

NAVIGATING GENDER USING TRANSPORTATION:
THEME AND VARIATIONS IN URBAN INDIA

by

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Navigating Gender Using Transportation: Theme and Variations in Urban India

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Starting with the knowledge of overt patriarchal structures and gender norms that affect when, where, and why women in urban India travel in public, this dissertation is an inquiry into how different groups of working women literally navigate gender and class positions while using various transportation modes. The geographies of Bengaluru and Delhi were chosen for the significant physical and social transformations that reflect realities of globalization, conflicting political ideologies, internal migration, and rapid urbanization. These changes are embedded within slick metro systems, the millions of new car owners, company provided transportation for employees of multinationals, and failing public bus systems. They are transcribed onto the bodies of urban women in which a tension between mobility in a literal sense and immobility with respect to gender norms and socio-economic hierarchies constantly plays out.

The project investigates the daily mobility practices of four populations of working women: women in Bengaluru's IT sector, young, unmarried women staying in Delhi's working women's hostels, women working in Delhi's retail sector, and women bus conductors in Bengaluru. A mixed methods approach of surveying, interviewing, and participant observation is utilized in order to understand what modes these women use for commuting in the city and why these modes are chosen. The primary aim is to locate the influence gender and class has on these commuting decisions.

Rooted in Right to the City activism, social exclusion research, and feminist epistemologies, this project is motivated by the reality that transportation decisions for women are inherently gendered, especially in respect to concern for personal security. At the same time, transportation mobility cannot be reduced to gender alone. Urban women

do not constitute a cohesive user category and policies that improve the mobility of one group can exacerbate socio-economic inequalities of others. To illustrate this, a comparative analysis is used. However, by focusing on qualitative evidence, the project locates individual agency within these women, the various ways in which women navigate through and around physical and social structures that restrict women's mobility. To conclude, this dissertation argues that the act of commuting in the city is one salient and important way in which a renegotiation of gender norms and class positions can be achieved.

Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my late father; Angela Carter, Iris Marion Young, Larry Levan, Walter Benjamin, and all those whose pushing of boundaries were eclipsed by realities of time. E. Manjula for her fierce determination and love for Bengaluru. Music of all kinds without which the writing of this dissertation would have not been possible; to all the cool girls on non-motorized wheels.

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Names

Unless specifically stated, all names in this project have been changed and bear no resemblance to the identity of the respondent. However, effort was made to adapt names that reflect certain regional or religious differences (e.g. Sikh; a Tamil Brahmin last name, etc.) that correspond to those of the original respondent.

Acronyms

ASSOCHAM: India's Associated Chambers of Commerce
BBPV: Bengaluru Bus Prayanikara Vedike
BBMP: Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike
BMTC: Bangalore Metropolitan Transportation Corporation
BPO: Business Process Outsourcing
BRT: Bus Rapid Transit
CBD: Central Business District
DMRC Delhi Metro Rail Corporation
DDA: Delhi Development Authority
DTC: Delhi Transportation Corporation
INR: Indian Rupee
IT: Information Technology
ICT: Information Communications Technology
IPL: Public Interest Litigation
JNU: Jawaharlal Nehru University
KSRTC: Karnataka State Transportation Corporation
NACTO: National Association of City Transportation Officials
NAFTA: North American Free Trade Agreement
NASCCOM: India's National Association of Software and Services Companies
NCR: National Capital Region
NCW: National Commission for Women
NHS: National Household Survey
NGO: Non-Governmental Organization
NSSO: National
OBC: Other Backward Classes
OECD: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PSU: Public Sector Unit
RTI: Right to Information

RTO: Regional Transport Office
STU: State Transport Undertaking
WTO: World Trade Organization

Note on transportation modes:

In this dissertation, auto and autorickshaw are used interchangeably as is two-wheeler and scooter. An auto/autorickshaw is a motorized, three-wheeled (two wheels in back, one in front) vehicle with a covered top and open sides. The driver sits in front and the backseat accommodates anywhere from two-four people. While not part of this research, it should be noted that an autorickshaw is different from a cycle rickshaw—or a rickshaw pulled by bicycle. When the term four-wheeler is used, this is in reference to a car or automobile.

Chapter One

Introduction

I.1.1 Identifying the relational threads

I'm standing at one of several platforms in Bengaluru's¹ Shantinagar bus station talking to Subashni, a bus conductor with BMTC, the city's public bus corporation. I've known Subashni for over a year now and we meet frequently, sometimes planned but more often spontaneously, while in transit. At this particular moment, amidst the belch of overworked buses, yells of bus conductors announcing route destinations, and frenzy of passengers embarking and disembarking she shows me photographs from a Women's Day² function hosted by the Corporation. One image is of Subashni and Binita, the head labour officer, speed walking while holding a spoon carrying a nimbu lemon in the mouth, the goal being to not drop the lemon. Both are wearing saris and baseball caps. Subashni, like the previous year, won the competition.

An elderly man, also waiting at the platform, has watched us interacting for several minutes. He approaches us in order to ask, in Kannada, how it is that we, one foreigner and one bus conductor, are speaking in English and laughing with one another. When Subashini tells him we are friends, he shakes his head in apparent disbelief. Again he says, but how is it that she, a foreigner and you, a lady bus conductor are "*like this*"? After some back and forth, I hear Subashini use the word globalization. It is possible because of globalization. "Because of this, the world is interconnected, even in our little Bengaluru," she replies in English. The elderly man accepts this explanation and, with visible excitement, declares: "New Jersey! I know this place called New Jersey!"

¹ In 2006, Bangalore, the name given by the British, was changed to Bengaluru to reflect the original Kannada name. A similar change took place in several cities throughout India (e.g. Bombay to Mumbai, Madras to Chennai). State government and society was slow to adopt this new name until 2014 when the city officially changed names. Much of the research for this dissertation began prior to 2014 and Bangalore is still used colloquially, especially by non-Kannada speakers. In this dissertation, the two names will be

Globalization, as Subashini's answer suggests, is often treated as an attribute or monolithic fact of the late 20th century, leaving no geography or individual unaffected. Globalization of course is not a thing but rather a process and this process of interconnectedness is predicated upon several forms and types of movement occurring on many different scales, often simultaneously. Before globalization became a household term, Marx declared the annihilation of space by time, manifested, at that time, in the physical infrastructure of the railroad, a transportation infrastructure that entailed the circulation of goods and later, people. This structuring of industrial capitalism was also the formation of several isms and izations, notably colonialism and urbanization. As early as the 19th century we find a link between the corporal and mental processing of movement being established. Michel Chevalier, a Frenchman visiting the US, noted the connection between movement and the American mindset, describing the American as "always in the mood to move on...He is devoured with a passion for movement, he cannot stay in one place," (Chevalier 1961: 270). Writing at the height of France's urban transformation, sociologist Émile Durkheim argued that a society's perception of time and space was a direct function of its social rhythm (Shivelbusch 1986). By the mid 20th century, we find a new logic of social rhythm emerging from transportation infrastructure. The post war defense strategies³, economic prosperity, and dominance of technocratic reason resulted in the 1956 Federal Highway Act. An Act where lineal progress manifested in the creation of straight, multilane highways, experienced by drivers and passengers in forms of physical speed and efficiency, qualities that also came to dominant American culture, particular in respect to food and consumption.

³ And thus bearing a similar resemblance Haussmann's restructuring of Paris under Napoleon the Third.

Today's globalized cities reflect an abundance of modal options, modes that reveal cultural attitudes and norms toward movement. What is à la mode in one city has become outmoded in another. While city planning agencies in North America redesign streetscapes with cycle infrastructure, the Delhi court bans the cycle rickshaw, declaring it a hindrance to the efficient automobility⁴ of the car owning class. An individual with a smart phone and data plan uses the same app to book his or her Uber driver in any number of cities. Amsterdam is eliminating cars from the urban core while Bangalore adds one million registered personal vehicles to the city annually. Silicon Valley pushes its prototypes for driverless cars but Super Bowl Sunday is dominated by advertisements that reiterate driving as the physical manifestation of American freedom and independence⁵.

Norms around transportation mobility, like the act of movement itself, are fluid and constantly changing. However, amidst the conversations and passions for new and old forms of mobility something else is happening, or rather not happening. That is to say that in the push to think about how we can travel we overlook who can, or cannot travel. In this instance I am referring to infrastructures, designs, politics, and public policies as well as social norms, cultural values, and economic constraints that permit the mobility of some and the immobility of others. Or even the mobility of some at the expense of others. A passenger and taxi driver both depart from the airport, but for the passenger coming

⁴ A cycle rickshaw is a small carriage, fitting one or two people that is then pulled by a person on a bicycle. I am referring to a ban that was enacted by the Delhi High Court in 2006 and eventually revoked (though maintained in some parts of the city) due to immense criticism.

⁵ Books such as Alan Walk's *Driving Cities* (2014) makes a clear connection between the automobile and contemporary neoliberalism while Peter Norton's encyclopedic look at the historical use of the street in the USA (Norton 2008) traces the changing idea of and social relationship to the street through the rise of the automobile in the 20th century.

back from an international holiday, the taxi ride is a marker of privilege while for the driver, it is a source of employment, employment in the service of others. This dissertation, like movement, travels all over the place, traversing the physical and empirical, the conceptual and theoretical. Its starting point is an idea that is simultaneously no place, everywhere, and every scale: *Who travels in and through the cities of the 21st century? For what reasons and by what means?*

1.1.2 Research motivation

Situated within current discourses addressing issues related to women and transportation, why and how gender affects and is affected by transportation infrastructures, modes, and policies, the motivation for this doctoral research began with the question *who is allowed to travel in the city and for what reasons?* A question in which city was replaced with the specific geographies of Delhi and Bangalore, India and who was identified as different groups of working women. The term “allowed” is a provocation, a reminder that women in the contemporary city are navigating a simultaneity of positionalities and tensions, particularly those of class and gender. One of the most obvious is the tension between traditional norms in which a woman’s physical mobility was determined by an elder and/or male of the household and present realities in which women determine their own futures and commute daily in these endless metropolises. To frame it as a question of allowed or allowing, the goal was to understand how dominant gender norms intersected with literal transportation mobility. For example, if a woman’s family expects her to prepare the evening meal, is she allowed to take up employment that entails working late? If most women stop using public transportation after p.m., does a woman riding the

bus at p.m. still feel safe and comfortable during her commute? In what ways are women in these examples both given and denied mobility?

Concretely, the motivation for this project came after several visits to the city of Bangalore over a period of three years and an empirical observation that more and more women seemed to be on the road, driving cars and two wheelers than previous visits. Familiar with the “morality” debates conservative, right wing Indian politicians are infamous for evoking in respect to modern women in the city. Take for example Andhra Pradesh speaker Kodela Shiva Prasad’s comment at the National Women’s Parliament meeting in 2017: “in older times, when women were housewives, they were safe from all atrocities...Today, they are studying, working and also are doing business. They are exposed to society. When they are exposed to the society they are more prone to eve-teasing, harassment, atrocities, rape and kidnap. If they do not leave home, it doesn’t happen,” (qtd in Deccan Chronicle 2017). I began wondering if women who could afford to were choosing private over public forms of transportation in order to bypass the subtle and overt gender norms that make it problematic for a woman to travel on her own in the city, especially one who appears to be transgressing boundaries of acceptability, a point I will visit shortly. In what ways does a car not only change how a woman travels, but also her relationship to the city? If a woman wore a short dress and wanted to step out without her family, would traveling by car shield her from moral policing? Did it impact her ability to navigate and experience the city in a way that was not tainted by her gender?

The link between using a particular transportation mode for one’s urban mobility and the influence it has on one’s relationship to the city is not unique to women or India but true more generally. For example, what is our relationship to our surroundings when

we walk versus riding in an underground subway system? How does our experience change according to our mode of commuting? What happens when economic or geopolitical circumstances cause us to commute on a daily basis but we must do so in uncomfortable or dangerous ways? How does discomfort play out in a physical but also mental sense? What is the difference between being allowed to travel and being able to travel?

Shortly after the 2012 Delhi Rape Case, an incident in which a young medical student was fatally gang raped while onboard a bus in Delhi, women were encouraged to share their experiences about traveling in the city with the media. *Atlantic Cities* quoted Arkaja Singh, a female lawyer in Delhi: “I have never really felt unsafe [in] Delhi...But I have a car. I would really like to see the city think through how to make it much easier, safe and more comfortable for people to get around without cars,” (Bergen, 2013). While Delhi has the highest rate of car ownership in the country, the car owning class constitutes about 20 percent of the city’s population (based on 2010 census, TNN 2013). Ms. Singh’s mode choice puts her in a minority population but it is evident that it is this population that largely dictates the form and infrastructure of Delhi’s urbanization (Ahmad et al. 2013; Randhawa 2012; Siemiatycki 2006).

As the above quote illustrates, questions regarding women’s perception of safety and modal choice cannot be addressed simply through a gender lens. Gender, like mobility, is produced by a complex web of unconscious and conscious positional threads that include class, religion, race, ethnicity, caste, age, family, education, disability and so on. Picking up on this distinction between being allowed to travel and being able to travel in the context of Ms. Singh it is imagined that a certain level of allowing happens even

before she is out of the house. That is to say her family and immediate socio-cultural and class context allowed, permitted, or even encouraged her education and training to become a lawyer. She is able to travel comfortably in a car due to her class and economic position. She is both allowed and able to travel. However, it is precisely this position that keeps her out of public spaces such as buses and metros, thereby upholding a mentality in which those transgressing boundaries (say for example by wearing a “sexy” skirt) shouldn’t be in public in the first place. While we don’t know whether Ms. Singh drives or if a chauffeur drives her, the car is a physical marker and manifestation of all of these norms and positionalities.

Ms. Singh and the women I observed driving in Bangalore led to a desire to locate the intersectional process by which moving in the city becomes a reflection of socio-cultural values, norms or power structures. But also, perhaps, an opportunity for transgression of norms and power structures. Furthermore, as a researcher committed to feminist solidarity, there was a need to consider the extent to which individual independence gained through automobile⁶ accessibility comes at the expense of urban equality and equity, and environmental sustainability.

Embodying movement

The meaning of mobility depends on the context and the discipline and for the purpose of this dissertation I refer to Tim Cresswell’s definition of mobility as “socialized movement,” (1999: 176)⁷ and Susan Hanson’s belief that mobility refers to “The

⁶ For an excellent discussion on women and cars along this line see Carol Sanger’s “Girls and the Getaway” (2012).

⁷ Cresswell goes on to illustrate with an example: “Just as abstract space can be transformed into social space (or place) by taking power seriously, so it is possible to think of human movement as a social

individual as embedded in, and interacting with, the household, family, community and larger society,” (Hanson 2012: 8). To these definitions I add that socialized movement shapes and is, in turn, shaped by tangible and intangible power relations and ideologies that manifest in forms such as transportation infrastructures that assume a universal user who is able bodied, traveling at certain times, to certain locations as well as low interest rate car loans promoted by the central and state governments or even the normalization of gender harassment through notions of “appropriate behavior” and “respectability” which in turn affects when and where women travel, sending the signal to transportation planners that certain groups of people don’t use transportation and thus there is no need to plan for them. Lastly, while Hanson sees mobility as a way for looking at gender *and* mobility, my understanding of gender is that it is already mobile. What I mean by this is that gender is inherently fluid. As a socially constructed attribute, one moves through gender at various speeds and varying degrees. One does not necessarily feel she is a woman on the bus until she is lecherously stared at or physically grouped. Now at that moment, a constructed identity has been forcefully placed upon her.

Iris Marion Young’s 1980 essay “Throwing Like a Girl” contemplates the situatedness of body movement and its connection to gender. Young begins with phenomenologist Merleau-Ponty’s emphasis on the body as the locus of subjectivity, the starting point for both relation to and understanding of the world. It is bodily orientation that defines initial relations between subject and the world. The problem for Young is that Merleau-Ponty does not consider “a particular style of bodily comportment which is typical of feminine existence, and this style consists of particular modalities of the

phenomenon—as a human geographical activity imbued with meaning and power,”(1999: 176). Cresswell’s definition of mobility is similar to Hanson and Young in respect to focusing on the social as opposed to the technical/modal aspects of mobility. .

structures and conditions of the body's existence to the world," (1980: 141). Young goes on to explore the various ways in which the external world is always already shaping the modality of the female body, which in turn, informs that initial relation to the world. Young is not alone in this observation that girls, far more than boys, are made aware of the body-in-world, particularly the dangers this body can bring to the girl. Genesia Alves writes, "The policing of women begins insidiously, cloaked casually and convincingly in good intentions. Maybe the first time it happens, a mother will do it to her own daughter," (2016). Her statement echoes with Phadke et al. "Most girls will remember the lines of control that were increasingly put into place as they grew older—as their brothers' worlds expanded, theirs contracted," (2011: 17). Using an example, which also forms the title of her essay "Throwing like a girl", Young observes: "the woman takes herself as the *object* of the motion rather than its originator," (1980: 148). The act of bodily movement formally splits a woman, she must divide her attention between the task at hand and the body that must perform it. "Feminine bodily existence is self-referred to the extent that the feminine subject posits her motion as the motion that is *looked at*," (148). This observation regarding the gaze helps us better understand how gender then comes into motion viz a viz the act of the gaze which is inevitably masculine, even if the looking is done by the woman herself.

The title of this dissertation *Navigating Gender Using Transportation* comes from the knowledge that gender requires constant navigation and this navigation stems from normative, fixed ideas of gender identities and expectations. And for women in urban India, it seems that this navigation of gender is particularly potent while using public transportation and perhaps even more so in cities of rapid urbanization. What are the

intimate physical and mental affects of this process (known as urbanization) and how do women in particular navigate them? Navigation in this instance is as physical a relation as it is social. How, when, and where is gender moved and is removed through the act of commuting in the city? To render this query into a researchable question I start by asking *if and how commuting in the city reflects of reproduces dominant gender norms that in turn shape the experience of and ability to commute. How is this complicated by one's embedded positionality—particularly in respect to class?*

In this introductory chapter I begin with a review of literature on women *and* transportation, the historical origins of this research followed by literature illustrating limitations of this perspective. Proceeding the literature on women and transportation I visit three relational inquiries explored within feminist research and connected them to the context of women's transportation mobility in urban India. I then introduce the key research questions that make up the doctoral research. This is followed with an overview of India's urbanization and transportation mobility in order to better understand the context this research addresses. Chapter Two looks at transportation mobility of women and men in Bangalore's IT sector, Chapter Three is an inquiry into the daily mobility of young working women in Delhi, their views toward the Delhi metro's introduction of women only cars and safety more broadly. Chapter Four takes an ethnographic approach to understanding the daily, micro political mobility encounters of women bus conductors in Bangalore. In Chapter Five I conclude by considering findings of all three case studies in relation to one another; the overarching theme, unique variations within different groups of women, and what this research tells us about women commuting in the cities of Bangalore and Delhi.

Section Two: Literature Review

1.2.1 Women and Transportation

Starting with evidence of women's increased formal labor force participation in the US, in 1978 Sandra Rosenbloom wrote an editorial calling for the need to look at women's travel issues. "Women's changing behavior is calling into question the accuracy of our planning models and our long-range housing and land use predictions and that is why the study of women's travel issues is not only legitimate but necessary," (Rosenbloom 1978: 350). Similarly, Ericksen (1977) study makes the connection between employment, women, and transportation. Using US census data Ericksen highlighted that a women's role in the home helped predict the length of her journey to work. Ericksen disaggregated the data by race, finding that black women had longer commutes than white women, a finding she attributes to a function of residential location. While the study exposing differences (e.g. commuting differences between men and women, black and white women) it does not go beyond the facts. It ignores how intersectional discriminations (gender and race) play out in the context of mobility. For example, that black women have longer commutes not out of choice but out of residential and job discrimination. Much of the existing literature coming out of transportation continues to highlight differences between men and women with a focus on evidence of the link between paid employment, commuting, and trip length (Root et al 2000; Spain 2000). Some find that women tend to take shorter trips, in terms of both distance (Hjorthol and Vågane 2014) and length of time (Hamilton and Jenkins 2000). In nuclear family structures with two adults working, it is the woman who tends to take up paid employment closer to home (Neto et al. 2014). However, Dunckel-Graglia's (2013) research in Mexico City found

that women, on average, had commutes that were up to two hours longer than men because of the combined responsibilities of part time jobs, food shopping, and accompanying children to school coupled with the geographic size of the city. A similar finding was reported in Neto et al (2014) which reported longer commute times for women working part time due to the fact that most part time labor (e.g. domestic work) usually occurred in more affluent neighborhoods located further away from their homes.

Anand and Tiwari (2007) found that high instances of “transport deprivation” of low income women due to the precariousness of residential location and consistency of forced evictions which pushed families into the urban periphery. If the cost of travel became too high, or the commute time so long that it disrupted her ability to perform household duties, then a woman was not likely to take up employment.

From the existing literature we find that three main factors contribute to gendered transportation decisions and choices of women—cost, personal security, and time poverty, or the expectation for women to engage in both paid and unpaid (i.e. caregiving) labor. First, women are likely to choose a mode based on its affordability, as there is salient evidence that across the world women earn less than men. In the context of the household, as norms around women’s economic capacities are usually framed as being inferior to the male of the household, it is the mobility and commute preferences of the latter who is privileged. In the UK it was found that men tend to be drivers or users of trains while women make the majority of trips on bus and foot (Hamilton and Jenkins 2000) and in France, the US, and Germany, women are more likely than men to use public transportation (Bhatt 2016). In North American households in which only one car is available, men get vehicle preference, particularly for employment commutes

(Guiliano 1979). Das and Pandit's (2013) work in India found that women are more willing than men to wait longer for public buses, further supporting evidence that women tend to use non-motorized and/or cheaper forms of transportation (GTZ 2007; Mahadevia and Advani 2016; Motte et al. 2016; Peters 2001; Sietchiping et al. 2012). Overcrowding of the bus is a main concern of both women and men in Kathmandu but for women overcrowding can lead to incidents of gender-based harassment (World Bank 2013). In the case of deteriorating public transportation, men are more likely to turn to a private modal option, whereas women will continue to use the poor service. This is what some refer to as being transit captive.

