, the views reported by men reflect the masculine culture of public transportation. In fact, this topic has been studied in other scenarios of women entering traditionally-masculine spaces, a common example being the sport of rugby (Fallon and Jome 2007). When women enter traditionally-masculine spaces, the initial reaction by men is to use hyper-masculine behaviors to push women out, rather than changing the culture of the space in order to include women. Likewise, the reaction by men to “pink” transportation is to defend the status quo, arguing that it is not the culture of transportation that needs to change, but rather that women are not “tough enough” to survive in the city. Going back to the analogy of women rugby players, the general attitude of men towards “pink” transportation is, “if women don't want to get hurt, they should not join the game.” As always, when attempting to change that which has traditionally been viewed as “normal,” we see a backlash against the changing factor. In the case of “pink” transportation in Mexico City, men have been aggressively against the implementation of women-only services, particularly “pink” transportation, which claims that violence in city buses, subways, and taxis is a form of gender discrimination. Take the following quotes as an example:

- “What a shame the level of feminism; hopefully, we can go back to the 1900s when we men were always the dominant figures.”
- “This is only about women getting an opportunity to feel ‘lady-like,’ and the whole idea is a bit of a joke.”
- “Also, they should implement buses for grandparents (Program Methuse-

lah), another for men (Program Apollo), another for couples who are in love (Program Cupid).”

- “For this, they are hauling in our taxes! I am not paying any more. Now they are going to give ... their own purple car with rainbows. How disgusting of our government and these ... people.”

Table 4. Does “Pink” Transportation Resolve the Issue of Security?

| Men | | Women | | Gender Unspecified | | Total |
|-----|-----|-------|-----|--------------------|-----|-------|
| Yes | No | Yes | No | Yes | No | N |
| 9 | 38 | 27 | 14 | 5 | 20 | 113 |
| 8% | 34% | 24% | 12% | 4% | 18% | 100% |

N=Number of respondents. Comments made online.

Despite the staggering reports of rape, violence, and harassment towards women where 100 percent of the violations are reported to be men violating women (Garibi et al. 2010), men tended to view public transportation as a dangerous place in general and not a dangerous place for women.

Table 5. Why Does “Pink” Transportation Resolve the Issue of Security?

| | N | % |
|---|-----|-----|
| Offers a guaranteed way to travel safely. | 46 | 40% |
| Women can be dangerous, too. | 17 | 15% |
| Women are weak; they become targets when they travel without men. | 28 | 24% |
| Because it has nothing to do with the men and women, but rather with the general level of security. | 24 | 21% |
| Total | 115 | |

N=Number of respondents.

Table 6. What is Your Opinion of Women-Only Transportation?

| | Men | Women | Total |
|--------------|-----|-------|-------|
| In favor | 15 | 46 | 61 |
| Against | 63 | 22 | 83 |
| TOTAL | 78 | 68 | 144 |

A chi-square test for independence was conducted to measure the strength of the relationship between gender and if the respondent favored or disapproved of women-only transportation, where the null hypothesis was defined as “gender is independent of approval or disapproval of women-only transportation,” where alpha was set at 0.05, and the P value 7.879. The calculation was 34.4, therefore rejecting the null hypothesis and concluding that one’s gender is strongly correlated with one’s opinion about women-only transportation.

In summary, men and women have starkly different views about public transportation. Men continue to see it as a place that is dangerous in general and therefore not necessarily the best place for women to be commuting. They state that women’s complaints are signs of weaknesses and their inability to survive in the city. Men almost exclusively tended to blame women, or they degendered the issue altogether, claiming that women-only transportation would not work or was a joke because 1) “women can be dangerous, too” (18%), 2) women are weak (20%), or 3) women-only transportation has nothing to do with men and women, but rather general issues of security and government corruption (29%). Women, on the other hand, see violence as being targeted against them and, therefore, an issue of gender inequality. In general, women believe that until the machismo culture changes, the city must provide women with a safe travel alternative. In fact, 77 percent of women concluded that “pink” transportation would not need to exist if men were educated to respect women.

Conclusion

Using women-only transportation to ensure women’s safety is a highly-controversial idea. Advocates for women’s rights have suggested that segregation tactics are likely to deepen gender divides (Associated Press 2009), making long-term equality between men and women difficult to achieve. Despite the risks involved, the transit administration in Mexico City believes that women-only transportation not only provides women with safe travel, but also has the potential to bring public awareness to the problem of violence and harassment towards women.