Qualitative research reveals that issues of safety and security—that is travel free of accident or gender-based harassment—factors largely into the travel decisions of women (Dunckel-Graglia 2013; Smith and Clark 2000; Gardner 1995). Klein's 1980 study establishes an intersectional link between employment, transportation, race, class, and gender-based security. Klein notes that the majority of rapes occur at night, with transportation factoring heavily into the occurrence. In most cases the victim was followed from a public bus or subway stop. Klein argues that women using public transportation in the US, especially at night, are coming from low income and/or minority backgrounds where there is no access to private vehicles. The report notes that nearly 90 percent⁸ of these incidents go unreported. As Klein observes: "The cumulative effect of harassment, perhaps even if it isn't explicitly acknowledged by the woman, is to remind her that she's not in control over her mobility," (Klein 1980: 481). Bhatt (2016) notes a

⁸ This statistic comes from the FBI.

strong correlation between violence against women and women's workforce participation.

While the literature of Klein, Dunckel-Graglia, Anand and Tiwari points to various power structures and scales embedded within transportation, much of the literature reinforces the idea of women (and men) as two homogenous categories of study. This is particularly evident in policy literature on "women's issues" regarding transportation in the Global South. Work such as Riverson and Kunieda's research (2005) on women's issues in developing countries does not explicitly identify the population of study, giving the impression that all women have limited access to transport and technology—in this instance the complexity of a case like India, in which there are many Ms. Singh's goes unnoticed.

Several authors critique the reductive tendencies of much of the literature on women and transportation, most notably Law's 1999 article: "Beyond 'women and transport'" in which Law laments researchers' preoccupation with a focus on journey to work, the global north, and the car. Coming out of the discipline of geography she calls for the replacement of transport with daily mobility and subsequent emphasis on social and cultural geographies of mobility. Law is not alone. Hall (2004) calls for a need to move away from women and transportation to a wider discussion of gender and daily mobility and Levy (2013) argues that the social identities of transportation users are embedded in urban social relations and practices, criticizing the way in which gender issues in respect to transportation are almost always coming from the economic context.

Carol Sanger's fascinating article "Girls and the Getaway: Cars, Culture, and the Predicament of Gendered Space" (1995) uses a legal lens to look at the car in North

America not from a vehicle of mobility but rather a vehicle that unfavorably justifies or what she calls “riding as consent.” Tracing the popular imagination of the car as a site for (in this instance heterosexual) sexual encounter in the context of rape law in the US, Sanger illustrates how the presence of a car in a rape case disqualifies the credibility of the woman’s claim of being raped. In court, the car is used as evidence as consent, that only acquaintances would share a ride, a woman who says “yes” to a ride, is essentially saying “yes” to a sexual encounter. Sanger’s research shares more affinities to the work coming out of geography and sociology than that of transportation planning, policy, and civil engineering. While the former focuses on complex, embedded social relations, the latter seems preoccupied with reaffirming categorical binaries.

Geographer Tim Cresswell (2010) finds that the transportation researcher is mostly interested in telling us about “facts” of movement, for example when it happens, the speed at which it happens, and where people go, “They have not been so good at telling us about the representations and meanings of mobility either at the individual level or at a societal level. Neither have they told us how mobility is actually embodied and practiced,” (2010: 19). Such a point is reiterated in the work of Brazilian transportation expert Eduardo Vasconcellos who finds that mobility in the context of transportation research and planning is “often treated as simply the ability to move, a function of physical and economic resources,” (Vasconcellos 2001: 53-54). In this case, “mobility alone is just a technical computation... It is therefore a very limited concept for transport policy analysis because it does not indicate why and how mobility is exercised (or not),” (Ibid). In overlooking the way in which an individual’s mobility is embedded within

social, economic, and cultural relations. It reproduces pedagogies void of critical reflexivity (Giroux 1997).

Why is it that geographers are interested in mobility as something embodied and practiced whereas transportation researchers focus on facts and technical computations of physical movement? The majority of transportation research takes a quantitative approach, focusing on numerical analysis and forecasting, requiring the setting up of discrete categories and binary oppositions. That much of the women and transportation research still relies on this methodological approach is reminiscent of the ways in which urban planning more generally and transportation research specifically risks a tendency toward normative assumptions of universal users who are physically able-bodied, working outside the home, and living in nuclear family structures. This is further problematic to the extent that normative assumptions of both physical infrastructure and social structures coming from the Global North are transposed onto the Global South. A condition marking the transition from first wave western feminism to second and third wave feminism broadly was a breakdown in binary thinking, awareness of intersectionality as a key tenant of feminist solidarity, and, more recently, the need to queer our understandings of gender and sexuality broadly. As Lefebvre notes in *Rhythmanalysis*: “Binary oppositions given as evidence enable us to determine the object but not to penetrate into it,” (Lefebvre 2013: 70).

1.2.2 Three intersectional relationships within feminist epistemology

The empirical research conducted for this dissertation is focused on the journey to employment as the starting point for thinking of how gender is navigated by women

working in different employment contexts while using transportation. In this section of the literature review I summarize three relational conversations within feminist discourse that informed a methodological understanding of how to avoid a reductionist approach to doing and analyzing the empirical component of the dissertation.

Feminist readings and debates about women and gender

First wave feminism in the United States (US) mobilized around a collective desire to challenge a law that allowed white men but not white women the right to vote. Using a rights-based approach, many of the early supporters used a normative framework to gain support among white men. In this case normative refers to the use of “essentializing” certain qualities of women, for example their inherent modesty, respectability, and prioritization of family and the nation.

Essentialism usually entails biologism and naturalism, but there are cases in which women’s essence is seen to reside not in nature or biology but in certain given psychological characteristics—nurturance, empathy, support, non-competitiveness, and the like...Essentialism entails the belief that those characteristics defined as women’s essence are shared in common by all women at all times, (Grosz 1995: 47).

In the fight for the right to vote, white women operated under a logic of gender essentialism, class, and exclusion—that is whiteness and middle classness (defined primarily through the ownership of property) became the centralizing characteristic of respectability (used for the argument that white women should have the vote before black men). As Angela Davis writes in *Women, Race, Class*:

The inestimable importance of the Seneca Falls Declaration was its role as the articulated consciousness of women’s rights at midcentury...However, as

rigorous consummation of the consciousness of white middle-class women's dilemma, the Declaration all but ignored the predicament of white working-class women, as it ignored the condition of Black women in the South and North alike. In other words, the Seneca Falls Declaration proposed an analysis of the female condition which disregarded the circumstances of women outside the social class of the document's framers (Davis 2011: 54).

Davis's statement serves as a cautious reminder of the dangers of unreflexive actions and interventions, a caution architects, planners and policy makers should exercise given the tendency to plan for a "universal", able-bodied user and normative understandings of social structures (see Hayden 1980; Adarkar 2007; Weisman 1992). Much of this early feminism and a universal approach to understanding gender has been criticized for being overly essential and therefore reductive. The danger research on women and transportation faces is that unless there is an explicit engagement with embedded mobility, relational movement—particularly along lines of class, culture, and race—then it winds up replicating a normative understanding of who moves and why. This is seen in Ericksen's paper in which factual evidence gathered from the data shows that black women travel further for employment than white women without further questioning *why* black women are traveling farther (Ericksen 1977).

Capitalism | Patriarchy

Although first wave feminists addressed a specific condition—an absence of socio-political representation, we might say that what these women (and some men), were challenging was the logic of patriarchy. When I use the term patriarchy I am referring to a structure based on a hierarchy in which men stand to benefit. This structure can be material or immaterial, implicit or explicitly. As Srivastava writes: "Patriarchy refers to a

system of social organization which is fundamentally organized around the idea of men's superiority to women. Within this system, even those who may not approximate to the male ideal (such as homosexual men) still stand to benefit from the privileges.” (Srivastava 2012: 14-15). This structure is so pervasive that it is often understood as originating from biology itself, so that some might argue it is not hierarchy, just difference. This difference also becomes the basis for the social construct of gender, that is socially ascribed differences between men and women which are not based on sexual or biological difference but have become so embedded within society they appear to us as “natural” or, as Grosz's quote illustrates, *essential* qualities.

We know from Srivastava's definition that patriarchy is a system of social organization operating under the assumption of men's superiority to women. The structure is such that even non-heterosexual men stand to benefit from the privileges attached to a patriarchal system—particularly in respect to access to public space. For some, patriarchy is the predecessor to capitalism, that the hierarchies and exploitation inherent to patriarchy laid the foundation for capitalism.

Early western anthropologists such as Claude Levi-Strauss traced out the process through which the first economic exchange between groups (societies) was of women. In other words, it was through the exchange of women that “society” evolved. For Levi-Strauss, there was “fundamental tension between the family (i.e., the domestic realm in which women reside closer to nature) and society, which requires that families break down their autonomy to exchange with one another,” (Hartmann 1976: 141). The conclusion is that “because it is men who exchange women and women who are exchanged in creating social bonds, men benefit more than women from these social

bonds, and the division of labor between the sexes is a hierarchical one,” (Hartmann 1976: 141). What Levi-Strauss offered was a historical explanation of how the sexual division of labor became naturalized and universalized into what we now understand as patriarchy.

In her essay “The Social Origins of the Sexual Division of Labour,” (1981) Maria Mies locates a fundamental shift in sexual/gender relations through the introduction of animal breeding and domestication. The introduction of animal husbandry, the name itself anticipating future relations and structures, was based on accumulation. The discovery that a single bull could impregnate many cows meant, “the free sexuality of wild animals was subjected to a coercive economy, based on breeding, with the object of increasing the herds.” It is at this time that “Women were subjected to the same economic logic and became part of movable property, like cattle,” (Mies 1981: 28).⁹ This discussion can be extended further, as Srimati Basu has done in her locating of India’s rape legislation not under the rubric of sexual violence but in its relationship to property, marriage, and kinship as relationships of exchange (2011) or Pateman’s argument that “Only the marriage contract can turn use of sexual property...into the use of a person. But it is the husband who has use of a person, not the wife,” (Pateman 1988: 172).

Some feminists argue that patriarchy might have been present even prior to exchange relations (Knopp 1992), however, as expressed in the previous section on the limits of binary thinking, there is little utility in fixating on either capitalism or

⁹ Paul Virilio’s book, *Negative Horizons* opens with a chapter called the Metamorphosis of the Passenger in which he states: “Patriarchy arose with the capture of women and then established and perfected itself through the husbandry of livestock. In this economy of violence that signaled the pastoral stage, beauty preceded the beast, it is the coexistence of this twofold livestock that favoured the establishment of the dominate sex; but looking again at these metamorphoses of the hunter, domestication is the fulfillment and perfecting of predation,” (2006; 40).

patriarchy. Both patriarchy and capitalism become “logics” that produce and reproduce essentialized men, women, and hierarchical relations between and among them. This has negative consequences for both men and women. While my empirical research will not engage directly with debates on capitalism and patriarchy both capitalism and patriarchy give shape to the physical and mental environment and operate through subtle and overt forms of hierarchy, exploitation, and denial particularly in the context of work, employment, and where this occurs.

Work | Employment

Fernandez-Kelly’s (1997) research on maquiladora factories in Mexico illustrates how the symbioses of patriarchy and capitalism leads to the superexploitation of women workers and reinforces a subordinate position in society. In this particular instance of factory work, women, often in low socio-economic positions (young, uneducated, sole supporter of children) are preferred over men due to their acceptance of low wages and poor working conditions.

Low wages are justified on the premise of women having “nimble fingers”, that is small hands that are able to handle elaborate stitching quickly and efficiently. This particular form of work essentializes women by assuming that all women are born with nimble fingers and, by an early age, will know how to sew. Therefore, even though maquiladora women are expected to stitch 390 pockets an hour, this is low skilled work (because it is an innate knowledge of women) and hence low paid. Garment factory work is not the only sector to have feminized the work force; Boyer and England (2008) trace the “strategic engendering” of particular office technologies such as clerical work which

went from being a predominately male profession into one representative of middle class femininity by the mid 1950s. Boyer and England's work can be seen as a precursor to more recent work on women working in Business Process Outsourcing in India where a similar system of labor devaluation based on gender norms is at play. Radhakrishnan's ethnographic work on women in Bangalore's Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) sector illustrates how a certain type of middle class women has benefited from the availability of home based BPO work. Radhakrishnan, profiling one particular woman, writes:

Before she joined Infoworld as a knowledge associate, she had a master's degrees in chemistry that she had never put to use. After she was married, she lived in a joint family with her in-laws, who forbade her from working outside the home. When she heard about Infoworld, she saw it as an opportunity to make some extra money without leaving the house on a regular basis..." (Radhakrishnan 2011: 81).

Gender norms in the case of this Infoworld employee prevent her from working outside the home, however these gender norms also work in relation to devaluing women's paid economic contributions to both the home and society. Infoworld employees are not considered career ambitious, Radhakrishnan notes that is not uncommon for women to quite if come demands—such as helping a child in school—comes up. "Infoworld's profitability ultimately relies upon precisely the kinds of financial dependence among educated women that its own rhetoric of gendered empowerment aims to alleviate...its homebred, piece-rate approach ultimately serves to reinforce, rather than erode, a certain model of domestic seclusion for middle class women (Radhakrishnan 2011: 82).

In the case of the Infoworld employee, she is not allowed to "travel" because of her middle class socio-economic and caste status. This is in contrast to the maquiladora worker who is permitted to travel because of her low socio-economic status, her devalued

labor and reproductive rights. However, in permitting travel for employment, there is a push back, an exerted masculinity in the form of extreme violence. As early as 1995, Ciudad Juárez, a Mexican border town and home to many maquiladora factories, reported at least 50 women associated with factory work had been raped, murdered and dumped in the city (see Wright 2001; 2004). While this violence deserves a much deeper discussion, I use it to circle back to Srivastava's understanding of masculinity as the process that produces superior men. In the border towns of maquiladora factories, men's labor has been both valued and devalued, valued in the sense that it is considered too valuable for such low wages, (thus adhering to the superiority of men over women) yet devalued through macroeconomic forces that demand cheap goods produced by cheap labor. The effect of neoliberal organizations and policy agreements such as the World Trade Organization (WTO) and North American Free Trade Agreements (NAFTA) plays out on a micro scale—geographies affected by these policies, in turn affect social relations at the city and household level. While this is not a sufficient explanation (or justification) for the subsequent physical violence against women factory workers, it illustrates how gender, capitalism, patriarchy, and employment intersect in complicated ways.

Anxiety

“The irony is that in keeping with the economic demands of globalization—where increasing consumerist aspirations require an additional earning member in the family—the ‘working wife’ is a common male expectation, but she also raises male anxieties,” (Srivastava 2012: 36). An attempt to reconcile the two, that is globalization and tradition is seen in the home-based tech worker where an educated, middle class woman is allowed

to participate in the “modern” economy so long as it takes place in the home, “This binary takes on equally dichotomous cultural connotations, where empowering work for women is associated with the ‘global’ while staying at home is associated with the ‘traditional’,” (Radhakrishnan 2011: 82).

Sudarshan and Bhattacharya’s 2009 study put an interesting twist on this notion of global and traditional in the context of labor force participation. Executing their own survey for data collection, the author’s find that labor force participation is higher for women with no schooling than those who have completed schooling. Unmarried women or women-headed households were more likely to work in paid labor than married women. The authors point out that their findings are significantly higher than the government’s National Sample Survey Office (NSSO) data of about 24-27 percent workforce in Delhi for women (Sudarshan and Bhattacharya 2009: 63), possibly attributed to the informality of these women’s labor. The paradox of more women completing degrees in higher education yet evidence of a decline in women’s workforce participation will be explored in Chapter Three of this dissertation.

A 2006 study of the working poor in Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu had the following observation: “The limited extent of female participation¹⁰ is at least partly to be explained by male ideas about status, in which it is important that ‘their’ women should not work outside the household; and partly too, by the very low wages which women receive when they do work outside,” (Harriss 2006: 188). In this particular case study, anxieties about the precariousness of residence (e.g. that the population of study was living in a slum with no legal rights) coupled with the changing land patterns (e.g. urbanization) reiterated

¹⁰ In his particular locality there were 1278 residents surveyed, it was found that 17.3 percent of women worked outside the home, mostly in petty trading.

social norms of control and protection—something that affected the women of the community. Revisiting Radhakrishnan's observations about women working for Infoworld and Harriss's findings for why women in the Coimbatore slum don't work outside the home we find that regardless of class position, there is a pervasive gender norm that located the domestic sphere as traditionally appropriate for women.

Caregiving

Feminist economist Lisa Seguino's work demonstrates the way in which export-oriented economic growth of most nations is a direct result of a) the lower wages of women (when compared to men) and b) the expectation that women will engage in caregiving work regardless of their position as a wage-earning worker (Seguino 2000). Women produce and reproduce the household conditions (e.g. food preparation) that make it possible for men [and women] to produce for the capitalist economy. Yet this unpaid, unquantified care work done by women goes unaccounted for in macroeconomic evaluations, it excluded from a nation's GDP.

The market gives almost no rewards for care. Much of it is unpaid—most of it provided by women, some by men. The market also penalizes individuals who spend time in these activities, which take time away from investing in skills for paid work or from doing paid work...[care giving] creates human and social capital—the next generation...But mothers cannot demand a fee from employers who hire their children, (Fobre 1999: 211).

Caregiving is a huge industry and many people already pay for caregiving. India represents a unique case for several reasons. First, there is a strong suggestion of norms that frown upon women working outside the home if it compromises the quality of family life, as illustrated in Radhakrishnan's study. A 2012 report conducted by the Organization

for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) found significant differences between the workday of men and women. Indian women, regardless of working outside the home, spent an average of five hours a day on household work and caregiving while Indian men spent 19 minutes per day on such tasks (OECD 2012). Aronson and Neysmith (1996) explain that for many women, emotional and practical work is intertwined when it comes to care work, particularly when that care is for one's own family. Mirchandani finds this especially hard for women who engage in paid employment inside the home. When pressed, many women find it hard to define. As one interviewee states: "I have staggered my hours so that I still sort of get to do Mom things. I work from 7:00 in the morning until about 1:00, and I take [my child] to day care during that time. And then I pick him up and we have the afternoon. When my husband gets home, I carry on working in the evenings," (qtd in Mirchandani 1998; 172).

In the case of Infoworld, employees will quit if the work demands interfere with caregiving duties typically ascribed to women. It is unclear if quitting is an individual choice or the choice of the family and extended family. Regardless of who is making the choice, it is clear that for women across the world, work, employment and caregiving are not autonomous activities and engaging in one over the other is a decision beyond the control of the individual woman. As seen in the literature on women and transportation, care giving manifests in respect to transportation, notably though the idea of time poverty, which requires women to travel more, but not necessarily with greater accessibility or comfort. This in turn effects employment as women are forced to choose employment options that are close to home in order to fulfill caregiving expectations (see Hanson and Pratt 1995). One aspect of caregiving is its spatiality. It typically occurs in

the home, or in the case of mobility, involves activities related to the home, transporting children, shopping, and so on. In so far as strong societal norms envision caregiving as a woman's activity, women's association with or to the home, typically considered a private space, becomes essential for understanding women's mobility in public and through the city. This aspect of decision-making and choices figures strongly in this dissertation. When I ask the question *who is allowed to travel and for what reasons*, "allowing" is a reference to the complexity of mobility decisions and who makes them. This figures literally in the context how, when, and where a woman travels.

Violence against women: a historic look

In the previous sections I illustrate why and how systems and structures of gender, capitalism, patriarchy, and work intersect in ways that continuously produce and reproduce one another. In this section I consider how these intersections play out spatially, particularly in the context of the city, urbanization, and notions of private and public—who should be doing what, where. Urbanization, the urban, the city represents control, uncontrolled, and controlling space, occasionally expressed in physical and structural violence. The birth of the modern industrial city is often framed in ways that simultaneously suggest control and disorder. The city, as a built environment, is an attestation of *man's* ability to control nature, people/citizens, and capital. Under the East India Trading Company, we find an attempt to control all three. The discipline of sociology was a product of the modern city, a new environment giving rise to new social relations (e.g. Georg Simmel), most of this evidence comes from the male perspective. In the industrial cities of London, Paris, and New York, historical information expresses the

presence of women in the city in tones of anxiety and disgust. The modern city was considered to be at odds with the “natural” disposition of the woman, who was *essentially* docile and domestic. Elizabeth Wilson argues that the presence of women in the early industrial cities of Europe and North America represented disorder, a threat to control. The ever-growing urban crowd was compared to a feminine instability and hysteria.

Nineteenth-century planning reports, government papers and journalism created an interpretation of urban experience as a new version of Hell, and it would be possible to describe the emergent town-planning movement—a movement that has changed our cities almost beyond recognition—as an organized campaign to exclude women and children, along with other disruptive elements—the working class, the poor, and minorities—from this infernal urban space altogether, (Wilson 1991: 6).

In her essay on German Expressionist artist Georg Grosz, Beth Lewis ties the violent images of Grosz’s murdered and mangled women to the larger social norm of the urban Weimar society that accepted this “sexual order as an expected manifestation of the nasty underworld of the metropolis can be viewed as an extension of the bourgeois preoccupation with the degeneracy and correction of urban life at the end of the century,” (1997: 206). However, evidence suggests that this acceptance of a sexual order dictating where a woman should be at what time of day continues. Consider a 1979 headline from the Oxford Mail: “Any woman walking alone after dark invites trouble,” (qtd in Ardner 1981: 33). McIlwaine’s investigations into links between urbanization and gender-based violence in the global South finds that as women become more visible in the urban environment, they risk even greater levels of violence as men try to reinforce their dominance in society (McIlwaine 2013). This point is similar to Srivastava’s argument that “increasing visibility of women in the public...attracts a male hostility in terms of the changing nature of popularly held opinions regarding the ‘proper’ spaces of men and

women,” (Srivastava 2012: 36). If we take this as true then it would be expected that geographies of rapid urbanization, that is changing land uses, populations, employment sectors, and spaces, will experience increases of gender-based violence.

The Indian context

A similar thread of bourgeois preoccupations with the corrupting affect urban life has on good and respectable women can be found within contemporary morality debates in India. Singer (1972) and Radhakrishnan (2011) both find that India’s own breed of urbanization is intertwined with caste, class, and colonialism, all of which have worked together to produce and reproduce gender norms that restrict women’s agency, literal and symbolic movement—particularly in the context of accessing urban public space. During British rule, Brahmin (highest caste) men instigated a strict distinction between the home and the space outside the home. That which was outside the home was subject to capitalism, British rule, and western influence. And so the home becomes the space of tradition and morality. This historical structuring, Radhakrishnan believes is one way of understanding how and why:

Middle-class women [usually of upper caste] have long acted as idealized markers of Indian national culture, and they have been a key mode through which ‘modernity’ gets reconciled with a perceived ‘authentic’ culture...men, whose identity was linked to the public sphere, could and should modernize to support the nation. Women, in contrast, could be educated and refined, but they were not to be ‘essentially’ modern, (Radhakrishnan 2011: 49).

Radhakrishnan’s understanding of the idealized marker of Indian society is similar to Phadke et al who find that in 21st century Mumbai: “The middle-class woman is, in fact, implicitly central to ideas of Indian womanhood as the symbolic measure of many things.

It is her education and employment that become the measure of a family/community/nation's progress...she becomes the canvas on which narratives of modernity and honor are simultaneously written," (2011: 23).

For Merleau-Ponty "Consciousness is in the first place not a matter of 'I think that' but of 'I can'...A movement is learned when the body has understood it, that is, when it has incorporated it into its 'world'," (Merleau-Ponty 1962: 137). This quote again brings us back to the action of allowing—who is allowed to travel (and who does the allowing) and who *can* or is able to travel? This permission, who does and does not have to ask, translates into bodily movements and relations that inform how we travel and commute. In a recent interview with Indian feminist activist Kamla Basin, she explained: "In college, I had very few friends because girls were not allowed to make their own friends. They were instructed to head straight home after college. After college they were married."¹¹ (*The Hindu*, July 2017). Basin goes on to trace the way in which she unlearned the forced immobility and scrutiny thrust upon woman, what she is wearing, who she is with, and what she is doing—three questions that again figure prominently into how one travels

Phadke (2012) illustrates the ways in which Indian women learn to "manufacture respectability" whenever they are in public. "When a woman is attacked in a public space, the question of what she was doing there in the first place is inevitably asked along with variations on the themes of what she was wearing and who she was with," (Phadke 2012: 58). Consider Section 354 (Chapter XVI) of the Indian Penal Code:

Assault or criminal force to woman with intent to outrage her modesty.

¹¹ <http://www.thehindu.com/education/cast-aside-conventions/article19284581.ece> [Accessed 20.11.17].

Whoever assaults or uses criminal force to any woman, intending to outrage or knowing it will be likely that he will there by outrage her modesty, shall be punished with imprisonment of either description for a term which shall not be less than one year but which may extend to five years, and shall also be liable to fine.

The state's concern with violence isn't so much about violence against the woman herself, but rather her modesty, which again is a marker of not only the woman but also her family, community, and nation broadly. Returning to Phadke, the argument is made that for a woman to receive protection she must prove her respectability, and to have respectability is to respect clearly defined boundaries of private and public space, and which of these spaces a woman should be in. This is in fact at the heart of Phadke et al.'s book *Why Loiter?* (2011). Using the example of Mumbai, the authors; argue that unlike Indian men, a woman is not permitted to loiter, to just be in public. If she is in public at all, it is to travel or move from a to b. To linger is to invite trouble. "Gender norms in India and beyond are constructed in a way so that public is considered dangerous and private, as it is constructed as the 'domestic', is considered safe and appropriate for women. These norms of dichotomous public/private space are reinforced through legal mechanisms that make marital rape permissible¹² because it takes place in the safe domesticity of the home" (Phadke et al. 2011).

Statically,¹³ it is more likely that a woman will experience violence in "domestic" space by someone she knows than a stranger in a public place.¹⁴ Yet the woman in public,

¹² Exception 2 to Indian Penal Code 376 "Sexual intercourse of sexual acts by a man with his own wife, the wife not being under fifteen years of age, is not rape."

¹³ The Center for Disease Control and Prevention in the US recently released US panel data confirming that the majority of female homicides are a result of domestic violence (Jeltseon 2017)

¹⁴ Taking this discussion of gender in the context of private and public one step further, Butalia points out that the assumption of public and private is also class based. The assumption is that all people have a private space, such as a residence, which allows them to move between private and public. For poor urban

carries great social anxiety, a woman in public, depending on several factors, experiences great anxiety, if not manifested as violence, is often marked by subtle and overt forms of harassment, scrutiny and moral judgment. Furthermore, as a country once under British rule, followed by passive and overt forms of western hegemony, another layer of cultural and economic anxiety is added, which again translates into social relations. The threat to the masculinity of the nation and society translates into further controlling of women. Similar to Radhakrishnan, Phadke et al find that within the past decade, Hindu women have faced institutional and familiar pressure to be more overtly Hindu. This is primarily in response to the impression that middle and upper class Hindu women are becoming too “Westernized.” However, as the Indian right grows stronger, Phadke et al note that the control of women within minority communities is tightened as they feel marginalized and under threat. When a community feels threatened, this threat often manifests in turn on increased violence of women. In their work on the nature of urban violence, Phadke et al found that the more homogenous the location, regardless of class position, women were more subject to community policing and surveillance (Phadke et al. 2011). Approximately two percent of marriages across India are inter-religious and 90 percent are within the same caste (Das et al. 2010). For a country of 1 billion, this suggests fairly homogenous communities, reinforcing Phadke’s argument of communal surveillance and policing.

In an article published in the *Hindustan Times* an octogenarian from a village within the NCR¹⁵ blamed the gang rape of a young woman by men from the village on the young woman, (who was not from the village). ““In our village, the women cover

women, slum and street dwellers, the violence is doubly experienced by men of the same status as well as those with higher status (Butalia 2012).

¹⁵ Delhi National Capital Region

themselves up...City girls come to lonely stretches around the villages and indulge in obscene acts’,” (Srivastava 2012: 45). What does the village octogenarian mean by “city girls”? He is implying that they are different from village *women*, Srivastava, in his analysis of this quote uses the word custom—that under urbanization, customs, specifically gender customs, are under threat. But who is a city girl? Are all women living in urban areas inherently city girls? Sensitive to the danger of homogenizing urban women into a singular category, Phadke et al (2011) present a series of short vignettes to illustrate the heterogeneity of women who constitute their understanding of “all women.” They distinguish between the city’s “belongers” and “unbelongers” with the former constituting lower caste Hindus, North Easterners, and Muslim women and being subject to further levels of scrutiny and violence due to their caste, religion or geography, while women who are considered privileged “belongers” in the eyes of the state are still subject to gender norms about where women should be and what they should be doing.

This category all women includes women whose fathers, brothers and husbands are the undisputed belongers—middle class, upper-caste, Hindu, young able, heterosexual men. This might seem like an exaggeration since one sees these apparently privileged women in public spaces of the city as Mumbai strives to take its place among the global cities of the world. However, parallel to this visibility of the ‘modern’ Indian woman is an increasingly net-traditionalism that locates women back in the private space of the home, (Phadke et al. 2011: 10).

What unites the majority of women for these authors, is that when it comes to public space, regardless of one’s otherwise privileged position, “all women” are expected to be in public space with a legitimate purpose that is appropriate to the class, caste, and religious position. Those transgressing these social codes—be it a middle class woman deciding to get a chai at a roadside stall or a female pavement dweller entering a public park—are equally illegitimate in their place. Both are at risk of multiple forms of

violence, violence that becomes justified through the argument that the woman was transgressing the appropriateness of her position in society.

Phadke et al. further offer an understanding of the urban Indian context that is useful to this dissertation project—what they call the consumer citizen. “The rhetoric of consumer citizenship has all but drowned out the faint voices that claim citizenship based on inalienable rights to public space in the city,” (2011:14). The consumer citizen for these authors can be understood as the wealthy elite and the middle classes who feel an entitled claim to a “right to” the city. They are the citizens whose neighborhoods are first sprayed with insecticide after monsoon rains, whose trash gets picked up on a regular basis, or are able to avoid being outside when particulate matter levels reach a dangerous level. It is the consumer citizen for whom new urban infrastructure and privatized public spaces are increasingly planned. Consider the argument made against Delhi’s Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) system, in which implementing the system required the removal one vehicle lane to make into a dedicated bus lane. The court case against BRT was justified on the grounds that it is the car owning class that brings the money into the city, therefore, their mobility should not be affected. As if taking cue from the American mantra “the customer is always right”, the consumer citizen in urban India is the one who has rights and can claim rights. In respect to women, it is the middle class female consumer citizen who makes up the bulk of product advertisements (she who washes stains out of her son’s cricket clothes with Surf Excel while making a Red Label chai for auntie next door). As a woman respecting traditional norms around home and family it is she who has the right to participate in modern material consumption practices (so long as

they serve the family), and, in respect to her mobility, she has the right to be protected¹⁶. It is for this woman that contemporary policies such as Pink taxis and preferential parking in the mall exist. Throughout this research project I will revisit the idea of the consumer citizen as a way of framing the positionalities of different women who make up this project and their varying degrees of consumption as indicative of a more subtle statement on rights and class.

Lastly, although this dissertation concentrates on the transportation mobility of women I am deliberately using the word gender to indicate the various ways in which this mobility is socially produced. In this project I rely primarily on Menon's definition of gendering as "the ways in which people are produced as 'proper' men and women through rules and regulations of different sorts; some of which we internalize, some of which have to be violently enforced," (Menon 2012: 2) as a way of linking gender to capitalism, patriarchy, class, and caste. By using the word gender, I am referring to something that is in motion and constantly being produced and reproduced. By titling the dissertation "Navigating gender" my purpose is to look at the dialectic between gendering and mobility, the way in which one's gender will inform both literal and conceptual mobility available to certain women, however, as transportation modes are constantly changing in urban India, in the process of using certain modes, one's understanding of one's proper gender position is subject to change.

¹⁶ Protection in this instance refers to protection against the unbelongers discussed in the previous page, but not protection against gender norms of tradition.

Section Three: Why India?

1.3.1 Research Questions

The empirical questions to be explored in this dissertation stem from practical challenges women face while trying to travel in the city. At the first level, the issue is about user perspectives, of being a woman and using transportation in urban India. At a second level, the issue is about the interface between gender norms and transportation policies, how transportation modes, planners, and government policies facilitate the movement of “respectable” women while upholding gender norms that reinforce a patriarchal social structure manifested in respect to when, where, and why a woman should travel. At the third level, the issue is about conceptual relationships between embodied gender, the urban, and mobility as feelings of personal freedom. Within this third level there is a question of individual agency.

I should add that a woman might, in addition to the challenges faced by gender constructions also face challenges that stem from poverty, being elderly or physically disabled; as well as challenges tied to racism, casteism, sexual preference or identity, and religion. These challenges do not act in isolation but for the purpose of this dissertation the issue under study starts with the issue of being a self-identified woman who has a commute that is tied to monetary based employment.

Research Questions

The primary inquiry starts by identifying different groups of urban women who use transportation on a daily basis and understanding the factors that influence her travel decisions.

1a) What transportation modes are working women choosing?

- What are the reasons for choosing this mode?

2a) How do gender issues and norms factor into transportation decisions, particularly in respect to cost, harassment, and time-poverty?¹⁷

3a) Does one's specific employment sector factor into transportation decisions?

4a) How do transportation decisions reflect embedded positionalities?

5a) Does an inquiry into transportation policies from the supply side reveal dominate gender norms in relation to women's urban mobility?

Aspirational Modes | Aspirational City

What changes would women like to see:

1b) In relation to transportation?

2b) In relation to the city and her place within it?

Conceptual Questions:

1c) Who is allowed to travel and for what reasons?

2c) How do existing transportation modes, infrastructures and policies work for and against the mobility of women?

Question 1c is equally about who or what allows individuals to travel. For example, economic necessity might be what allows certain women to travel in the city. Young women might have to take permission from parents if they wish to travel in the city for recreation, particularly if it is in the evening.

Dissertation Structure

¹⁷ By this I mean to what extent is a woman making a commuting decision based on her constructed identity as a woman? Examples include considering harassment, time of day, or clothing as influencing her travel decisions.

This dissertation is structured into three main chapters, organized chronologically according to year of research and specific geographic location. All three can be considered case studies of a particular population of women, defined primarily by type of employment as well as location of employment or residence. Chapter Two is an investigation of the transportation mobility of women and men in Bangalore's IT sector. Chapter Three considers the impact of the Delhi metro's women only car by looking at the mode choices and aspirational mobilities of different populations of working women in Delhi. Chapter Four is an ethnographic study of women public bus conductors in Bangalore.

1.3.2 Urbanization in India

While the previous literature review focused on providing a methodological understanding of the research questions and subsequent research, in this next section I provide a more general overview of urbanization in India from the standpoint of spatial form, urban planning, and transportation infrastructure.

It is a well enough known trope that the world is rapidly urbanizing and it seems no contemporary article is free of reproducing UN statistics of urban to rural migration, particularly in the context of India and China, the two countries with the largest urban systems in the world. Both countries share certain commonalities; predominately agricultural until recently, have large populations, and equally large bureaucratic machinery. They share characteristics of rapidly expanding, state led, capital infrastructure coupled with large-scale migration. While China's urbanization is characterized by meticulous, prescriptive planning, and forced migration, India's urbanization is notably ad hoc, a democracy with a post colonial hangover, particularly

when it comes to outmoded and out of context concepts of town planning that fail to keep pace with the movement of people, finance, and speculation. Patel (2006) argues that the unevenness of Indian urbanization is a result of the way in which capitalism was brought to India through the British and how it changed in marked phases such as colonization, independence, and post liberalization¹⁸.

After Independence from the British, India inherited a centralized administration system. Much of this system was retained albeit with a strong desire to demonstrate independence, particularly through the rapid growth and industrialization characteristic of the 1950s (Deb 2006). However, the execution of such growth, particularly in the context of city growth and development have been identified as having the following problems:

- (I) the tendency to apply ‘universal’ methods to deal similarly with diverse situations,
- (II) an uncritical fascination with modern western models,¹⁹
- (III) the destruction of traditional indigenous systems, a greater disturbance of the existing environment and its degradation (qtd in Priya 2006).

Further evidence is found in Ghertner’s 2011 work on urban development in Delhi, linking spatial gentrification to a gentrified political system. Bham’s 2016 work on planned development as crises traces how the introduction of public interest litigation (IPL), originally an attempt to give individual’s greater access to the legal system, has worked against the already marginalized (2016). Implicit in all of these examples is the

¹⁸ In the context of migration, the need to consider that it is not only economic factors that influence the movement of people, but geopolitics such as partition. Lastly, urban migration has long been connected to caste and religious networks.

¹⁹ We might find this somewhat ironic when reflecting on the earlier discussion of fear of western modernity in the context of the modern urban woman. Presumably, a model of the modern western city would support the movement of a modern western woman who is often viewed as loose, immoral, and inappropriate.

way in which urbanization is as much a physical as it is mental and social process²⁰, while

Spatial Form

While World Bank data still classifies India as predominately rural in composition (67 percent as of 2016²¹), rural has become a residual category, (Tacoli 2006) meaning it is defined according to the urban. A prominent characteristic of urban India is the peri-urban, the outer areas of the cities that are neither suburbs in the Western sense nor the rural villages they once were. Cities such as Bangalore and Delhi, who, unlike Mumbai, Chennai, and Kolkata, do not face geographic boundary restrictions in the form of water, are relatively free to grow outward with these edges becoming vacant swaths of land with concrete pillars waiting to become gated communities and commercial spaces if speculation serves correctly. But as this process takes years, at times even decades, the physical space remains ambiguous, neither rural nor urban in character. In this way Indian cities are polycentric, that is what constitutes the urban core or center, depends on one's relationship to the city and historical frame of reference.²² But they are also

²⁰ Take for example the following: "Nehruvian socialism and secularism created a national rhetoric of inclusion...economic liberalization, globalization and communalization of the city have made it permissible for people to express their hostility in ways that would have been unacceptable earlier," (Phadke et al. 2011: 13).

²¹ <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.RUR.TOTL.ZS?view=map> [Accessed 17.10.2017]

²² This is particularly true in the case of Bangalore which was used by the British for the training of soldiers and today what was once the British cantonment is now the HAL or Hindustan Aeronautics Limited; as it is considered old, by some this is known as the center of the city, for others it is the main railway station and bus depot which serves as the departure site for travel within and out of state; meanwhile, the city planning and development authority has, in attempt to appeal to smart city rhetoric, in recent years promoted the idea of a CBD, which is not entirely accurate. More discussion on the complexity of a city "center" can be found in: Pani 2010; Nair 2012; Narendra 2016.

polyamorous, taking nearby smaller towns, villages²³ into the urban boundary. Polyamorous also in the sense of being in love with cities that bare little to no resemblance to the population, geography, or government structures and wanting to bring that city, in some representational form to their city.²⁴ The result is more than just a postmodern pastiche of out of place infrastructure but worse, infrastructure that is incomplete, disjointed and has no functionality for the population. The result is simultaneity and plurality but very little connectivity. A half built flyover, a metro system that is 11 years behind schedule, a BMW showroom located on a dirt street. This simultaneity is also found in visual culture in the form of media, advertisements, and everyday life, particularly in the context of women, where billboards featuring white models in bikini tops and Diesel Jeans overshadow government issued notice boards that read: Save the Girl Child! Feticide is illegal!

Simultaneity

The key point I wish to make is that present day urbanization is characterized by simultaneity. That is a coexistence of many urban forms, ideologies, social practices, economies, as well as transportation modes. Simultaneity is particularly evident in proximity of people of different class and caste statuses. No middle or high-income household functions without the close proximity of those employed in service work. Even the new gated communities of the peri urban are not so closed as to deny entrance to those selling fruits, vegetables, and flowers from their carts nor the domestic help coming from nearby informal settlements. “Class populations must also be seen as structurally

²³ The best example of this is Gurgaon, which was once a village area outside of Delhi in the neighboring state and now considered part of the National Capital Region (NCR)

²⁴ The best example of this is Bangalore’s obsession with being identified with Singapore.

highly integrated with one another insofar as the combined actives and performances of the one caste fundamentally affect, and fundamentally affected by on-going social action undertaken within the other,” (Peace, 2006:154).²⁵ The best efforts of the state, political and planning machinery to make legible and aestheticize the urban fails on several levels. The persistence of this necessary high integration²⁶ is coupled with anxiety and fear, reproduced by state, community, and neighborhood level attempts at homogeneity and purity reproduces in the form of violence against the lower classes/castes but also in relation to gender norms, the way in which urbanization and globalization have contributed to plurality of gender norms that both accept and resist women’s mobility.

How this relates to Transportation

Bangalore, located in South India, and Delhi, the capital of India and located in the North, are the two cities in which this research takes place. Both are marked by rapid transformation coupled with a firm timelessness, producing a simultaneity that is as physical as it is social, as fluid as it is rigid. While there are far more dissimilarities than similarities between Delhi and Bangalore, I will focus on similarities as they relate to urban form and transportation—specifically the exponential increase in number of automobiles on the road.

Unlike the port cities of Mumbai, Kolkata, and Chennai which, despite population growth,²⁷ are limited in their outward expansion, Delhi and Bangalore are marked by

²⁵ Evidence of this co-dependence was found in the recent ‘riot’ of domestic workers in Gurgaon. Gurgaon, a satellite city of Delhi sprung up out of agricultural lands in less than a decade and became the center of Delhi’s high tech, new money, high end malls and gated communities. Many of the women from the villages serve as domestic workers.

²⁶ Itself based on hierarchies and inequalities.

²⁷ With the exception of Kolkata.

significant geographic unfurling, growing more outward than upward. Bangalore's official city boundary was expanded continuously in the 2000s eventually becoming 716 sq km while registering a population growth rate of 42 percent between 2001 and 2011²⁸. Delhi's designation as the National Capital Region NCR meant an expansion to 1483 sq kms to include the nearby villages and lands that have now become the gated communities, high end malls, and multinational corporations of Gurgaon and Noida. These official numbers do not account for the organic and informal growth that continues at the fringes, nor the ways in which formal or permitted building is coupled with informal construction, be it makeshift housing for the construction workers, mobile phone stores, or religious infrastructure. It is estimated that 30 percent of Delhi's residents live in residential areas that don't comply with land use demarcations, regardless of income bracket (Bon 2015). Both are also marked by the construction of metro projects, which have often been initiated with great violence against the physical environment and residents. Bangalore, once known as the Garden City, lost 50,000 trees in the late 2000s for the purpose of road widening, followed by a felling of approximately 9,300 trees for the initialization of the metro²⁹ that is more than 10 years behind schedule. Another important similarity is a high proportion of car ownership.

Delhi, a city known for its overt, class-based display of money, has always had more cars than most Indian cities. As the seat of central government, cars have always been given to and associated with the political elite. In the case of Bangalore, the growth of the Information Technology sector, its identity as a global sector with ties to the auto centric US and UK, coupled with higher salaries has allowed a large segment of middle

²⁸ This is considered the highest growth rate of all cities in the country.

²⁹ Bangalore's Environment Support Group (www.esgindia.org) has actively documented and fought against environmental destruction occurring in Bangalore for over two decades.

class citizens the possibility of car ownership. This rise in motorized vehicles is both a result of and has contributed to neglect in public bus infrastructure, which has been the primary source of public transportation in both cities until very recently. Both city bus corporations have explored degrees of privatization (Korattyswaropam 2010). In their 2007 study, Badami and Haider found that overcrowding and unreliable service were key problems faced by bus users in Delhi with a similar claim being made in Bangalore (DULT 2011).