Based on the findings, this author believes that, in the case of Mexico City, women-only transportation will likely reduce gender inequality embedded in the public transit system. In fact, the negative responses that men gave to the feminization of the public transit system are a predictable reaction when attempting to change the culture of a place.¹² Additionally, the comments made by women linking violence

to gender discrimination shows a fracture in traditional thinking that the violence is normal and something that women need to learn to negotiate.

This paper concludes by stating that women-only transportation can be positive if it also has the potential to change the root causes of violence against women in normal public transportation. However, if women-only buses, subway cars, and taxis are used only to alleviate daily harassment and violence against women, then it may never force commuters to recognize the deeply-embedded gender inequalities within the transit system itself. While providing alternative transportation for women in order to ensure their security is an understandable solution to a very serious problem, it does not guarantee that the public transit system will eventually become degendered. In order to measure if women-only transportation is changing deeper gender inequalities, which provoke the need for women-only transit services, it is crucial that future studies of transit alternatives for women take into consideration public opinion.

Endnotes

¹ http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/15772398/ns/world_news-americas/t/brazil-city-ready-introduce-women-only-buses/.

² <http://www.defence.pk/forums/current-events-social-issues/151677-ladies-only-buses-launched-lahore-save-women-sexual-harassment.html>.

³ <http://www.thejakartaglobe.com/home/indonesia-railway-company-launches-women-only-carriages/391784>.

⁴ <http://dubaimetro.eu/about-dubai-metro>.

⁵ <http://abcnews.go.com/GMA/International/story?id=803965#.T6VJML8bV04>.

⁶ Pink transportation is a new version of women-only transportation, where instead of simply demarcating women-only buses and taxis with signs cities have begun to paint them bubble-gum pink.

⁷ See Appendix I, quote 2 for the original Spanish version.

⁸ This quote taken from an interview with director of INMUJERES, an institution responsible for the administration of women-only transportation. Her quote complements a study conducted by the Consejo Nacional para Prevenir la Discriminación (Advisory Board for the Prevention of Discrimination), who conducted

an investigation in 2009 on the depth of violence against women in public transportation.

⁹ See INMUJERES report for a comparison of the old laws and reformed ones: <http://www.google.com/url?sa=tandrc=jandq=andesrc=sandsource=webandcd=1andved=0CEwQFjAAandurl=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.inmujeres.df.gob.mx%2Fwork%2Fsites%2Finmujeres%2Fresources%2FLocalContent%2F632%2F3%2FCuadro.pdfandei=8p39T5SIlgjA2gW8rfDkDgandusg=AFQjCNGvnbzSDiV32sbDqLgHOPSMQ3qUQQandsig2=9-KTP-s7yHB5DODKlpYB9g>.

¹⁰ <http://www.google.com.mx/url?sa=tandrc=jandq=programa%20viajemos%20segurasandsource=webandcd=4andved=0CFYQFjADandurl=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.inmujeres.df.gob.mx%2Fwork%2Fsites%2Finmujeres%2Fresources%2FLocalContent%2F415%2F1%2FProgramaViajemosSeguras.pdfandei=CRT3T9apFaOC2AXWuYHdBgandusg=AFQjCNHzEBvBp5VZAg-NxCYkIC5TZMOv7Qandcad=rja>.

¹¹ See Appendix I, quote 7 for the original Spanish version.

¹² See similar studies on women entering traditionally male occupations or sports.

References

- Ahrentzen, S. B. 1992. Home as a workplace in the lives of women. Place Attachment. I. Altman and S.M. Low, eds. New York: Plenum, 113-137.
- Aitken, S. 2000. Mothers, communities and the scale of difference. *Social and Cultural Geography* 1: 65-82.
- Amedee, G. 2005. Closing the transportation divide: Linking TANF and transportation. *Race, Gender and Class* 12(3-4): 86-106.
- Associated Press. 2009. Mexico's pink taxis cater to fed-up females. MSNBC.COM. October 19. http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/33385984/ns/world_news-americas/t/mexicos-pink-taxis-cater-fed-up-females/#.TqAr7XJltLc.
- Banister, D. 2005. *Unsustainable Transport: City Transport in the New Century*. New York: Routledge.
- Belwal, R., and S. Belwal. 2010. Public transportation services in Oman: A study of public perceptions. *Journal of Public Transportation* 13: 1-21.
- Blumen, O. 2010. Gender differences in the journey to work. *Urban Geography* 15: 223-245.