Automobility and speed

To say that people across India are migrating to cities for improved access to employment does not account for the distance and time it takes to travel to from place of residence to place of employment. This is particularly problematic for the urban poor who have been forcibly relocated to the urban periphery in the name of slum clearance and redevelopment (e.g. Bham 2016).³⁰ Two feet are not the same as two wheels, which are not the same as two motorized wheels (e.g. two-wheeler, scooter, motorcycle) and those two wheels are certainly not the same as four motorized wheels (e.g. car), and once again we find that it is a certain consumer class that is the primary beneficiary of urban amenities due to their ability to access these services more quickly and comfortably than the urban poor's work on car use and ownership in Brazil finds those commuting by car paying proportionally less of their total household budget on transportation than the urban poor (Vasconcellos 1997; 2001). Many (Harvey 1989, Jameson 1990, Virilio 2006, Illich 1974) have argued that speed is a, if not the defining feature of the late 20th, early 21st

³⁰ In Bangalore, the Ejipura/Koramangala slum demolition which occurred in January 2013 is one important example.

century. Speed of information, speed of production, technology; speed of movement and travel. In the rapidly urbanizing, sprawling city, access to speed translates into access to opportunities and resources.

Although the car is not the predominate mode of transportation in urban India, with current levels of car ownership and use in urban areas remaining proportionally lower than most of the West, the rate of vehicle use, and the number of vehicles on the streets has reached crises levels. In Bangalore, an estimated one million new cars are added to the roads every year [RTO interview, Kormanagala 06. 2016]. The car as both a utility and a status symbol is not a new phenomenon, particularly for a society in which the urban form was not predicated on the private vehicle. Until India's liberalization of the economy in the 1990s, a car, of Indian make, was only used by the very elite.³¹ Low and Banerjee-Guha find fault with town planners and politicians dizzy with the "euphoria of globalization" and the subsequent emphasis on privatization.

City planners learn about 'best practice' in their field, and the 'best practice' is mostly defined in terms of the practice of the cities of the economically developed world. Much of the transport policy...being implemented...has come out of the USA of the 1950s, premised on the assumption that the most advanced and best mode of transport is the private vehicle," (Low and Banerjee-Guha 2003: 5).

The current road building paradigm in most Indian cities is "associated with the economic benefits allegedly associated with investments in roads—public transport funding is normally described as 'expenditure' while funding for roads is describes as 'investment' (Vigar 2002: 165)

³¹ After independence, growth in manufacturing industries was encouraged and physically located in central areas of the cities. This was particularly the case in Mumbai, a dense port city. By the era of liberalization (1990s) poor air quality, which was attributed to heavy industries in the urban core, became one of several reasons for shifting manufacturing elsewhere. However, air quality did not improve and studies done in Mumbai during the same decade now found that 78 percent of air pollution was from two wheelers and 11 percent from cars in Mumbai (Low and Banerjee-Guha 2003).

In their recent report, the Center for Study of Science Technology and Policy (CSTEP) found that while India's 2011 population had increased 1.8 times from what it was in 1981 (2.4 times for the urban population), the number of registered³² motor vehicles increased 26 times during the same time period. A focus on Bangalore shows a higher than average growth in respect to cars (CSTEP 2015). Low and Banerjee-Guha found that as early as 2003 private vehicle ownership was growing at 10 and 15 percent per annum (Low and Banerjee-Guha 2003). There are several factors motivating the increased rates of car ownership, higher incomes among the middle class coupled with more 'common man car models' (Banerjee-Guha 2003) such as Marutis and the Tata Nano. Meghna Verma's 2015 study on growing car ownership in India finds a strong correlation (-0.9) between a drop in interest rates and increase in car sales over the same period of time. In 2001 the borrowing rate for a car loan was 17 percent while in 2010 it was 11 percent. By 2017 the borrowing rate is as low as 4 percent. The survey executed by Verma and included in the paper found that only 39 percent of respondents (N=226)³³ would have bought a car if interest rates had been higher. Additional findings from the survey were that the majority (72 percent) thought the car to be the safest and easiest form of transportation and that owning a car was a symbol of doing well in life (61 percent).

Although the practice of dowry is illegal, anecdotal evidence from interviews with the Regional Transport Offices (RTO), women groups, and conversations broadly all mention the car as a popular wedding gift, a symbol of entrance into "middle-classness".

³² The word registered should be emphasized, Indian roads are notoriously full of drivers without licenses and vehicles without registration, though this is far more common among two wheelers.

³³ Concern for survey reliability is strong, as the paper does not indicate where, how or to whom this survey was administered.

Eduardo Vasconcellos's research on car ownership in Sao Paulo suggests a similar finding linking efficiency, speed, and comfort as not only utility functions of a car, but values inherent to the middle and upper class.

Demand is socially determined in the sense of being related to how social groups and classes—especially the middle class—see and interpret the process of economic modernization in contemporary capitalist societies. In this respect, the automobile is perceived by the middle classes as essential to perform their desired daily activities, that is, to ensure their social reproduction (Vasconcellos 1997: 245).

However, in somewhat of a counterpoint to this finding, a recent paper on women's use of transportation in Rajkot, a mid-sized Indian city used a representative sample of the city's population³⁴ and found that even as household incomes increase, women's mobility patterns, trip lengths, and modes, do not change significantly (Mahadevia and Advani 2016). Sangar (1995) argues that the car is both a means and a place. Her phrase "driving as consent" in the context of rape law in the US, is just one of many reminders that cars have historically been positioned as masculine in association. Although one might observe increased ambiguity in the marketing of cars in order to appeal to the "family man", soccer mom, or urban millennial, cars continue to be marked as symbols of freedom, spontaneity, and independence but also reliability, safety, comfort, and family utility. The symbol depends on the target consumer. In urban India a plurality of transportation modes exist and reflects a plurality of social messages and norms around who uses what.

³⁴ According to the author's, 10 percent of the city's household's were surveyed.

Chapter Two:

Moving the Bangalore Knowledge Worker: Gender and Transportation in Bangalore's IT Sector

2.1.1 Introduction: The Bangalore Context

“The ethos of mobility and achievement in India’s IT industry forms the basis of a class culture that reshapes meanings of Indianness to fit the conditions of globalization,”(Radhakrishnan 2011: 5).

For most of the western world, the city of Bangalore/Bengaluru³⁵ is synonymous with Information Technology (IT), representing a geo-temporal moment marking India’s transition from being a recipient of to active player in contemporary socio-economic, political, and cultural globalizations. By the mid 2000’s, Bangalore’s profound influx of more than 1.5 million knowledge workers (Kalpana 2010) galvanized responses ranging from books of inspiration, development, and interconnectedness (Thomas Friedman *The World is Flat* 2005; Nandan Nilekani *Imagining India* 2008) to sitcoms such as *Outsourced* (2010-2011), which played upon western fears and stereotypes that American jobs had gone to India literally overnight. Karnataka’s then Chief Minister, taking a cue from the India Shining³⁶ campaign, declared Bangalore to be the Singapore of India, an analogy suggesting the entire city had become as orderly and manicured as the islands of gated IT campuses floating just outside the city’s official boundary. There is a certain truth to these plural narratives, which all broadly speak of an overall push toward neoliberalism, urban corporate governance, and world city imaginary (Nair 2000; Idiculla 2015; 2016), though none seem to grasp or reflect how these changes were and continue to be experienced in the daily life of residents. Nor particularly how these changes impact

³⁵ Bangalore, the colonial name given to the city by the British, officially changed to Bengaluru, the native Kannada name, in 2014. As this research was conducted in 2013 for the most part the name Bangalore will be used, unless explicitly stated as Bengaluru by a research participant or written in a document.

³⁶ “India Shining” was a phrase coined in 2000 by India’s right wing Hindu party, BJP to market an overall sense of economic positivity and growth in the country.

social relations and gender norms, or how such changes are literally navigated in respect to transportation mobility.

This interplay between the built environment, a global economic industry, and cultural understandings of “Indianness” makes Bangalore an appropriate place to start an investigation into how transportation mode choices reveal fluctuating norms of when, where and why women travel. If and how pervasive anxieties about women on the move and on their own shape and are reshaped by women’s daily use of transportation. Empirically, the first part of this doctoral research focused on literal mobility—that is the commute to and from work of IT employees. The IT sector has transportation policies and modes that are unique to IT employees, the most well known being company buses, a mode that is not unique to Bangalore, but found in Silicon Valley, California, made famous by the Google Bus protests of 2013 and 2014. Unique to Bangalore’s IT sector however are transportation policies specific to women employees—such as night taxi services, which drop a woman directly to her home as a safety precaution that speaks to the accepted reality of gender-based violence.

The goal of this research was to understand if being a “knowledge worker” homogenizes transportation decisions of men and women through an emphasis on privilege, difference, and, to a certain extent, protection, from the rest of the city (i.e. non-knowledge workers). If existing literature tells us that factors such as cost, time poverty, and concern for gender based harassment affect women’s travel, did the company policies around women’s transportation “correct” these biases so that transportation mobility was the same for both men and women? The grounding questions explored in this case study include:

- 1) What are the transportation mode choices of women and men in the IT sector?
- 2) How are these choices determined?
- 3) Do mode choices of women in the IT sector reflect findings from existing literature on women and transportation, that is cost, security, and time poverty as the dominate factors determining women's mode choices?

or

- 4) Do mode choices reflect a homogenous user group, one associated with the privilege of the tech industry?
- 5) How and why do firms justify transportation privileges for their employees?

This particular research entailed looking at differences 1) between men and women within the IT sector as well as differences between women in the IT sector and 2) between IT sector workers and the general population of the city; that is, if, how, and why, these men and women felt different from the general population and how difference was reinforced through the use of transportation modes that were not available to the general public. The second strand of research was to understand the supply side, or logics behind the transportation decisions made by IT company heads. Why certain policies and modal “interventions” unique to the IT sector were developed, if and how they moved, removed, or reinforced norms around when, where, and why women should be in public, using transportation.

In this chapter I begin with an overview of literature on the rise of the Information Technology sector in Bangalore and its interface with the growth and development of the physical city. I then transition to review literature on women in the IT sector, picking up on earlier themes regarding women and employment and link this to transportation modes and policies within the IT sector. After presenting the research methodology, descriptive

survey statistics are presented followed by an analysis of various interviews, relating these conversations back to the initial research questions.

2.1.2 Spatial growth of the city

For many outside India—even those living in the city itself—Bangalore’s rise to tech stardom came out of nowhere. Yet years before women and men would traverse the ever expanding city in order to reach the isolated pockets of gated “modernity”, the capital of Karnataka was quietly transitioning from a sleepy hamlet, colloquially referred to as “pensioners paradise” into India’s public sector powerhouse. Nair’s (2005) chronicle of Bangalore in the 20th century details the diversity of professions and classes that moved to Bangalore in the early years of independence. First the city became home to textile³⁷ production, providing blue-collar employment³⁸ for a large number of Kannadigas³⁹. With the rise of public sector units, a part of the post independence, state led industrialization came an educated class of engineers who would eventually help start the IT workforce. Throughout the 20th century, the city was home to army and military personnel⁴⁰, first, those of the British and then, the Indian Army. Jawaharlal Nehru, India’s first Prime Minister, the proponent of the modern democratic nation heralded

³⁷ Kalpana (2010) notes that this post independence focus on textile production was possible because of an early 20th century emphasis on wool, cotton and silk textile on the east side of the city and brick and tile factors on the western side. Mill workers were typically considered part of the “laboring poor”. Even today textile and garment factories are present in Bangalore, though far few in number and more dispersed in the outer fringes of the city.

³⁸ Blue collar is not an entirely appropriate term to use in this context as employment also has ties to caste status. In this case, textile factory work is associated with those having government school education of 7th standard or less.

³⁹ Name for people from the state of Karnataka.

⁴⁰ Unlike Calcutta, Madras, or Bombay, Bangalore was not an economic hub of the British. Appreciative of the cooler weather, the British used Bangalore as a cantonment. After Independence, the state capital shifted from Mysore (capital of Karnataka from 1399 to 1947) to Bangalore thus bringing state administration into the city. The cantonment became government land and was developed for the Indian army and military.

Bangalore's detachment to colonial trade⁴¹ as the perfect representation of a new city for a new nation. In a 1962 speech given to Bangalore's Municipal Corporation, Nehru stated: "Bangalore, as I said, more than any other of the great cities of India, is a picture of India of the future...your great city represents the future we are moulding⁴²," (qtd in Nair 2005: 220).

Nehru's speech was part of the 1960s National Government agenda to develop Bangalore's manufacturing sectors such as Indian Telephone Industries, electrical machinery, and other heavy industries (Nair 2005). Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) was established, training pilots and producing aeronautic equipment, which facilitated a migration of educated engineers to Bangalore. English was readily spoken among this particular economic class as most South Indian states had historically resisted the nationalization and imposition of the Hindi language. Emphasis among the educated classes was on learning English as a second language⁴³,

Public Sector Units (PSU) were concentrated in the city "center".⁴⁴ Government housing was built near these manufacturing areas and company buses were provided to

⁴¹ Though not necessarily devoid of colonial power; Bangalore was where much of the British army trained due to its good climate.

⁴² Bengaluru as a composite of agricultural settlements existed before the founding of the medieval city in 1537 (Nagendra 2016) and continued developing as spatially fragmented localities throughout British rule and, to a certain extent in the decades immediately after Independence. Bangalore City Corporation was formed in 1949 (Nagendra 2016); included in this geographic boundary was the cantonment area, HAL, the two academic institutions (Bangalore University and Indian Institute of Technology), the old pete/market area (historically the area reserved for the "indigenous" population during the British era). To a certain extent these were all fairly autonomous areas; different locations for different populations. Despite then Prime Minister Nehru's instance on the creation of a master plan that could imagine and plan for the city's development for the next 30 years, there was little effort to create symbiosis between land use, industry sectors, and transportation. In addition to public sector units at this time, industrial townships for industries such as Soap Factory Layout, Central Silk Board, and Tin Factory were established in peripheral areas, connected to place of employment but not necessarily an urban center (Nagendra 2016). All of these former industrial townships are now within the city boundary.

⁴³ A detail that would eventually give India an upper hand against China as the leader of software outsources (while China remains dominant in the manufacturing of hardware).

⁴⁴ Bangalore is polycentric, a point I will revisit. However, many Bangalorian's consider MG Road and the City Railway station to be central Bangalore.

transport workers to and from their place of employment (Sabapathy et al., 2012). The early existence of sector-based provided transportation in Bangalore is a historical detail illustrating that company-based transportation was already part of Bangalore's transportation landscape and not a byproduct of the IT sector. I would argue that the proliferation and sustained use of company-based transportation, coupled town planning principles of "clustering" industries together and providing housing colonies for employees, illustrates that Bangalore in the early years of independence, was not imagined as a future mega city, or unified urban environment. This is evident if we consider that the city did not have its own transportation corporation until 1997, a point that will be revisited later.

By 1991, the year India's economy was officially opened to the world⁴⁵; the five largest public sector units employed over 81,000 individuals (Kalpana 2010). By this time however, technology was already eclipsing the influence of PSUs. The technology boom began in the mid 1980s, even prior to the country's economic liberalization (Nagendra 2016),⁴⁶ the first Software Technology Park scheme with special economic zoning and permissions was started in 1985. By the mid 90s, Texas Instruments set up in Bangalore (Kalpana 2010).

During the post reform urban development strategies of the 1990s, Bangalore was the recipient of Central Government funds, the 1993 Mega City Programme (MCP). The MCP was designed to allocate funds to all Tier 1 cities⁴⁷, which Bangalore was not a part

⁴⁵ India was forced to open its economy in 1991 after a balance of payment crises. Many see this as the end of India's 'pink' era, the color pink indicating India's strong ties with Russia and socialism.

⁴⁶ Liberalization has generally reduced the employment intensity and availability in extractive and manufacturing sectors (Kidwai 2006) and somewhat related, the organization of labor (i.e. Unions) have declined (Kidwai 2006). These factors have furthered polarized an already fragmented city and is reflected in the transportation modes available to different population segments.

⁴⁷ Until 2007 Bombay, Delhi, Calcutta, and Madras were considered the 1st Tier cities due to their size.

of. However, instead of covering Delhi⁴⁸, Hyderabad and Bangalore were added to the Programme due to their population projections, with funds to be used toward infrastructure projects. The projections were correct and in 2007 Bangalore was given Tier 1 status, though one might say the government was, at this time, more than 10 years too late. Between 1941 and 2001, Bangalore's population went from roughly 411,000 to 6 million. Growth had outpaced planning, particularly in respect to transportation. As early as 2005 a World Bank report described Bangalore as "a city of 60,000 unfilled potholes...where software workers morning commute to work can take up to two hours," (World Bank 2005: 1).⁴⁹

As of 2016, Bangalore's population stands at 10 million. In addition to population, the city's boundary continues to expand; from 66 square kilometers to 531 square kilometers in the mid 2000s (Nair 2005) and again to 716 km in 2007 (Census 2011). According to Kalpana (2010), the textile sector remains the largest formal sector in respect to employment; however the textile worker is in a very different socio-economic, class, caste, and consumer position than the knowledge worker. The textile worker, while profoundly impacted by the city's course of urban development, the prioritization of certain infrastructure projects over others—for example, signal free toll roads over investment in public buses—is one of many indications that it is the knowledge worker and IT sector that continues to dominant city politics, investment, and development.

⁴⁸ Delhi, as the capital city was to be covered through a separate program.

⁴⁹ Note this is not the opinion of the authors of the report, but a paraphrased description taken from the financial press. However, it is curious that, in this report, the emphasis is on software workers. Presumably, other workers, particularly the service workers of Electronics City would also have commutes equally as long. The decision to mention software workers perhaps suggests their importance to and in the city.

How did IT shape the city?

When several engineers and businessmen proposed to city politicians in the early 1990s that Bangalore was well poised to house an IT revolution, a conscious decision was made by all parties that the sector should locate in the south, in an area of land that was, at the time, outside the city boundary. Land was purchased from the government on a 99 year lease for the creation of Electronic City. In several recountings of the city's IT story (Nair 2006; Pani 2010; Stallmeyer 2011) it is mentioned that the inspiration was none other than California's Silicon Valley, campus style environment. There wasn't enough land in more central parts of the city to create an industry that was meant to be worlds away from the growing chaos of the city. In his memoir, *Imagining India*, former CEO and founder of Infosys⁵⁰ writes about the company's decision to move to Bangalore and why information technology allowed for certain freedoms that more traditional government sectors did not have, it allowed a total control of the environment (Reilly et al 2009) and, as one of the first major private sector developments, it allowed more control over the economic structure and workplace environment.

Shortages in infrastructure did not affect us, as our markets were international, and all we needed to do business was a wire and some computers...Since the government did not recognize us as a 'conventional' business for a long time, their regulations did not hamper us, and we worked outside the controls that stifled companies in manufacturing and agriculture. We did not need the raw material—iron or coal, but for instance—that required Indian firms to interface with the state-run companies that controlled these resources, (Nilekani 2008: 5).

Presumably unburdened by the need for urban infrastructure, companies settled into the 462 acres of Electronics City, an area approximately 18 kilometers from the City Railway

⁵⁰ One of the first, and most successful IT companies in India.

station⁵¹. A decision described as both a necessity—there was not enough space in the city center—and a desire, the desire to create a new aesthetic and worldliness. As one HR manager explained:

Whenever clients come here, they walk in, they walk through this chaos; [and] they are confused because they see...cattle on the road. You see people crossing the road; you see the buses going helter-skelter, you see the road is crowded, you see the dirt on the road, and you are confused...and they come here, and suddenly they see order, they see beauty and they see aesthetics, they see a lot of well-dressed people moving about (qtd. in Stallmeyer 2011: 60).

Total control over the environment and no control on how to get workers there

IT companies wanted to create a place that, upon entering, felt worlds away from the rest of Bangalore; at the time of the tech boom Electronics City really was worlds away from the city; there was one arterial road and no bus network. Reilly⁵² et al attribute the afterthought of transportation for employees as an inherent confidence of the sector, manifested in this instance the ability to “afford a fleet of private transit buses for their more highly skilled employees,” (Reilly et al. 2009: 26). During the initial growth of the sector, the majority of the workforce was concentrated in the well-developed residential areas of central, north or eastern areas of Bangalore.⁵³ Transportation was provided for by the company bus and, in more recent years, a transition to the private vehicle.

⁵¹ www.electronic-city.in

⁵² Reilly et al.’s study is a comparison of the IT sector in the context of both Bangalore and Silicon Valley. While theirs is footloose, or perhaps we can say footless (i.e. virtual) nature of the IT sector, both Silicon Valley and Electronic City utilize the very much rooted campus approach for operations. Furthermore, both Silicon Valley and Electronic City share the characteristic of having located outside the city proper (San Francisco in the case of Silicon Valley) in order to realize this campus style architecture.

⁵³ Relocating to be closer to work would not have been a feasible option as the areas surrounding Electronic City was the peri-urban hinterland of villages in transition and if it correct that most of the original supply of workers were from the city, then other commitments would have prevented them from shifting.

However, neither company bus nor private car alleviates the problem of poor road infrastructure⁵⁴, which is most acutely felt by the urban poor who, in addition to poor roads, must grapple with poor public transportation. During peak hours of approximately 8:30-10 am and 5-8:30pm the speed at which non-two wheeler vehicles travel averages between four and five kilometers per hour according to Pawan Mulukutla of WRI (Pandey 2016). The same article finds that traffic costs the city about \$950 million USD a year and the average commuter is likely to spend 240 hours stuck in gridlock traffic, annually (Pandey 2016). Sabapathy et al. (2012) found that the IT economy had an impact on the commutes of the entire city, though not everyone benefits equally.

The state government of Karnataka...has been actively pursuing policies to attract further foreign investment in the IT sector including investments that would provide better accessibility and infrastructure for this sector. However, the rest of the city has received inadequate attention. This has exacerbated spatial and infrastructure inequalities. This research provides evidence that the transportation in work travel patterns in the globalizing city of Bangalore have resulted in greater inequalities, (Sabathy et al. 2011: 165).

Bangalore's IT sector sits within a larger local economy that is paid less (Sabapathy et al. 2011: Upadhyaya 2009) and excluded from several privileges associated with being a knowledge worker in the global economy. While these particular HR managers see the firm's location away from the chaos of the city as good, it is this location that contributes to the disjointed, polarized structuring of the city, and global cities more generally (Sabathy et al, 2011). During Radhakrishnan's early stages of field research in Bangalore, she recounts her surprise upon finding the office of her interviewee:

Whitfield's expanses of empty lots slowly give way to the futuristic office buildings of multinational tech firms. Stretches of the road are paved, while most

⁵⁴ In the aftermath of liberalization, the increase in capital raised by the private sector has not translated into a proportional increase in spending for city infrastructure (Kidwai 2006), even though though the former is perhaps the biggest strain on city infrastructure.

are not...There is barely a dirty road leading up to the door of the office...Once inside, I realize that the building is only one part of a huge, self-contained campus that consists of immaculate and contemporary common areas surrounded by carefully landscaped outdoor areas that have been invisible in the dust at the main gate (Radhakrishnan 2011: 61).

The juxtapositions between the campus and the immediate surroundings reminds us of the simultaneity of urbanization in which several times and spaces are experienced in a single locality (for examples in the Bangalore context see: Solomon 2000; Goldman 2010; Idiculla 2016; Purushothaman 2016), occurring at both a visceral level and played out in the context of social relations (Upadhy 2009; Radhiakrishnan 2011; Stallmeyer 2011; D'Mello and Sahay 2007).



Figure 1: Upcoming development adjacent to a major IT firm on Sarjapur Road, Bangalore

The early⁵⁵ IT campuses of Bangalore were directly inspired by the Silicon Valley, especially as several of the founders had lived and worked in the original tech valley. While Silicon Valley has been criticized for its lack of “good” design (Rogers 2017; Stallmeyer 2011), iconic physical structures of glass are meant to reiterate the so-called organizational collaboration and transparency of the sector. Yet, in the context of Bangalore, these futuristic structures tower above manicured palm trees, high walls, and plethora of security at every entrance, yet remain invisible to the outer world thus conveying the opposite: fortress, hierarchy and privilege. Their great distances from the central city further reinforce this.

Radhakrishnan’s observation and Stallmeyer’s quote from HR allude to several simultaneities that play out in the context of attitudes toward and movement through a polarized city. What happens when we move this polarization to the context of gender norms and transportation modes? How does the influence of the modern tech office, global workforce, and “flattening” of office hierarchy play out in respect to women employees? In what way might the chaotic simultaneity of physical development, economies, and cultures, also translate in the experience of gender and changing norms of where women should be and what they should be doing? How is the simultaneity connected to and moved by transportation mobility?

Company bus and tech privilege

In her work on the politics of the Google Bus, De Kosnik (2014) unpacks the defining features of “tech privilege”, a term associated with knowledge professionals working in

⁵⁵ As IT campuses continue to proliferate in the city, there is a marked transition from the original IT campuses which emphasized a total landscape, much more similar to Silicon Valley to the new “parks” which give little attention to the environment beyond a nod to glass architecture.

Silicon Valley. In the US, tech privilege refers to the industry's dominance of white men, the power and biases that come with this. De Kosnik expands this definition to include “a set of perceptions that elevates things and people associated with the tech industry—including its products, process and employees—above all other sectors of work and life, and above all spaces and populations not directly affiliated with tech,”(2014: 101). Bangalore's tech sector may be homogeneous in respect to education levels and middle classness, and more homogeneous than the public sector, whose affirmative action policies increase representation of underrepresented groups and castes but the proportion of women in the sector suggests certainly more gender diversity than it's US counterpart (for a good discussion of this see Chandra 2014).

So, in respect to the understanding of tech privilege in the western context, Bangalore's tech sector appears to be overall more inclusive and heterogeneous. However, if we consider tech privilege as the elevation of people and things associated with the industry, then tech privilege is clearly evident in Bangalore. Furthermore, as Wilson (2014) believes, tech privilege is a cognitive privilege that extends the principle workings of the tech sector—namely smoothness—into a totalizing view of how the world should operate. With this in mind, tech privilege holds in relation to the spatial reconfiguring of the city, in respect to a socio-economic catering to the consumption patterns of firms and employees within the sector. Moreover, tech privilege is seen in the infrastructure development project of the political class, the rise of gated communities along new toll roads, the proliferation of malls with global name brands.

2.1.3 IT and Gender

Migration

Those coming to work in the IT (also referred to as ICT or Information Communication Technologies) sector are generally distinguished from those working in BPO or Business Process Outsourcing. The former, part of a highly educated class, historically came from families in which the father likely worked in middle to high-ranking government/public sector unit positions. In this sense, Radhakrishnan (2011) argues, this population was already part of the middle class. So what became known as India's "new" middle class is nothing new in the sense of class position, rather, it is the choice of the private over public sector that is new. The private sector offers higher incomes while the post liberalized economy gives access to foreign brand goods, more opportunities to work "off shore", and to economic, social, and cultural cosmopolitanism. BPO employees, though affiliated with the ICT sector, are most likely not part of this old middle class, having neither the education nor the father in a government job, both of which also indicate a lower caste position. Rather, the BPO employee of the mid 2000s tended to be a first generation, English-medium educated member of the family, often coming from Bangalore or other parts of Karnataka; it is the mastery of English and engineering that permits entry into the lower rungs of the knowledge economy. Another sector that is an indirect product of the IT sector is the rise of the service sector⁵⁶, those who've migrated to serve in the growing service sector (restaurant, hotel, beauty) that caters to a consumer citizen, but cannot afford to participate as one.

Women in the IT economy

⁵⁶ I could also make the claim for the real estate sector and subsequent demand for construction labor, which, during the first wave of growth were in state migrants from poorer, rural areas, and now largely from the north.

In the Indian context, the IT sector represents one of the first large scale private employment sectors that is deemed a “respectable” career choice for educated women. An urban sector by default, India’s National Association of Software and Services Companies (NASCCOM), a non-profit trade company associated with the IT-BPO sector, attributed the overall increase of working women in urban India to the IT-BPO sector alone (NASCCOM 2009). It is perceived to be not just gender neutral but gender inclusive and between 2006 and 2008, the number of women in India’s IT-BPO⁵⁷ sector increased by 60 percent and at the time of their survey, made up 40 percent of the total workforce. Although one finds fewer women in executive roles, women remain more prevalent and more integrated throughout this sector than more traditional sectors such as manufacturing and the public sector. This same report by NASCCOM found that the transportation policies of companies were particularly instrumental in attracting and retaining female employees. When asked what women like best about these jobs, the response is often ‘work environment’ (Singh and Pandey, 2005; D’Mello and Sahay, 2007). Work environment in this case refers to everything from the modern interiors of the office building to company ‘perks’ such as subsidized company cafeterias, game rooms, the landscape architecture of the campus environment, and company policies such as paid maternity leave⁵⁸ and secure transportation for women employees.

Rahdakrishnan’s extensive qualitative research on women in the IT sector found that men and women within and outside the sector believe it is a “safe and appropriate”

⁵⁷ If we distinguish between IT and BPO (call work), it can be found that the latter has a higher percent of women employees than the IT sector, skewing the NASCCOM finding to a slightly higher percent. However, India’s IT sector in proportion to other IT sectors in West, such as the US, one finds a higher percent of women, a finding that has been attributed to the ‘acceptability’ of STEM careers for women in India

⁵⁸ Neither in existing literature nor in my work did I come across women who took advantage of crèche facilities, despite their availability.

profession for women. The insularity of the work, particularly in relation to the IT campus infrastructure discussed in the previous section, reiterated this safeness. This was coupled with the perception among educated, middle class women that science related professions were most appropriate for them with one of the primary reasons being the isolated working conditions such work entails (Radhakrishnan 2011). Isolation in the IT sector is isolation from the rest of the physical city but also isolation in the sense that most of the work entails sitting at an isolated computer and desk space.

This notion of middle class respectability is prevalent in the work of Phadke et al who argue that the middle class woman is to be “the bearer of respectability—of all moral and cultural values that define the society,”(2011: 23) and in India, this respectability is “fundamentally defined by the division between public and private spaces,”(2011: 24). The IT job offers a high degree of respectability given the isolated, secure campus, the company bus and night taxis that take her from this gated workplace directly to the private space of her home. For Radhakrishnan, because this “global work” is isolated physically from the non-middle class urban denizen, it becomes viewed as a private, respectable space and thus appropriate for respectable people. The previous generation of Indian middle-class women, if they worked, was in government, like their husbands, but typically choosing to work for the state banks as secretaries or accountants with fixed 9 to 5 schedules. At this time, the private sector demanded daily travel and client interactions that made it difficult for women to enter or be accepted (Radhakrishnan 2011). In contrast to the previous generation, many women in IT begin working prior to marriage, immediately after completing a BA, demonstrating a desire to achieve financial and personal independence and freedom. Similar to the previous

generation however, norms around family and child raising duties continue to fall on women, and most do not stay in the field for a long period of time. “A large proportion of women...work for a few years, get married through the conventional arranged-marriage system, and then leave their jobs altogether,” (Radhakrishnan 2011: 12). In her sample of 60 women, only three had stayed in the industry more than five years.

Company policies such as strict anti-harassment rules, comprehensive maternity leave, childcare (*crèche*), and medical clinics on campus are some of the many examples of company initiatives to attract “respectable” women to this sector (and retain their respectability). However, many women do not stay in the workforce long enough to take advantage of these initiatives, suggesting strong norms around the care giving responsibilities of women after marriage, suggesting downward mobility of women in respect to incomes and workplace responsibilities even in the high achieving IT sector. There is a perception that women are not career ambitious though upper management has found that the women who do return to work after having children tend to stay with that particular company for many years. This is in contrast to male employees who tend to change jobs, and often cities, every few years, thus remaining both mobile and competitive. Women who stay after marriage and/or giving birth tend not to seek career advances or salary increases, but demand regularity to their schedule. Going “offshore”, the term used to describe going abroad to work with a client, is almost inevitable in this line of work; women’s reluctance to do this once they have children again keeps them from moving up within the company. While there are certainly exceptions to these generalizations, many of which I observed during my research, there is an observable

pattern in which companies are willing to invest in women for reasons that are tied to assumptions around women as obedient, hard working, and loyal to a company.

Themes

The themes of “appropriateness” and “background” from Radhakrishnan’s 2011 study on women in the IT sector have been adapted and tested in the context of this project. Appropriateness was addressed in the previous section in the context of IT and gender so I will focus on why the concept of background is important to the methods and research methodology. Background can be considered the embedded ‘noise’ in quantitative research. For Radhakrishnan, background represents something that is both concrete and fluid in the understanding of one’s positionality in, for the purpose of this research, the home, the office, and city. As I found in this research, background can be anything from class, caste, the state one is from, educational attainment, socio-cultural values, and a limitless number of known unknowns.

In the parlance of middle-class India, the term ‘background’ comes up in conversation almost daily. In professional contexts, a question about one’s background can be a question about educational achievement. In a family conversation about a prospective bride, a question about background refers to a combination of class and caste position...IT professionals almost always come from a certain background—an overwhelmingly homogenous, elite background that nonetheless makes a compelling claim to universality and relativity...‘Background’ refers not only to overt class markers, but also to the gendered character of the domestic sphere, which is implicitly linked to class standing. Good family backgrounds are composed of heterosexual families in which middle-class women make appropriate decisions for their husbands and children (Radhakrishnan 2011: 7-11)

As questions of class and particularly caste positions can be a sensitive subject and one that was never directly acknowledged by the men and women I interviewed, these

embedded aspects of gender identity, particularly how it relates to concern for one's safety had to be read into and analyzed in respect to existing literature, triangulation, and ethnographic observation.

Transportation in the IT sector

One example of a sector based transportation policy is the guaranteed ride home policy whereby any IT or BPO female employee working past p.m. is eligible for free door-to-door transportation. Broadly, guaranteed ride home transportation for women is usually a taxi/cab or small mini bus that is shared by other women employees. In addition to the driver, a security personnel sits in the front seat to ensure that employees reach their residence safely⁵⁹. Monitoring techniques include strict time keeping of cab departures, text messaging when the woman arrives, and kilometer counting of the taxi to ensure no one takes advantage of the system. This policy emerges in response to a much earlier national law. The 1948 Factories Act⁶⁰ laid out several provisions to protect workers in general and women in particular.⁶¹ Section 66 was designed to ensure that women only worked between the hours of 6am and 7p.m.⁶² Like many gender-based policies (both

⁵⁹ Some firms extend these taxi services to men who work late as well, on the grounds of insufficient public transportation at night, though without the same extent of security procedures.

⁶⁰ Section 66: "(b) no woman shall be required or allowed to work in any factory except between the hours 6 A.M. and 7 P.M. Provided that the State Government may, by notification in the Official Gazette, in respect of any factory or group or class or description of factories, vary the limits laid down in clause (b), but so that no such variation shall authorise the employment of any woman between the hours of 10 P.M. and 5 A.M...."

⁶¹ The Factories Act in the context of women's labor is also a good example of the intimacy of the previously discussed themes. While provisions such as Section 66 were meant to protect women from dangerous conditions though many women countered this argument by saying they were being denied employment.

⁶² An interesting detail of Section 66: "The State Government may make rules providing for the exemption from the restrictions set out in sub-section (b), to such extent and subject to such conditions as it may prescribe, of women working in fish-curing or fish-canning factories, where the employment of women beyond the hours specified in the said restrictions, is necessary to prevent damage to, or deterioration in any raw material."

past and present), this was done to protect women from vulnerability both in the context of traveling to and from work as well as within the workplace—with the assumption that work that took place at night was dangerous. However, it can be argued that policies regarding the time of day that women can work reinforce gender norms around caregiving while further limiting employment options for women.

In particular the rise of the BPO call center, with its dependency on daily correspondence with North America, Europe, and Australia, necessitated night shift work. Women, with their perceived friendly nature and docile attitude, were deemed particularly suitable for night shift call center/BPO work⁶³. It became necessary to amend the Factory Act⁶⁴ while still ensuring that social norms around the IT sector remain “safe” and “respectable.” Consider the following statement issued from the Delhi government:

In establishments like call centers which have been granted exemptions for timing in working hours for women, the employers are bound to provide adequate transport facilities during odd hours and ensure the security of women employees in their premises. Instructions have been issued to the Deputy Labour Commissioner to periodically cross-check the IT shops which have been granted exemption from timing or working hours of women for strict compliance of the condition on which the exemption has been granted,”(Delhi Government 2013: 15).

Given norms around women’s safety and care giving duties in India broadly, I would argue that the IT sector’s ability to adjust the Factories Act provisions to suit this economy is an attestation to the power, or the “promise” it held as a sector of global competitiveness and economic development.

⁶³ Several academic studies illustrate that call center work was already more or less feminized prior to shifting to India (see Denis 2003; Mullings 1999).

⁶⁴ The Factory Act is more or less a guideline and can vary from state to state in terms of actual laws in place. What is generally emphasized however is that companies employing 10 or more people are responsible for the safety of women, especially those who are working outside the hours established by the Factories Act. In cases in which the safety of a woman has been compromised and legal case is brought to court, the company is found guilty of negligence.

2.1.4 Transportation modes in Bangalore

The company bus

While there is no formal definition of the company bus, for the purpose of this discussion the company bus will be defined as bus transport that is provided to employees on behalf of their employer. What is provided—in terms of routes, timings, locational coverage, and cost to users varies greatly⁶⁵ by firm and geographic location. Literature on company buses is sparse, suggesting that this inquiry is either off the radar of transportation researchers or difficult to investigate due to the nature of it being in the realm of the private sector⁶⁶. Perhaps the most well known example of the company bus is the Google Bus, thanks to media coverage in 2013 and 2014 when residents of San Francisco and Oakland identified the bus as a literal driver of inequality in the area, particularly in respect to escalating rents and housing evictions in the San Francisco area. Protesters intercepted the company buses that stopped at public bus stops with signs admonishing what was considered a two-tier system (e.g. “Warning: Illegal use of public infrastructure”) in which knowledge workers of Google, Facebook, Yahoo!, and Apple were able to live wherever they chose, (sparking a premium in housing rents), and then travel great distances in comfortable transportation that was free of charge for the user but at a premium to other residents (De Kosnik 2014; Butler 2014). While several journalists made valid links to the various ways in which these tech companies were

⁶⁵ Companies clustered in one specific geographic location, like an industrial office park, might all provide employees with company initiated transportation, but again routes, timings, and costs will vary from one company to the next. Similarly, one company with offices scattered throughout different regions and countries will vary its company transport policies according to that particular region. We might then envision company transport, specifically the company bus as an institutional arrangement dependent on both private and public factors, particularly the built environment in which it is located.

⁶⁶ Though as it was said earlier, in the post independence era, sector based transportation was common, particularly for those working in the government sector. The pervasiveness of this type of transport, particularly in terms of modal share of total transportation in the city, remains unknown.

freeloading⁶⁷ off public infrastructure (Wong 2014; Solnit 2014), it is curious to know that no neutral academic articles nor reports from IT firms themselves have been put in the public domain. Overall, existing information tells us that in the Bay Area context, company buses transport approximately 35,000 employees a day (Hirsch 2014), company buses are usually “luxury” buses with Wi-Fi and comfortable seats available for all passengers, buses are free of charge to users, commutes are generally one hour or longer (De Kosnik 2014).

Although company provided transportation is not unique to the IT sector, in the Bangalore context, it is the largest and most influential sector⁶⁸, with some firms contracting a fleet of 80 or more buses to operate in the morning and evening. As illustrated in section 2.1.2, the company bus emerged out of the need to address the spatial mismatch between residential and work locations, making it similar to the Silicon Valley context in which a shortage of housing stock around the IT campus supposedly forced employees to seek housing further away.⁶⁹ The main problem IT companies faced in nascent years was getting their workforce to Electronics City in a safe, efficient, and timely matter. On the one hand, it was because of a lack of pre-existing transportation infrastructure that required companies to provide their own; on the other hand, there was little or no demand for buses to service routes which went from the areas within the city

⁶⁷ For example, MUNI, the public transportation system of the Bay area has a fine policy of \$271 for all vehicles that block public bus stops, a fine that IT firms had successfully avoided paying for several years.

⁶⁸ One ongoing and valid argument against this policy has been that the IT sector is taking away buses from the rest of the public. BMTC, the city’s public transportation corporation is a public private partnership and runs on a for profit basis. As providing buses to the IT sector is more financially advantageous, it has been found that although fleet is increasing in terms of absolute numbers, these buses are not reaching the general public.

⁶⁹ This argument has been contested on the grounds that the privileged IT worker can, and prefers to live in residential neighborhoods that suit an upper middle class urban lifestyle such as downtown San Francisco, whereas in the Bangalore context there was no good housing available around Electronic City in the late 1990s and early 2000s.

to this particular area in the south. In other words, the company bus fulfilled a spatial mismatch that the IT sector itself created.

Not only was the company bus a way to get people to work, it was seen as a necessary component to the industry's global delivery model.⁷⁰ In its initial stages, companies such as Infosys and Wipro contracted with private companies to provide point-to-point transportation for their company's employees. However, as IT expanded, these firms found that the supply of private bus contractors did not meet the sector's demand. Furthermore, when private bus contractors went on strike, firms faced major setbacks and significant financial losses. In the early 2000s, a decision was made to adopt a private-public transportation model and they contracted with Bangalore Metropolitan Transit Corporation (BMTC), the city's public bus company. BMTC came into existence in 1997, after it was recognized that the city had grown to an extent that demanded its own transportation corporation as opposed to the earlier model in which the state road transport (Karnataka State Road Transport Corporation) operated routes within the city. Unlike other city bus corporations, BMTC was set up as a quasi government organization, designed to run on a for-profit model with revenue coming primarily through fares. Setting up a partnership with IT firms was seen as mutually beneficial for both parties as BMTC could generate a profit⁷¹ and IT firms had reliable transportation⁷².

The IT company bus of major firms typically service a 30-40 km radius and offer an extensive point-to-point service network. Company buses arrive at designated (public)

⁷⁰ Understood as a model of providing services (i.e. outsourcing) to clients outside India in a timely and efficient manner.

⁷¹ According to one firm, BMTC is able to contract these buses out to the IT sector for one segment of the morning shift and the evening shift. Because they are not used during the day, many of these buses are then contracted to private schools for the afternoon ferrying of school children.

⁷² It has been argued by those in IT sector, that this partnership forced BMTC to become more efficient, that BMTC has learned from the IT sector's model and structured their system off the private sector and today is one of the only public bus companies in India that maintains a profit margin.

bus stops throughout the city at set times, pick up their employees and travel directly to the IT campus. There are at least two pick up times in the morning and two departure times at night. All buses, regardless of belonging to the BMTC or a private company, are air-conditioned, multi-axle, and have seating for every passenger. Buses have GPS tracking services allowing passengers to receive text message updates regarding delays and because it is a service of the firm, if employees who use the company bus are late, they are not reprimanded—a particularly important point considering the city’s relentless traffic.

In its initial stages, the company bus was free to employees. However, as Bangalore’s urban boundary expanded in size, and middle class residential developments sprung up in new parts of the city, the cost of the company bus became burdensome to many companies, particularly after the global recession. After 2009, most firms made employees pay a monthly fee for use of the company bus. Although subsidized by the company, a monthly bus pass is anywhere from 1500 INR to 2300 INR⁷³. This fee is considerably higher than the Bangalore Metropolitan Transit Corporation’s (BMTC) range of monthly pass options, which is between anywhere from 800 to 1200 INR. The fee to use the company bus is especially high if one takes into account that this mode can only be used to go to and from work.