- Bondi, L. 2005. Gender and the reality of cities: Embodied identities, social relations and performativities. Online papers archived by the Institute of Geography, School of Geosciences, University of Edinburgh, GEO-005.
- Bondi, L. H. C. 2000. The best of times for some and the worst of times for others? Gender and class divisions in urban Britain today. *Geoforum* 31: 329-343.
- Buzar, S., P. Ogden, and R. Hall (2005). Household matter: The quiet demography of urban transformation. *Progress in Human Geography* 29: 413-436.
- Carmien, S., M. Dawe, G. Fischer, A. Gorman, A. Kintsch, and J. Sullivan. 2005. Socio-technical environments supporting people with cognitive disabilities using public transportation. *ACM Transactions on Computer-Human Interaction (TOCHI)* 12: 233-261.
- Castells, M. 1983. *The City and the Grassroots: A Cross-Cultural Theory of Urban Social Movements*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press.
- Crane, R. 2007. Is there a quiet revolution in women's travel? Revisiting the gender gap in commuting. *Journal of the American Planning Association* 73: 298-316.
- Fallon, M., and L. Jome. 2007. An exploration of gender-role expectations and conflict among women rugby players. *Psychology of Women Quarterly* 31: 311-321.
- Feminist Wire. 2009. Pink taxis cater to Mexican women. *Ms. Magazine*, October 20. <http://www.msmagazine.com/news/printnews.asp?id=12000>.
- Hsu, H. 2009. How does fear of sexual harassment on transit affect women's use of transit? Women's Issues in Transportation: Summary of the 4th International Conference. *Transportation Research Board Conference Proceedings* 46: 85-94.
- Garibi, M., et. al. 2010. La discriminación y violencia contra las mujeres en el transporte público de la Ciudad de México. CONAPRED.
- Kitchin, R. 2002. Sexing the city: The sexual production of non-heterosexual space in Belfast, Manchester, and San Francisco. *City* 6: 205-218.
- Koskela, H. 1997. "Bold walk and breaking": Women's spatial confidence versus fear of violence. *Gender, Place and Culture: A Journal of Feminist Geography* 4: 301-319.
- Koskela, H., and R. Pain 2000. Revisiting fear and place: Women's fear of attack and the built environment. *Geoforum* 31: 269-280.
- Lefèbvre, H. 1991. *The Production of Space*. Oxford: Blackwell.

- Loukaitou-Sideris, A. 2008. How safe is the ride? Evaluation of design and policy responses to women's fear of victimization and crime. Earlier Faculty Research, University of California Transportation Center, UC Berkeley. 12-01-2008. <http://escholarship.org/uc/item/2zg5x2sb>.
- Lynch, G., and S. Atkins. 1988. The influence of personal security of fears on women's travel patterns. *Transportation* 15: 257-277.
- Mamun, M., and N. Lownes. 2011. A composite index of public transit accessibility. *Journal of Public Transportation* 14(2).
- Olcott, J. 2005. *Revolutionary Women in Post-Revolutionary Mexico*. United States: Duke University Press.
- Pain, R. 2001. Gender, race, age and fear in the city. *Urban Studies* 38(5-6): 899-913.
- Pain, R. 2009. Globalized fear? Towards an emotional geopolitics. *Progress in Human Geography* 33(4): 466-486.
- Pain, R. S. J. S. 2008. *Fear: Critical Geopolitics and Everyday Life*. Aldershot: Ashgate.
- Scherer, M., and K. Dziekan. 2012. Bus or rail: An approach to explain the psychological rail factor. *Journal of Public Transportation* 15(1): 75-94.
- Schulz, D., and S. Gilbert. 2000. Women and transit security: A new look at an old issue. *Women and Transit Security*. Women's Travel Issues Second National Conference, Baltimore, Maryland.
- Smith, N. 2008. *Uneven Development: Nature, Capital, and the Production of Space*. Athens, Georgia: The University of Georgia Press.
- Soja, E. W. 1996. *Thirdspace: Journeys to Los Angeles and Other Real-And-Imagined Places*. Malden, Massachusetts: Blackwell Publishers Inc.
- Times Online. 2007. Jobs for the girls: Pink taxis are hailed for safer journeys. www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/driving/news/article2943525.ece.
- Torres Ruiz, G. 2008. GDF toma medidas contra abuso sexual en el transporte público. *Cimacnoticias*. <http://www.cimacnoticias.com/site/08012306-GDF-toma-medidas-co.31826.0.html>
- Turkovich, M., L. van Roosmalen, D. Hobson, and E. Porach. 2011. The effect of city bus maneuvers on wheelchair movement. *Journal of Public Transportation* 14: 147-169.

Valentine, G. 1989. The geography of women's fear. *Area* 21: 385-390.

Valentine, G. 1992. Images of danger: Women's sources of information about the spatial distribution of male violence. *Area* 24: 22-29.