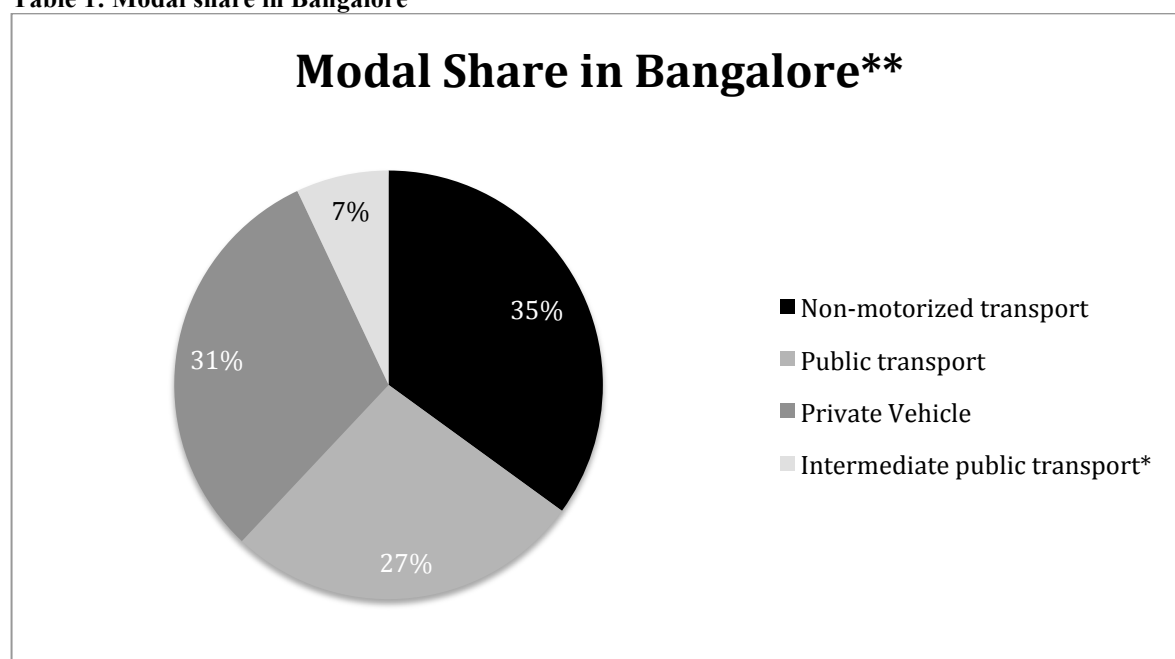
Public transportation

Although Bangalore has a metro rail project in the making, at the time of this research (2013), it was not a viable mode for commuting. With only two stations completed, the project was, and remains, more than 10 years behind schedule with costs escalating more

⁷³ In 2017 the conversion is roughly 65 INR to the US dollar.

quickly than completion. From a public transit perspective, BMTC is the primary provider of city transportation. Although the fleet and service network has increased substantially, ridership is declining. In an attempt to appeal to the growing diversity of urban residents, BMTC offers several different qualities of buses, which are charged at different rates to the user. The most common expression for these buses are “ordinary” or non/AC buses and “Volvo” which is AC, multi-axle and low floor. Even the ordinary buses are charged at a rate that is the highest of all metro cities in India.⁷⁴

Table 1: Modal share in Bangalore



* The company bus would fall into this category

**Data comes from DULT 2011

2.1.5 Methodology

Although the IT sector is associated with the knowledge worker and India’s “new” middle class, it requires labor of all kinds, from office cleaners, food servers, security

⁷⁴ See bbpv.wordpress.com; bengaluru.citizenmatters.in; citizensforbengaluru.in for example.

personnel, gardeners, and company drivers, to software engineers, mid-level managers, and business leaders. Full time employees employed directly⁷⁵ by a firm receive incomes that are higher than the median incomes of city residents and India as a whole⁷⁶. Existing research (Sabapathy et al 2012; Upadhy 2004; 2009; Upadhy and Vasavi 2006) suggests that this is one of many factors that gives the knowledge worker advantages in respect to housing, consumption, education, and urban political influence. It has also been shown that full time male and female IT employees have more transportation mode choices available to them than those working in other employment sectors (Sabapathy et al 2012). The purpose of this research was to understand if and how this privilege of working in the IT sector, particularly in respect to transportation mobility, is complicated by one's gender. Are women IT employees, with their access to taxis and company buses, still concerned with issues of safety and security? How does the identity of being a global knowledge worker interface with local norms around family duties and responsibilities? Do company policies aimed at women alleviate or exacerbate gender norms? To summarize why this population was chosen:

- Bangalore's IT sector has many gender inclusive policies that are meant to attract and retain⁷⁷ women employees.
- Employees of Bangalore's IT sector earn incomes that are significantly higher than the national median giving them purchasing power for private vehicles, quality housing, private schools for children. This is what Phadke et al (2011) call the consumer citizen. In India's urban context, the consumer citizen also yields a great deal of political power.

⁷⁵ Office cleaners, security, and food service workers are all examples of contract-based workers.

⁷⁶ To be discussed in greater detail. 2011 census data find that the national median income level is just under 50,000 INR annually, or approximately \$830 US dollars. Average monthly salaries in Bangalore are approximately 8,000 INR.

⁷⁷ The best research on these reasons can be found in Radhakrishnan 2011, D'Mello and Sahay (2007), Mirchandani (1998), and Patel (2010).

- Many of the individual IT firms have their own transportation systems; this usually includes a company bus and (night) taxi service.
- The IT sector's 'knowledge worker' is typically educated and coming from a middle class background, factors that might lead to more liberal gender roles at various levels.

This makes for an appealing case study for several reasons but specifically along two interconnected threads:

- IT sector transportation policies both reinforce and dissolve normative constructions of gender by allowing women to work at night but provided a solution based on protection and exclusion.
- These transportation policies, coupled with norms and privileges associated with the Bangalore "techie"⁷⁸, actively make this population into a unique transportation category that creates hierarchical (power) differences (inequalities) between tech workers and the rest of the urban population.

The research questions to be explored in this section are:

- What transportation modes are woman and men in the IT sector choosing?
- What are they choosing these modes?
- Along what lines do we locate differences between men and among women IT workers in respect to factors that influence transportation decisions?
- What are the "logics" used by industry elites to justify certain transportation modes, policies and infrastructures for the IT sector?
- Along what lines do we find examples of privilege and difference within the sector and in relation to rest of the city?

Project Execution

At the time of carrying out this research in the summer of 2013, Electronics City was home to approximately 300 predominately multinational companies. While more tech parks have, over the years, developed in different pockets of Bangalore, Electronic City is the oldest and remains the most significant in the city. In order to intimately understand

⁷⁸ Techie is the colloquial term for Bangalore's tech worker, most prominently used in the media.

the complexity of transportation systems within the IT sector and how they interface with other public modes of transportation, a case study approach was implemented, with factors such as time constraints, gaining access to employees, and ease of execution being significant determinants of the methodological approach.

One of Electronics City's older and well-established IT firms was selected as the subject of this research. The firm's low-rise campus is spread across 81 acres and includes a helipad, several sports grounds (cricket, football, and hockey), multiple food courts, a swimming pool, a handful of gyms, and medical facilities. The campus is similar in structure and layout to IT campuses in Silicon Valley or large universities in the US. No cars are allowed inside the campus, with the exception of army jeeps, which have patrolled the campus since the 9/11 attacks in New York City.⁷⁹ Employees get around by bicycle (provided by the firm; personal bicycles are not allowed inside the campus), walking, or electric golf carts for those requiring assistance. There is parking for 1,600 cars, with preference given to top management (many of whom are given cars and drivers after reaching a certain rank) as well as car poolers, who fill out an application and are given preferential parking. There are 1,750 spots for two-wheelers (it remains unclear how designation is given) and a small bus depot that has room for 75 (company) buses and several night taxis. Eighty percent of employees use some form of mass transportation for commuting to the office (source, internal sustainability report 2009).

A total of 15 weeks (July-September 2013) were spent living and working within the firm. The first four weeks involved understanding the organizational structure, meeting with key decision makers, and observing transportation use among employees,

⁷⁹ As told to me by senior personnel, as about 60 percent of the firm's business is with the US, after 9/11, the firm was required to institute higher level security.

especially in respect to the company bus and use of night taxis among women. One on one interviews began and a pilot of the survey was administered to approximately 20 people. By August, approvals to execute the survey were obtained; formal interviews and focus group discussions began.

To initiate the survey, an email was sent to the addresses of the firm's full time IT workforce. The body of the email explained the purpose of the research, an overview of the research objectives, and explanation of respondent confidentiality. At the bottom of this paragraph was an electronic link to an online, comprehensive survey.⁸⁰ Although I did not have control over the distribution of this email, senior management estimates that the email reached approximately 20,000 employee inboxes, of which 2,070 responded, providing about a 10 percent response rate. Data was coded and analyzed in STATA. Although this particular firm has a call center presence, it was in a separate campus. Management stated that the survey would not be sent out to these employees. The survey was divided into three categories: characteristics of work commute (e.g. mode choice, kilometers from work); perception of security (e.g. gender-based concerns regarding personal security); and demographics (e.g. age, income, children).

In addition to the survey, elite interviews were conducted with the heads of the company's sustainability, transportation, facilities management, labour, and gender inclusivity units. Research on the firm prior to arrival and within the first month of being at the research site allowed me to identify which departments were relevant to the research, after which I requested permission to conduct the interviews. Approximately 15 one-on-one structured and recorded interviews lasting between 20-30 minutes were

⁸⁰ People employed in call center work, which is typically a night shift and done by men and women who are younger and often with less formal education, were not a part of this survey.

conducted with men and women of various ages and employment ranks within the company. Interview respondents were obtained primarily through a snowball methodology. After the survey was sent out to employees, a handful of individuals contacted me to request to have a further conversation on the topic. Some of these were treated as formal interviews and recorded, others were treated as casual exchanges; permission to use information was granted but no documentation was done during these exchanges.

During the duration of the research I stayed in accommodations at the firm's campus. This small dormitory is typically reserved for new hires who have recently moved to the city and are looking for accommodations. As a result of being on campus full time, ethnographic observation was used extensively; particularly in respect to observations of service workers such as gardeners, building cleaners, sweepers, wait staff, food cooks, and security guards. No individual interviews were conducted with service workers, as permission to contact these individuals was not granted. Lastly, three focus groups were organized. The first was a woman-only group, also of various ages, ranks, and life stages. The second was with bicycle commuters, and finally a group of women who work in the Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) unit. While the decision to focus on one IT firm presents limitations on the ability to make statements on the relationship between gender, income, and transportation mobility within Bangalore's IT sector broadly, the depth and detail of responses allows for a better understanding of the complexity of this relationship as well as the unique position the company bus holds regarding transportation perceptions and preferences of men and women.

Section Two: Survey Analysis

2.2.1 Demographic profile

Gender Ratio

The gender ratio of survey respondents was 61 percent male and 39 percent female while the gender composition of the campus is closer to 67 percent male and 33 percent female. In presenting this information to two senior executives (male) one commented that the higher reportage rate of women reflects the greater interest women have in transportation policies, with the observation that it could be because they are more greatly affected by it. Overall, the firm seems to have a higher than average percent of women employees than those surveyed in existing literature; Upadhyia and Vasavi (2006) found ratios between 15-30 percent in the several firms they profiled and NASSCOM (2009) found a 24 percent population of women in the software industry (higher when one accounts for the BPO sector).

Table 2: Gender Ratio (percent of total)

	Survey Ratio	Firm Ratio
Female	39%	33%
Male	61%	67%

Age

Age was reported as a categorical variable, with 55 percent of respondents (male and female) being between 20 and 29 years old and 95 percent of respondents being 39 years or younger. This corresponds with Upadhyia and Vasavi (2006) identifying a median age of 27 for the sector and Sabapathy et al (2011) identifying a mean age of 29. Although

this is a young workforce,⁸¹ life stage choices such as marriage and having children occur at ages older than the country's average.⁸² India's 2011 census reports that 47 percent of women in India marry by the age of 18 and have their first child by the time they are 20.⁸³ Although survey respondents were not asked about their marriage status, when asked about children, only 12 percent of respondents between the ages of 20 and 29 had children. However, 80 percent of respondents age 30 and older had children. This suggests that the survey population follows a demography that more closely resembles populations associated with global IT industry as opposed to the population of geographic proximity. Again Upadhyaya and Vasavi (2006) report similar findings on women IT professionals having children later. This also corresponds to the findings from Radhakrishnan (2011) in which the ages of marriage and childbearing were older than the previous generation of middle class women, though Radhakrishnan found that while women in the sector married later than the national average, family pressure to marry begins in the early 20s and by 26 women felt a lot of pressure from family that they were "late" in the marriage market. Education is often a significant factor in explaining delays in marriage and children; 99 percent of survey respondents had a B.A. or higher, again evidence of a population group that is significantly different in that this is a population that stands out in India.

⁸¹ Sabapathy et al's research was a comparative between the IT and Public Sector, in the case of the latter the mean age was 33.

⁸²<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/47-of-young-Indian-women-marry-before-18/articleshow/8211979.cms> [Accessed 20.11.17]. The ages of marriage and first child vary widely throughout the country. In South Indian states such as Karnataka and Kerala, these percentages are much lower, for example, less than 15 percent of women in Kerala will be married by 18, illustrating the ways in which regional culture, education, and other factors play into this.

⁸³<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/Fewer-women-having-kids-in-30s-Study/articleshow/10898196.cms?referral=PM> [Accessed 20.11.17].

Place of Origin

The number of firm employees originally from outside the state of Karnataka was at 58 percent. This relatively high percent of non-Kannadigas reflects the overall city demographic, which has seen a shift toward a non-native population since the 1990s. Migration to the city is high enough that Kannada, the official language of Karnataka, is thought to be less spoken in Bangalore⁸⁴, than Tamil and Telugu, the language of two neighboring states as well as English, and, to a lesser extent, Hindi.

Language in the context of transportation

Not being able to speak or read Kannada makes traveling in public transportation more challenging. Bus stops are rarely marked, and stops with physical shelters seldom have route information. Newer buses, such as the Vajra (which are three times the fare of ordinary buses) have LED destination boards in English and Kannada, but the majority of “ordinary” buses simply have changeable signs at the front and back of the bus with the bus number, and origin and destination in Kannada. As BMTC is yet to provide a functioning real time service phone application, passengers must rely on asking for directions or information by fellow passengers or from the conductor as the bus pulls into the stop. This can be intimidating. Difficulty in understanding the public bus system could be a significant deterrent from using the bus, especially given the unreliability of service in the morning rush. A young female employee originally from Chennai

⁸⁴ Language politics, though not given overt attention in this dissertation, are an important component to understanding larger social dynamics within the city. For a good overview of this, see Nair 2006. In a more recent example (2017) of language politics in the context of public transportation, several residents of the city defaced the city’s metro (BMRC) attempt at adding Hindi signs to the stations. While the Kannada population was clearly divided on the matter, the Chief Minister of Karnataka supported the resistance against the Hindi imposition. <https://www.ndtv.com/bangalore-news/no-hindi-on-bengaluru-metro-karnataka-chief-minister-siddarmaiah-tells-centre-1730482> [Accessed 24.10.2017].

explained: “It’s a floating community here so no one can help you with directions, it’s really hard to figure out.” Her quote suggests that passengers using the existing bus network are not local and therefore would not be able to help her find her way. Her mode choice to work was the company bus and the language barrier had an impact on her decision to commute by this mode. When asked to talk about her experience trying to use Bangalore’s public buses she explained: “You get the stares and stuff like that. The men here talk and make comments but since I don’t understand Kannada, I don’t know what they are saying to me,” (23.8. 2013). It is unclear if the stares made her hesitant to ask for directions; given the men were speaking in Kannada it seems unlikely it was a floating community. Floating community then could mean a more gendered discomfort with using the public buses and not being able to understand neither the language nor the route network.

Interestingly, when another female employee addressed the same topic, this time a native Bangalorian, her response was quite different. “See, Bangalore used to be so relaxed. Only now it is different, unsafe because there has been such an influx of people, now you have different kinds of people. There has been a ‘cultural influx’. See, Bangalorians aren’t aggressive. But you had this first influx and then a second influx of people,” (8.8.13). This woman also chose the company bus for her work commute, however, her logic was that while the public buses used to be the native population it is now full of migrants, both from within the state and outside the state. Now, she did not know or trust the “common man”, even if he was originally from Karnataka, he did not have the appropriate urban mindset necessary for living in this modern city. Like the previous respondent, there was a general discomfort with those who were using the

public buses; this was one reason why the company bus was a safer and more comfortable option.

A third woman, from North India, traveled by company bus with the following observation: “As we are working in [the firm] people are more professional so we don’t have issues with traveling in the company bus and coming to office. Almost 100% I can say, I have not had any bad incidents.” However, unlike the previous respondents, she felt appreciative of the people in the city, particularly when it came language.

Outside, I do really appreciate the people in Karnataka, not because I am from Karnataka, but I have seen [other places]. You go to Chennai, and you speak to them in your language they are not going to respond to you in your language, they will speak in Tamil. In Karnataka you go to any place, any person, even if they aren’t speaking English, he will try to put it into his own words and English, maybe you don’t understand it but he will try. It happens in other languages also. You speak in Hindi, he will try to answer you in Hindi and I have been to Chennai, and I’ve been to Kerala a couple of times, I don’t know any Malayalam and I go and I speak in English and he answers in Malayalam, I try in Hindi and still he answers in Malayalam and it was very difficult, so I really appreciate that people do really help other city people. It’s not like people in other states don’t want to help; but they don’t give up on their language. I think that is first and foremost the thing that you want them to do (23.8.13).

We can read this last comment in a number of ways. While on the one hand, her delivery did not convey an attitude of superiority, the underlying wish to “give up” on language reiterates a general attitude among North Indian’s in regard to Hindi being the national language and thus a language that should be understood throughout the country. Secondly, it reflects a middle class attitude that English speaking is, or should be an aspiration of the entire population. Her comment suggests that native Kannadiga will try to speak in English because, living in Bangalore, *he* sees or should see the positive transformation of Bangalore into a “modern” and “world class” city, and he does not want to be left behind. This feeling is perhaps reiterated when one takes into account the

number of English language coaching and tutoring schools throughout the city, or willingness among lower middle class residents to send children to English medium schools⁸⁵ as English remains equated with success and upward mobility in the context of employment. According to the 2001 census, only 42 percent of the city spoke Kannada, and the city Legislative Council speculated that this percent had dropped to 32 percent in 2005 (Khajane 2015). This is one possible way of gauging changing demographic and class profiles of the city while also speaking to the second interviewee's claim that Kannadiga's have always been "laid back", "accepting", and "welcoming" of others⁸⁶.

Home location

61 percent of respondents live less than 20 kilometers from work but 69 percent of respondents have one-way commutes that are greater than 45 minutes. A similar finding was reported in Sabapathy et al's 2012 comparison of commuting patterns between IT and PSU sector employees in Bangalore, finding that those in the IT sector have a mean average one-way commute duration of 111.4 minutes. However, the particular firm that was sampled in their survey (n=191) found an average commute distance of 35.2 kilometers.

⁸⁵ This is a complex discussion that deserves more space. I would like to note that in the time period since beginning this dissertation I have observed first a push toward English, followed by a more recent push back and emphasis on the regional language. Anecdotal evidence I believe suggests among the laboring class, including the security guard in my building, there is still a faith in speaking English as a path to better employment and thus the sending of children to private tuitions.

⁸⁶ Though this too has resulted in a push back in more contemporary language debates, most recently seen in the context of the Bangalore Metro where the Hindi signs (below those in English and Kannada) have been defaced.

Table 3: Distance between residence and IT firm

Kilometer distance residence & firm	Percent of the survey population
< 5	13%
6-10	12%
11-20	36%
21-30	22%
> 31	17%

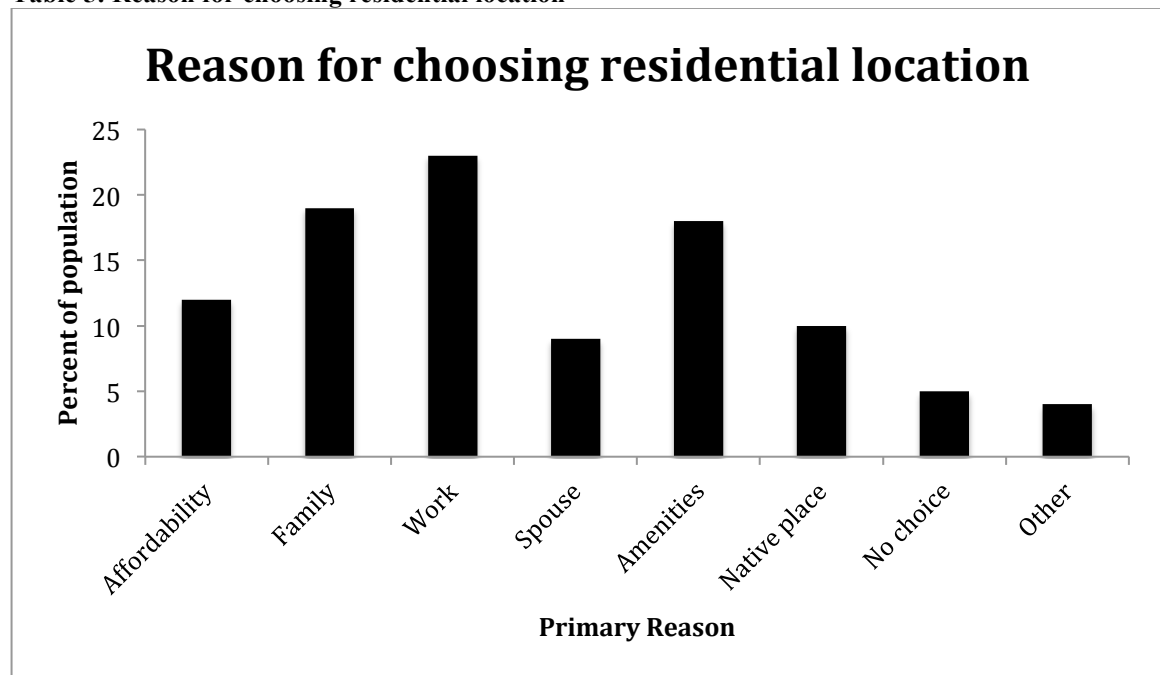
Table 4: Average commute time (one way)

Average commute time	Percent of the survey population
< 15	9%
16 - 30	14%
31 - 45	21%
46 - 60	24%
> 61	32%

Only 23 percent of respondents cited proximity to work as the primary reason for choosing to live where they do, cross tabulation suggests that these respondents tend to be younger, unmarried, and not from the city. In the case of those who were staying closer to the firm, typically 10 km or less, the accommodation was a paid guest (PG) accommodation or shared flat. The gendered dimension of accommodation for unmarried working women staying away from family will be discussed in Chapter 3, in the context of Delhi.

Family was a significant factor determining one's residential location as was the amenities a particular location offered. For those originally from Bangalore, residential location was chosen on the basis of being close to family or having an affiliation with a particular neighborhood; those coming from outside Bangalore and married explained residential location was a compromise or trade-off between several factors such as spouse's employment and proximity to other amenities and facilities, particularly private schools. Again this is consistent with Sabapathy et al who found that the longer an IT employee lives in Bangalore, the further the distance his or her residence is from the firm (2012). The point made in Sabapathy's work and the more general discussion on the Google bus in Silicon Valley however is that residential location is a *choice*, there are trade offs between one location over another but the incomes and modes available to the IT worker allows more choice than one would find among those coming from different employment sectors.

Table 5: Reason for choosing residential location



However, to simply frame this as privilege dehumanizes the very real and complex set of decisions one makes when choosing place of residence. One senior level employee used himself as an example to explain the mentality of what he felt were like-minded employees.

This firm is a company I wanted to join at any cost; I joined about eight years ago. Irrespective of where they set up I would stay in Bangalore north [because that is where my family is] but now I work in Bangalore south. It's about 38 km from here. I just have no problem because I want to work at this firm at any cost. Now coming to a different issue, if it was a regular job than I would think, if I'm going to travel so far, do I have an option of traveling somewhere close by and getting job close by? (29.8.13).

Salaries

At the time of doing this research (Summer 2013) the majority of survey respondents made between 26-49,000⁸⁷ INR per month, this should be compared with the city's monthly average income of 7400 INR (DULT 2011), Sabapathy et al (2012) found the weighted distribution of income in the IT sector to be highest in the 30-40,000 INR bracket and compared it to the PSU sector which was concentrated at 7,501-10,000 INR bracket. As both sectors are indicative of an educated working population it is further evidence of the much higher salaries within the (private) IT sector. In the case of this study, income categories were broken up further according to men and women, revealing that more women are placed in the lower income categories.

⁸⁷ Approximately 65 INR to the dollar (2017).

Table 6: Monthly Income in INR, percent of total survey population

	<25,000	26-49,000	50-99,000	100-199,000	>200,000
Female	23%	48%	21%	5%	0
Male	18%	29%	30%	18%	6%

70 percent of women are concentrated in the lower pay bracket while only 46 percent of men are within this pay bracket. Data from the survey supports existing evidence that women are more often placed in lower pay brackets than their male counterparts. As discussed in the introduction, lower salaries for women translates into transportation mobility and mode choice, with women often using cheaper modes of transportation than men. In the context of this research, if women are in lower pay brackets, then the cost of using the company bus, or BMTC for that matter, is more expensive for women employees.

2.2.2 Mode choices and reasons for choosing

In this section I concentrate on the question of transportation mode choices of women and men in the IT sector and why these modes are chosen, looking for evidence of subtle and overt ways in which gender has an impact on transportation choices.

Top four mode choices

Survey respondents were asked to identify the transportation mode most commonly use to get to work. Ten possible choices⁸⁸ were given as well as a write-in option if the appropriate choice was not given. The company bus, followed by BMTC buses was the

⁸⁸ Company bus, Public Bus, Car (self drive), Car (driven), Carpool, Taxi, Two-wheeler, Auto rickshaw, Bicycle, Walk, Other.

most frequently used modes of both women and men. Women used cars and two-wheelers in equal proportion but for men, the third most utilized mode was the two-wheeler followed by the car.

Table 7: Top four modes used, percent of total survey population*

	Company bus	Public bus	Car	Two-wheeler
Women	64%	15%	4%	4%
Men	49%	14%	12%	13%

* Percent does not equal 100 as other modes are used.

Although the top four mode choices are approximately the same for women and men we see a greater distribution among the modes used by men and a higher use of company bus among women. One possible explanation was that women don't have access to cars or two wheelers.

Modes at home

Both men and women are more likely to have a two-wheeler than car in the home. Proportionally, women seem to have more availability of private modes but again are less likely to use them for their work commute.

Table 8: Mode Available at Home, percent of population within respective gender category*

	Car	Two-wheeler
Women	45%	55%
Men	37%	49%

*Tabulation was done in respect to each gender, not as total of population

The survey question was worded as "Do you or your spouse (if applicable) own a car?" A vehicle at home does not mean that an individual has access to it at all times, including for work purposes. For instance, if there is only one car in the household, it is possible

that the male in the household is given preferential access. This hypothesis draws on evidence from other research in which men tend to have longer commutes than women and are more likely to use the car for employment purposes, both in India (Mahadevia and Advani 2016) and the west (Dobbs 2005). However, evidence as to why women did not commute by private modes was found in follow up interviews where the majority of women expressed concern over “rash” driving, particularly during the morning rush. Some women cited gendered harassment while driving at any time, with men appearing more aggressive toward them when it came to overtaking or shouting remarks if they were on the two wheeler. Consider the following exchange:

*I: At home do you have any other mode of transport?

FR1: Two-wheeler, four-wheeler.

FR2: We also have both but even though we have I still prefer to come by company bus.

I: On the weekends how do you go?

FR1 I take the car [laughs]

I: Okay, you don't take the two-wheeler?

FR1: Yeah, because I've left the car for the whole of the week so now I want to use it.

FR2: Two-wheeler is definitely not safe, especially for women. It is very rash driving. Drivers don't follow routes, laws so it is better to be on a safer side and get into a car. Even if you ram the car, the car is damaged not you.

[Group interview 23.8.13]

*I= Interviewer, FR = Female respondent

The response of the first woman suggests that the car is equally an object of utility and of pleasure, a finding that supports Verma's 2015 study of car users in Bangalore in which the majority of respondents used the car for personal as opposed to official use for the

very same reasons as expressed by these women. Given the traffic and rash driving of rush hour many people would prefer to not be behind the wheel. Verma points to the various ways in which the “automobile companies in India have successfully positioned car [sic] as status symbol [sic] in minds of Indians,” (Verma 2015: 306). The car as a utility is taken advantage of on the weekend. However, the car as a status symbol remains regardless of how much it is used.

Reasons for mode choice to work

Survey participants were asked to choose up to three reasons⁸⁹ for using a particular mode for their work commute or again write their reason if the response choices were inadequate.

Table 9: Primary Reasons for Choosing Company Bus

	Primary Reason	Secondary Reason	Third Reason
Women	Security	Comfort	Avoid traffic
Men	Cost	Comfort	Avoid Traffic

Why choose the company bus

Personal security was the primary reason women gave for choosing the company bus, followed by comfort, and then the ability to avoid traffic. For men, the motivating factor in using the company bus was cost, followed by comfort, and lastly, the ability to avoid traffic. Comfort and personal security, I would suggest, are related. While comfort can speak to air conditioning and being able to sit down, a mode cannot be comfortable if one

⁸⁹ The survey question read: “Please select up to three reasons for commuting this way”. Respondents had ten possible choices: Cost savings; Avoid traffic and congestion; It allows me flexibility (eg I can depart when I wish); I can utilize my travel time (eg for reading, sleeping); It is the most comfortable way to travel; It is convenient for other members of my family (eg my spouse drives and I take the bus); Environmental/sustainability reasons; I feel safe traveling this way; It allows me to get physical exercise; I am physically disabled and have limited mobility; Parking is difficult/too expensive; Other

does not feel secure in it. However, the opposite may not be true. In the instance of women-only transport, it is often overcrowded and not particularly comfortable but it is chosen because it offers one a sense of personal security. Various prompts within the survey encouraged participants to untangle these two issues, for example, suggesting comfort to be qualities such as air conditioning, guaranteed seating, and cleanliness. That women respondents did prioritize personal security over comfort as the main reason for choosing the company bus suggests that respondents did think of these as separate reasons for choosing this mode.

Regarding comfort, on the company bus employees can stream TV shows from their smart phones, work on their laptops or take a nap with out fear of the personal possessions being stolen. During interviews, both male and female company bus users frequently referred to this mode as a comfortable, safe space, where one did not need to be “on guard”. One unanticipated finding in both the survey and interviews was that men also expressed concern with personal security, though from the perspective of theft. Several men said they felt targeted when using the public bus due to the obviousness of being a “techie” (e.g. style of dress, carrying a laptop) and had had personal belongings stolen. For some respondents, this became a pivotal point in which they switched either to the company bus or a car. For women however, it wasn’t just concern for one’s possessions but concern for one’s personal space, namely the body. As one female executive explained to me: “It’s a community that you know. Here on the company buses we are bound by a code of conduct.”⁹⁰ It is an extension of our office space.” She then

⁹⁰ An interesting counter point, on May 11th 2017 a male tech worker was arrested for groping a woman, who also worked in tech, while commuting home from a tech park in Whitefield. The bus was an A/C Volvo BMTC bus. The woman used an app based complaint mechanism allowing the city’s “Pink” hoysala (woman driven police car) to intercept the bus and arrest the man. In several newspaper accounts, the

followed up by saying, “On the weekend, you’d never see me on a public bus,” [8.8.2013].

That personal security was the most cited reason for taking the company bus suggests that for women, gender is consciously and unconsciously at the forefront of modal decision-making. That is, women are choosing a transportation mode based on avoiding unwanted encounters that take place on public transportation due to being a woman. Women who chose to commute by company bus are willing to spend more on their work commute, this is particularly true if we consider the cost factor. In the early years of the IT economy, the firm provided the company bus free of charge. Monthly fees for the company bus began in 2009, during the global recession (which had a particularly strong effect on the sector). At present, the monthly fee to use company bus is more expensive than the cost of a non-A/C monthly BMTC pass (approximately 800 INR) and about the same (approximately 1,500 INR)⁹¹ as an AC monthly BMTC pass), but one can only use the company bus for employment trips and departure times are fixed. As illustrated in the previous section, women are more concentrated in the lower income brackets and so taking the company bus warrants some financial consideration. Some of the younger, unmarried women interviewed, especially those who were originally from the city and living with their parents, held both a company bus pass and a BMTC pass, bringing monthly commuting expenses to about 3,000 INR. To quote one young woman “Many times I’ve considered not taking the company bus and just taking public transport

woman is described as “a native of Bengaluru and an employee of a leading IT company,” while the man is described as “working in a tech-company.” <http://www.thenewsminute.com/article/bengaluru-techie-held-allegedly-molesting-woman-inside-moving-bus-61856> [Accessed 11.10.17]. This particular incident reinforces this woman’s point that it’s not the IT sector, but this code of conduct within this firm in a way that the company bus is an extension of the workplace.

⁹¹ Fees are calculated according to distance and broken into short (1250 INR), Middle (1500 INR) and Long (1700 INR) monthly fees.

and even a good route is available [to me] and then I think no, even if you are paying more at least you are getting something comfortable, a seat to sit in and there is more security,”(21.8.13).

Another young woman interviewed had a different opinion. She “shelled out the money” for the company bus in order to force herself out of bed in the morning. Because it arrived at the same time every day it was a good disciplinary measure to ensure that she was punctual. “I get a seat and go back to sleep.” This would not be possible if she was to take the BMTC bus [9.8.13].

Presumably, affordability was the primary reason cited by men for choosing to use the company bus, a finding somewhat counter intuitive given the high cost to use it. Statistically, it has been demonstrated that a two-wheeler is the cheapest of all modes in Bangalore, including the BMTC⁹² on a per kilometer basis if one does not include the initial cost of purchasing the two-wheeler into the calculation. However, given traffic, climate, and poor road conditions, a two-wheeler is not a feasible mode beyond a certain number of kilometers. Knowing that most employees live between 10 and 20 kilometers from the firm, a two-wheeler is not preferred, particularly during the monsoon rains. Second, given that men are proportionally higher earners, they may view the cost of the company bus as acceptable relative to the cost of traveling by car, and given the comfort of the company bus, that is being guaranteed a seat, air conditioning, and not having to drive in traffic, the cost of the company bus is considered an acceptable trade off.

⁹² BMTC bus fares are calculated on a km distance basis. If we were to factor distance costs between a two-wheeler (cost based on petrol only), a regular (i.e. non AC bus) BMTC bus, and an auto rickshaw it would be the following based on a 2.5 kms distance: BMTC bus = 10 INR, Two-wheeler = 4 INR, Auto = 25 INR. During interviews, there were two instances in which male employees said that taking a two-wheeler worked out to be cheaper than taking the company bus. When asked, senior personal within the transportation unit confirmed that this was in many instances to be true.

In Sabapathy et al. (2011) it was found that income increases among IT employees led to an increased likelihood of choosing the company bus over the public bus. In the firm that they studied, the company bus was provided “as an incentive in the employee’s term of engagement [and] is associated with a certain monetary value, which is forfeited by the employee if he or she decides to commute by an alternative mode...This is likely to be a disincentive for IT employees to use public transportation” (2011: 165). Furthermore, mid and senior level employees were provided with a private vehicle purchased by the IT firm, a provision also practiced in the firm studied for this research, representing yet another disincentive to use public transportation.

The company bus is not just a sphere of protection for women; it is an encapsulated mode of transportation that protects IT workers in several ways. It protects the time of the IT worker by providing direct transportation to the workplace. It bypasses stops making the commute time shorter than public transport. By serving a 30-kilometer radius, it gives greater spatial freedom to the IT worker to choose a place of residence. It is a homogenous crowd bound by a “code of conduct” that ensures bodily security and security of possessions.

Why choose the public bus?

For women, flexibility was the most cited reason for using the BMTC bus system whereas cost, again, was the most cited reason by men. Findings from the interviews suggest that women with children who used the BMTC bus would prefer to use the company bus but find the lack of frequency, especially departure times in the morning to significantly impact the feasibility of using this mode. Getting children ready in the

morning or taking care of elderly family members were frequent examples given by female employees as to why their morning schedule was more complicated and subject to fluctuation than those of male colleagues. Women who were not married and used BMTC cited the lower cost and availability to use the mode outside of work as the primary reasons why a BMTC bus was more desirable than the company bus, but cited concern for personal safety as being higher.

Table 10: Primary Reasons for Choosing Public Bus

	Primary Reason	Secondary Reason	Third Reason
Women	Flexibility	Cost	Other
Men	Cost	Flexibility	Avoid Traffic

In one interview the following exchange occurred:

I: Can you compare the public bus with the company bus?

FR1: Actually when it comes to a public bus they are more frequent and it's more convenient than a company bus.

I: Right, because the company bus only comes a few times in the morning. Do you have any children?

FR2: I do. But I do feel that company has done a lot, for example, there are, say I have to travel between 7:15 and am there are four schedules of bus. I do feel that is good enough. 15-minute intervals. So I mean for any particular area they are trying to accommodate four buses. The problem is what after 8 o'clock? Because maybe some have to drop the kids, do some small work, they will not be able to do that before 8 o'clock so then how to come to office? [23.8.2013]

Similar to the previous discussion, conversations with a handful of unmarried, younger women suggested that cost was a significant factor for choosing their mode but in this

case they were using the BMTC bus only. One observed difference between these women and the women who chose to have both a BMTC and company bus pass was that these women were not originally from the city. This seemed to be true of many entry-level employees who recently move to Bangalore. As one younger, unmarried female interviewee explained: “If I was to take the company bus it would be costlier than this bus pass [BMTC] so in fact this is the reason I prefer public transport, because I can use the pass to go anywhere and you know I travel on the weekends,” (13. 8. 13). For many of these recent hires, travel on the weekends usually means traveling outside Bangalore, even outside Karnataka to see their families who were typically in Tamil Nadu or Andhra Pradesh. With a BMTC monthly bus passes, one could travel to one of several depots in the city that serve as connections to regional bus transit.

Although women use two wheelers and cars for work commutes far less than men within the firm, there is similarity between the two in respect to reasons for using. In the tables below we see that flexibility was cited as the primary reason for choosing both modes, a finding that speaks to Verma (2015) and Sabapathy et al.’s (2012) research on the car owning class in Bangalore, that once a car was acquired, it was seen as indispensable to the functioning of daily life. It is also reminiscent of Beckmann (2001); Mitchell (2005); and Vasconcellos (1997), who directly or indirectly link the car to the middle class social and economic production and reproduction.

Table 11: Primary Reasons for Using Two Wheeler

	Primary Reason	Secondary Reason	Third Reason
Women	Flexibility	Avoid Traffic	Cost
Men	Flexibility	Avoid Traffic	Cost

Table 12: Primary Reasons for Using Car

	Primary Reason	Secondary Reason	Third Reason
Women	Flexibility	Comfort	Security
Men	Flexibility	Comfort	Avoid Traffic

Getting to the bus stop

66 percent of respondents who use some form of bus transport live within 10 minutes of their bus stop and 29 percent live within 20 minutes from the bus stop, the latter tending to travel by company bus as opposed to BMTC. The majority of respondents walk to the bus stop but some take rickshaws or two-wheelers, suggesting issues of last mile connectivity. That almost 30 percent of respondents do live up to 20 minutes away from the bus stop but still prefer to travel by either BMTC or the company bus suggests a strong aversion to commuting by personal vehicle because of traffic. One male interviewee, a champion early riser who lived outside the company bus catchment, took a BMTC bus four kilometers to a second bus stop that was serviced by the company bus. He took the same commute home daily but often took an auto rickshaw on the return journey instead of BMTC. For those who live great distances, one of the major advantages of the company bus is having a seat during a 60+ minute journey.

Safety at the bus stop

When asked about how safe one feels while traveling to the bus stop only 24 percent of women said they feel “very safe”. While the survey question did not indicate whether safety referred to safety from crime and harassment or safety from road crashes and

traffic, during one-on-interviews it became apparent that respondents interpreted it as both. Young female employees who moved to the city to work for the firm cited being close to a safe bus stop as a significant criterion for determining their residential location. Women mentioned street design (such as lack of sidewalks and poor lighting) and local activity (either absence of economic and social activity or economic and social activity of “the wrong kind”) as factors that further influenced their feeling of safety.

Perception of Personal Security

In a separate question all survey respondents, regardless of mode choice, were asked whether or not women needed to be more concerned with their personal security than men while on board the company bus and onboard the public buses. In the chart below we see that men and women perceive these spaces differently. While less than half of men felt women needed to be more concerned with their personal security onboard the company bus, more than half of women felt they did. This is somewhat of a surprise given how many women praise the company bus as a secure place for them. Both men and women believe women need to be more concerned with their personal security than men while onboard the BMTC buses, though we see a higher percent of women responding yes.

Table 13: Do women need to be more concerned with personal security than men while using the following mode?

	Company Bus	Public Bus
Women	61%	96%
Men	48%	88%

While most men interviewed seemed aware of women's need to be cautious while using transportation they did not elaborate on specific details about how to be more cautious.

Consider the following conversation with a male employee in his late 20s:

I: Could you comment on your perception of women's safety in Bangalore?

MR: So I would say that it is not an unsafe city. If you were to compare Delhi, Delhi is, on a scale of 1-10 an 8. So Bangalore would come around a 4 and Bombay would probably be a 3. I mean Bombay is safer than Bangalore but Bangalore is pretty safe. I've seen over the years, [that] we've never had a problem, even for men. So in the US, in the city, you would, whether man or women, you would fear mugging. But there is no such threat as in people do not feel unsafe as in there is no such threat of mugging. Smaller incidents are there and those happen mostly in private vehicles, mostly they are hi-jacked. Or the women are walking or talking on the phone, those are the things that happen but still I would say it is pretty safe city to live in. [Interview 23.8.13]

Compare this to a group discussion with two women employees:

I: Could you comment on your perception of women's safety in Bangalore?

FR1: Safety, it depends on what time you are going out. You should always take care of yourself and if you are going out [out as in a restaurant, bar, etc.] you should go out with someone. You should always take self-precautions. It's not like somewhere that is very open you know it's not like it's 12 o'clock in the night and I want to walk somewhere alone and I don't have to face anything, it's not like that kind of place.

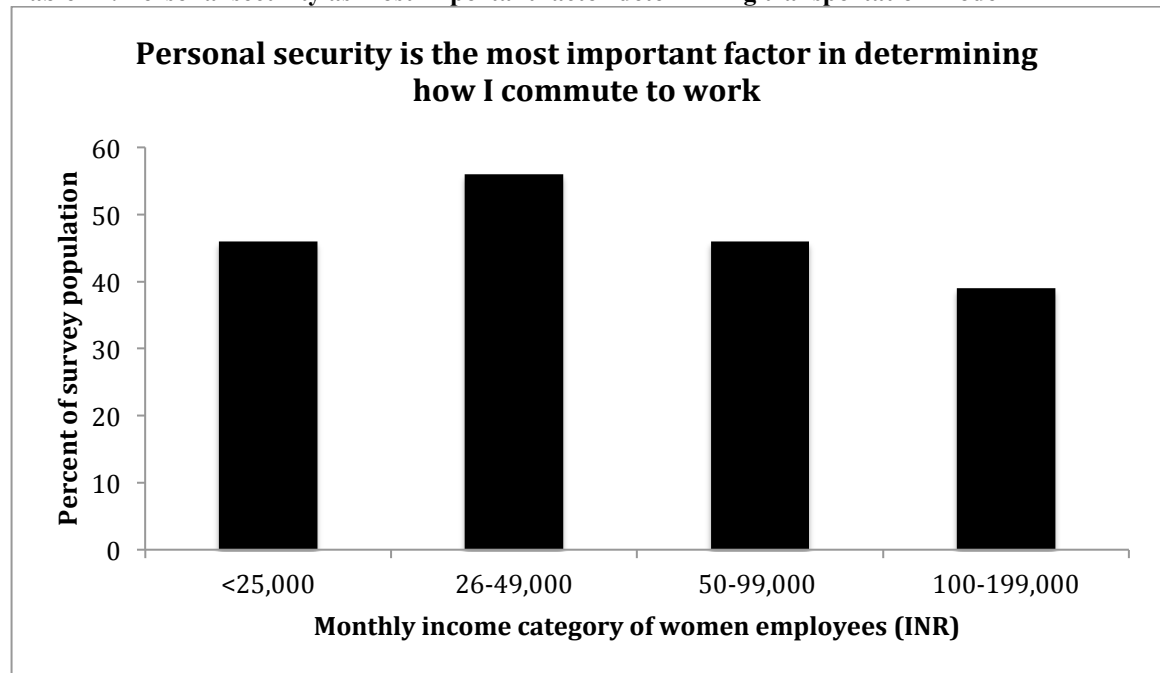
FR2: Not anywhere! Not anywhere can we [women] do that!