Valentine, G. 1993. (Hetero)sexing space: Lesbian perceptions and experiences of everyday spaces. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 11: 395-413.

Valentine, G. 1996. *(Re)negotiating the Heterosexual Street. BodySpace: Destabilizing geographies of gender and sexuality*. N. Duncan, ed. London: Routledge, 146-155.

Wade, L. (2009, Dec. 8). The relativity of feminist liberation. *Sociological Images*. <http://thesocietypages.org/socimages/2009/12/08/the-relativity-of-feminist-liberation/>.

Wilson, E. (2001). The invisible flaneur. *The Contradictions of Culture: Cities, Culture, Women*. E. Wilson, ed. London: Sage, 72-89.

Wu, W., A. Gan, F. Cevallos, and L. Shen. 2011. Selecting bus stops for accessibility improvements for riders with physical disabilities. *Journal of Public Transportation* 14: 133-149.

Appendix I: Coding Format

Determining Gender

There were three principal ways for determining gender. The first was if the person explicitly said they were a man or a woman; this accounted for around 15 percent of the comments coded. If the person did not explicitly say, "I am a man" or "woman," then we looked towards the conjugations of the person talking: *nosotras* vs. *nosotros*, for example; this accounted for another 30 percent of the comments coded. If neither of these two methods worked, then we used the name to determine the sex, e.g., obvious male and female names (Diego, Jorge, Ana, Fernanda, etc.). Ambiguous names such as Ale (which would be Alejandra or Alejandro) were coded as "gender unknown."

Favor or Against

A comment was coded as in favor, against, not sure, or don't care if the commenter specifically stated his/her viewpoint in one direction or another—for example: "I absolutely do not agree with this program" or "I think this is a wonderful program that will help women feel more secure."

1. In favor of “pink” transportation.
2. Against “pink” transportation.
3. Don’t care either way.
4. Not sure if it is good or bad.

Reasons Given for the Need for Women-Only Transportation

1. Women are weak, need protection, and, therefore, need special space.
 - a. Example comment: *Nunca existira la igualdad para hombres y mujeres porque las mujeres son mas debiles en todos los sentidos, y la cordura es para los debiles ya lo dijo.*
 - b. Most common: women are more likely to be raped or violated because they lack the presence of a man.
2. Men are violent and disrespectful to women.
 - a. Two ways of assessing this variable:
 - i. Men are responsible for the level of crime and insecurity in Mexico. Women tend to be less likely to rob, rape, or kidnap passengers and therefore can change the current issues of security in taxis.
 - ii. Men are generally violent towards women.
 - iii. Men are the cause of women feeling insecure.
3. Other. Here, we looked for any comment that degendered the issue. Most of these comments were government-oriented. That is, the commenter believed that this is a dubious government intervention to make it look like it is doing something, or that the reason security is an issue at all is because the government cannot control the streets. The second most common “other” was that it was neither because of women or men, but rather a general lack of education among Mexican people. If there is any reference to one’s sex, gender, or sexual orientation, this variable was not used.
 - a. *El problema de la delincuencia, e falta de educacion y de la ingobernabilidad en el pais no se resuelve pintando de colores ni el carro ni las corbats de los politicos.*
4. The greater population, older adults, and children, too.
5. Combats discrimination against women.
6. Just a service for women and nothing more.

Resolves Issue of Security?

1. Yes
2. No
3. Wasn't sure, it could make things worse.

Reasons it Resolves Issues of Security

1. Offers security.
2. Women can be dangerous, too, i.e., "pink" taxis assume that only men are dangerous.
3. Women are weak, they will stand out as targets, and without the protection of men (i.e., women traveling alone), they become a greater target for rape, etc.
4. Because it has nothing to do with men and women, but the general level of security in Mexico.
5. Other

Women-Only Transportation

1. Feels safer.
2. Is safer.
3. Stays the same.
4. Is more dangerous.

Pink Represents

1. Weak.
2. Independence for women and equal work opportunities.
3. Greater inequality and difference between men and women.
4. Discrimination against men.
5. Women need to change to protect themselves, or women need to be segregated to stay safe. A form of blaming the victim.
6. *El principal error de cualquier sistema es adaptarse a la delincuencia.*

Sexualization/Objectification of Women

1. Yes
2. No

About the Author

AMY DUNCKEL-GRAGLIA (*amy.graglia@gmail.com*) is currently enrolled as a graduate student at SUNY Stony Brook in New York. She received her MA from SUNY in 2009 and was declared ABD in August 2010. She currently resides in Mexico City, working as a research consultant with the local Mexican government to resolve issues with public transportation, urban development, security, and gender inequality.