FR1: Yes, I don't think that is anywhere so you can't expect such things. So self-precaution is a must but I feel pretty good, probably it depends on the area and the time. [Group interview 23.8.13]

Importance of security according to income bracket

The relationship between security and income and whether women with higher incomes are less concerned with their personal security, presumably because of having more transportation modes available, was explored.

Table 14: Personal security as most important factor determining transportation mode



In table 14 we see that security is most important for women in the 26-49 INR category. These women would presumably have more mode choices than those in the category of less than 25 INR for whom cost might be the most important factors. As we get into the higher income ranks, security as the most important factor decreases, it is important to remember that a very low percent (less than 5 percent) of women are actually in these upper income ranks.

The hypothesis was that concern for personal security decreases among the higher income bracket for several reasons. These women would have more secure,

transportation modes available to them, perhaps a company car, possibly a driver. We can recall the earlier quote from Ms. Singh, the lawyer from Delhi who commutes by driving and has never felt unsafe. Those in the higher ranks also tend to be older as they are more established in their career⁹³. Most likely their lives, residential neighborhoods, and accommodations are quite different than the younger women for whom personal security factors weigh more strongly. Phadke et al (2011) make the argument that for the middle, particularly upper middle class women, access to private spaces (e.g. Private transportation, the house, the mall) is readily available (“upper-class women tend to move from one private space to another, rarely accessing public space at all,”(60). This is one way in that a woman’s personal safety in public is inherently class based. Upper-class women are reminded of the dangers women face in public so long as newspapers are read and social media is actively used. However, her relationship with or presence in public space is out of choice as opposed to necessity, with safety mechanisms in place (e.g. access to app-based cab services) that a woman outside her class will not have.

Why use private/personal modes?

Rash driving is one of the primary reasons women do not use two-wheelers or cars to get to work.⁹⁴ Some women felt targeted on the road by other drivers, honking, tailing, and having gendered stereotypes shouted at them were some reasons cited for choosing not to drive to work. Many of these women do drive cars and, to a lesser extent, the two-wheeler outside of work commutes. This suggests that morning and evening rush hour in

⁹³ Those in the 100-199 INR income category would be entitled to a company-paid for driver who would pick them up and take them home from work.

⁹⁴ This finding corresponds with Jain’s 2015 Gender Appraisal of Mobility in which working women in Delhi cited lack of safety as the primary deterrent to using a two wheeler for the work commute (2015: 25).

Bangalore is a particularly stressful time to be on the road. However, for the four percent of women who do commute to work by two-wheeler, the reasons cited for this mode choice are exactly the same as men. Both men and women chose to use two-wheelers primarily because of the flexibility it allows (e.g. “saves time”), as well as the ability to avoid traffic,⁹⁵ and, lastly, cost. No interviews were conducted with women who used a two-wheeler to get to work. But, while women frequently spoke of rash driving as a deterrent to using some form of personal transport to get to work, one male employee gave the impression that he himself may be a rash driver. “I am keen to the two-wheeler; I just love driving my bike. I haven’t gotten a four-wheeler [car] see cause the main thing is traffic. If you have a two-wheeler you can get anywhere within a half an hour. You can just go in and out of all four wheelers” Male Respondent (21.8. 13). This is in contrast to an interview with a woman who owns a two-wheeler but does not use it to get to work.

People do not have good road sense. They are so reckless and don’t even bother about the people, there is no ethics, especially these two-wheeler people, they really get to your nerves in the morning, riding on the platforms [sidewalks] and actually, the thumb rule is that the pedestrian gets the priority but you can’t even step out of the house you know
Female Respondent (21.8.13).

The same male employee was asked if he noticed many women using two wheelers. He explained: “When I came here it was 2007. The number of women driving was different, it was none, it was maybe nil and now in 2013 I'd say it's maybe 30 percent. Still, when I see women driving, I see them driving more four wheelers than two wheelers.” This comment was reiterated in a second interview, this time with a female employee who had

⁹⁵ This perhaps sounds contradictory to the previous discussion. Because roads are narrow, most of the traffic congestion is a result of a gridlock between buses and cars. For those on a two-wheeler, it is quite easy to weave around this traffic and it is not uncommon to see (male) two-wheeler drivers weave through the pedestrian path in order to get around traffic in the street.

a car in her household. When asked the same question her reply was “I feel as though more women are going for a four-wheeler over a two-wheeler. I don’t come across women who say, ‘I want a two-wheeler.’ It is pretty less. I think it is because it is less safe,”(20.8.13). This brings me to ideal mode choices and mode choices outside of work.

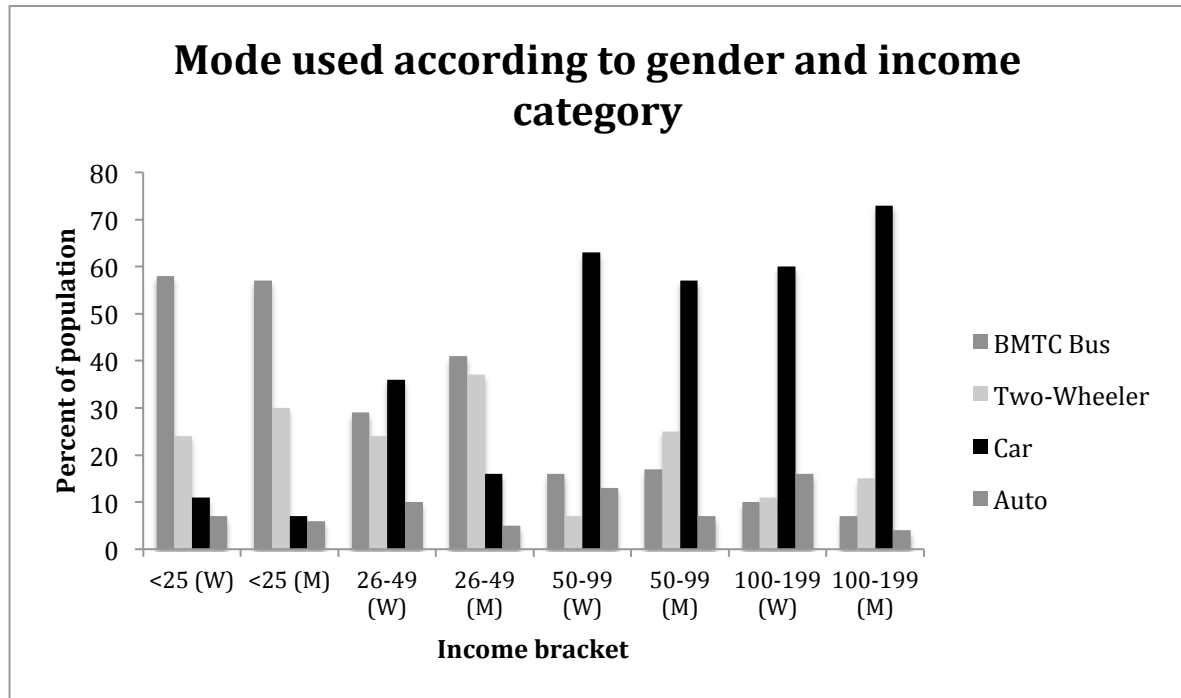
Table 15: Ideal Mode Choice*

	Company bus	Public bus	Car	Metro
Women	40%	9%	11%	10%
Men	33%	19%	13%	13%

* Percentages don’t total 100 as the survey population cited other modes

It is interesting that in an ideal situation more women would use their car to get to work, and rely less on the public bus and even company bus. Responses from men seemed to suggest that ideal modes and actual modes used correspond, with the exception of the Bangalore metro. For many women and men, the company bus remained the ideal mode to work. However, unlike actual mode choice, this was not the ideal mode for the majority of female respondents for whom we find a greater distribution among preferences than we do actual modes used. Car becomes the second most popular response for both women and men, followed by the Bangalore metro, which, at the time of research and writing (2017) is not a feasible option (but again we are talking about ideal modes), and then the public bus. That women view the car as an ideal mode could speak to the time poverty many women experience in general, and particularly in the tech profession, where work hours tend to be longer and can be erratic making it more difficult to fulfill expected home responsibilities. While a car does not offer freedom from responsibility, it offers women the freedom to do their double load more efficiently.

Table 16: Mode used outside of work according to income and gender



Looking at the transportation modes used by women and men for non-work trips we see that women in nearly every income category, except the highest, use cars more than men. Men of all income categories use two-wheelers at a higher rate than women, confirming the observation of several employees regarding women's preference for the car.

The car as a middle class social reproduction

Verma's 2015 study on growing car ownership found that in the case of Bangalore, only 42 percent of respondents used their car for work commutes. This was explained by several factors, the most significant being the stress of commuting in the city's traffic and poor road conditions. While Verma's study did not correlate mode used and distance to work location, in my research the further an employee lived from the firm, the more likely he or she was to use the company bus, primarily due to the traffic situation.

However, this depended on several further factors, the primary being not distance, but one's residential location. Bangalore has developed several ring roads and flyovers, most of which are tolled and cannot be used by auto rickshaws and, in some cases, buses⁹⁶. Those who live great distances but have access to the ring road did tend to drive to work as opposed to use the company bus because in these instances greater distance is not necessarily correlated with longer commute times. On the other hand, those located in older neighborhoods where the commute entailed coming through the center of the city, tended to prefer commuting by company bus. Those who did drive to work were typically more senior in the firm and thus had more flexible arrival and departure options, with several explaining they left either very early or after 10 am, to avoid the morning rush.

Verma (2015) found that once a car had been acquired, more trips were made, thus the car was seen less as a luxury and more as a necessity, and 61 percent of Verma's respondents agreed with the statement that the car made them feel that they were doing well in life. Both these points reiterate Vasconcellos's argument that, in the context of developing countries, the car is an essential tool to the social reproduction of the middle class: "demand is socially determined, in the sense of being related to how social groups and classes—especially the middle class—see and interpret the process of economic modernization in contemporary capitalist societies," (1997: 245). Consider the following interview excerpt:

Our neighbors asked my wife if I had lost my job," he explained to me. "She was very embarrassed and worries for my safety." Although attitudes are changing, for the most part the bicycle as a utility is still associated with "the common man,"

⁹⁶ Autorickshaws are generally prohibited due to the low speeds at which they travel. All of these initiatives are PPPs with revenue going to the private firm managing the project. As buses are charged high tolls, it is unsustainable for the BMTC to ply these routes. One exception are the company buses which are allowed to travel on the Electronic City Expressway, the earliest flyover in the city, built with inputs from those in the tech sector as a way of significantly reducing travel times.

someone of relative economic immobility. Using a bicycle for the work commute, particularly given the poor road conditions coupled with the marginalization of cyclists by motorized vehicles who, again, associate the cyclist with a person of low socio-economic standing made it unfathomable to this man's neighbors that he could be cycling by choice. He felt that cycling opened his eyes to many factors in the city, such as this socio-economic inequality manifested in the context of transportation. He told me of his time "offshore" where he spent two years in Houston, Texas. "Your salary increases as per the standard of living of where you are sent. It is expected that you will need a car. For people like us, we become used to the lifestyle, the wide roads, the driving. People come back here and they think, I had an SUV there so why I shouldn't I have one here? [13.7.13]

Ajay's interpretation of his peers offered several insights. As someone in a more senior position within the company, his peers both inside and outside of work expect him to behave a certain way—a behavior reflected in material possessions, preferences, and commutes. As he explained it, his colleagues could afford to own an SUV in Bangalore if they wanted⁹⁷, and many of them did. But from a utility perspective why would one need an SUV in a city where average travel speeds are less than 15 km an hour? If we are to understand what Ajay is saying then it would seem that for these employees travel decisions are based on embedded understandings and relations to one's social and economic position and identity as a knowledge worker.

Going offshore was presented as a rite of passage within the firm, life, and identity as a middle class knowledge worker. When employees return from being offshore their employee level⁹⁸ moves up with the individual typically moving into a management position. Moving offshore allows one to return to India with more savings, which is then reflected in lifestyle and consumption choices, including a vehicle. Yet in all of the interviews conducted I did not meet a single woman who had gone offshore to

⁹⁷ SUVs are heavily taxed. In addition to import fees (if it is a foreign brand), India's Luxury Goods Tax is high.

⁹⁸ There are ten levels total. One being the lowest and ten being a CEO.

live for more than a few months; those who had gone abroad went for a particular project that would last a short period of time. This in and of itself speaks to a different kind of gendered mobility. In a separate phone interview with a younger man who had been with the firm for a few years but had not, as he explained, gone offshore, he offered insight into what he saw as the transportation trajectory of the IT employee:

Oh yes, the income, the disposable income of people has increased and due to the working hours, not the working hours as such but the shifts, the timings, so people have been forced to switch to personal transport because everybody cannot come early or leave by the last bus so they have no option but to take a motor bike or a car. Also, as of when you become a senior person within any IT company you have a family, you have a car and it's a general trend because you will have a two wheeler and everyone will say okay that is not the safest thing so why don't you switch to a car. So then most people, as their number of years in the industry increase they first will start with the public transport and then they will leave that and go to a motor bike and from a motor bike they will switch to a car and then they will stop using public transport so most people who are six or more years in the industry, the kind of income they have and will spend, they will not use the public transport [23.08.13].

2.2.3 Gender as the primary consideration: analysis

In the previous section I discussed the mode choices of employees within a particular IT firm in Bangalore's Electronic City using evidence from survey data and interviews to better understand the reasons for making particular choices. In this section I further engage with embedded positionalities of gender, class, and age and how these inform transportation decisions.

Why are women choosing the modes that they do?

Despite having more mode choices available to them than the average Bangalorian, survey findings suggest that women in the IT sector both consciously and unconsciously choose their transportation modes based on constructed gender norms that manifest in

respect to concern for cost, personal security, and time poverty. For those using the company bus, personal security and comfort are at the forefront of the decision to use the mode, as alternative modes are seen as less secure when it comes to gender-based harassment and less comfortable in respect to both physical and mental comfort, wherein mental comfort is linked to gender and class based concerns of distrust toward the non-knowledge worker who is not obligated to maintain a certain “code of conduct.” Though the company bus greatly improves the work commute and the interior space seems to remove gender based concerns for security from the actual commute, data suggests that gender is at the forefront of the decision to use the bus. And yet gender also seems to be at the forefront of those who decide to use the public buses. Women who commute by this mode cite flexible timings as the primary advantage, allowing her to complete caregiving duties such as getting the children ready for school. Cost is also a reason for choosing the BMTC bus; it could be argued that this is indirectly attributed to the lower salaries women receive which may prevent her from choosing a different mode. So, in the case of both forms of bus travel, gender more or less becomes the primary “navigating” factor.

During interviews I did not explicitly ask about safety and security considerations during non-work commutes. While further research is needed, based on conversations in which this topic organically came up, I would conclude that personal security was less of a concern for the reason that almost all travel was done in the company of others and/or by private modes, as illustrated in the previous section. Younger, unmarried hires⁹⁹ spoke of spending the weekend with friends. If she chose to go out in the evening, it was in a

⁹⁹ As many of these women stay in Paid Guest accommodations, meals are provided for; furthermore most neighborhoods in urban India are such that food, pharmacy, and daily necessities are available in walking distance from any residence thereby negating the need to use transportation for this purpose.

group and entailed sharing an auto or riding on the back of one's two-wheeler. Married women spoke of using the car on the weekend for errands or traveling with the entire family for recreation. Gender is still a factor in determining travel, but a salient difference between work and non-work travel is that in the case of the non-work trip, a mode is chosen according to time of day and ability to travel with others. The young unmarried woman may use the BMTC bus to get to her friends place on a Saturday morning or afternoon but she would not travel by public bus on her own to go out on a Saturday night. Unlike travel on the weekend, the work commute requires traveling at specific times of day and often by one's self. As these factors are beyond a woman's control, she must choose a mode that provides her with safety and comfort regardless of time of day and who she is traveling with.

Transportation security: a company perk or hindrance?

In this section I highlight two different discussions with women to illustrate that not all women feel the same way about the firm's security measures for women. A focus group discussion with three women revealed how nuances of company policies compliment family dynamics and concern for personal security while using transportation. All were married, in their early thirties, and with families—one lived with her in-laws. All three joined as a “batch” of BPO workers and were now working in quality assurance for various US and UK clients. As BPO employees, they reflected not only a different employment category but also a different “background”¹⁰⁰. Although the particular firm

¹⁰⁰ Again recalling Radhakrishnan (2011) and Patel (2008) found that BPO employees tend to be less respected among the educated middle class. Whereas IT jobs require, in addition to English, college degrees and technical proficiency, BPO jobs require a fluency in English, which can be obtained through certificate training courses. BPO workers tend to go through cultural programs, such as accent training, in

under study had both IT and BPO services, they were somewhat isolated from another, being in separate buildings and having separate shift timings. As BPO employees did not participate in the online survey,¹⁰¹ the group interviews shored up several unique insights on company transportation.

I: Can you tell me about your daily commute?

FR1: We have our bus coming at 7:30, at a dedicated bus stop. We take company transport so if we board the bus by 7:30 we reach here by 8:45am. So this, Electronic City, is almost in the outskirts and we stay in the middle of the city so it takes about 1.5 hours to reach the campus.

I: Why do you take the company transport?

FR1: Taking company transport is for security...That is the safest mode of transportation. When we chose this job maybe we did not think about the transportation. We wanted to work at [firm] and we were ready to take any kind of transport but luckily we've gotten company transport. Now that we have gotten the day shift we use the bus. We used to work from 12:30 to 9:30pm and we used to have cabs that would pick us up. So lesser time it would take because it never used to go on the main road that the bus takes so it could cover long distances.

FR2: It's off peak time as well. [She means in the context of the old shift]

FR3: The bus is 100 times better than public transport. One is that the government transport is rash driving and there are a lot of problems when you don't have the exact change when you try to give it you should always have the change and then there is the seating is a problem. There are very few seats for ladies and in general the ladies do not prefer to go behind [the section designated for ladies] and stand, as it is always very crowded. And from that perspective the company bus is always the best.

I: Did you have to pay for the cab service?

order to interact with clients in the US and UK, suggesting that these individuals don't have an innate cultural currency for interacting with other nationalities.

¹⁰¹ A limitation that was beyond my control.

FR2: For the cabs, no we didn't have to pay. But for the buses yes we do. This has been started from the recession time. Earlier we never used to pay for transportation it was absolutely free of cost. For all of employees. Irrespective of its subsidies. But since the recession time they are charging based on distance. And that price keeps on revising every year.

I: Do you feel it is a fair price?

FR1: Compared to the market, yes it is.

I: But if you were to keep with the 12:30-9:30pm shift it would still be a taxi?

FR1: Yes, for night drops it would be a cab, that is compulsory. We have to pre-book the cabs.

I: With the cab approvals, do you have to do that every day?

FR1: Yes. If I'm not in continuous basis, that is if I'm not working every night the same time then I must.

(23.08.2013)

Unlike the general shift for IT employees (8:45am-5:45pm), BPO employees have several shifts: 8am-5pm, 9-p.m., 12:30-9:30pm. There is another group of shifts, 1:30-10:30pm, 5:30pm-2:30am and a 7:30pm-4 or 5am, according to daylight savings in the west. One's shift is determined according to which offshore client and department an employee is assigned. If a woman's client is the American-based Kraft foods and she is assigned to customer service, there is a good chance she will work from 5:30pm-2:30am. However, the firm ensures that no one works a night shift for a long duration of time, unless requested by the employee, so BPO employees tend to work a variety of shifts. Most of these women, having worked for the firm for over five years, had some seniority in regard to shift preferences, though not in the sense of mobility into a more senior position. As the interview progressed I learned more how their jobs interfaced with personal relationships and responsibilities.

I: Do you have children?

FR2: Yes, he is five.

I: Having a child, how does that influence your shift?

FR2: I'm not dependent on my kid for all those activities because I drop him to my mom's place. And she takes care of him. If she was not there then that would be a big issue.

I: Thinking about the women you work with, do you think they choose their shift timings based on family needs? What is the most popular shift for women?

FR1: I think it is 9 to 6; it's a general shift. People prefer this. Say for example before you get married you are free to work any shift. But after marriage there are certain constraints at your in-laws place where you will have to come home before 8 or 9 o'clock in the evening. But there are some who are okay with this shift from 12:30-9:30pm because they can be with their kids say until about 10:00 and go the buses around 10:30 and then reach office by 12:30. And then have their husband reach home by 6pm and pick up the children. By the time she goes back they are home. So people manage.

I: And these early morning shifts, do women work these shifts?

FR2: They do.

I: And would you say these are younger women or...

FR2: No they will be middle age to old age.

This last exchange revealed a contradiction within the response. Initially, I was told that before marriage a woman can work any shift because she is unconstrained by family and extended family duties and norms. However, when pressed as to why only middle to old age woman (keeping in mind that 40 was considered old age according to firm demographics) worked the early morning shifts I was told that it was because of respectability. Unmarried women, inevitably positioned as prospective brides, should not work late at night because it could be seen as inappropriate or unsafe. While this conversation could not be considered a representative sample, the statements made by

these three women supports other ethnographic work on call center culture in which it is framed as “moral decay”, particularly for women. Consider one interview with a male IT professional in Radhakrishnan’s study: “Take the kids working for BPOs. No background, their parents have never seen money..Now a BPO guy comes back at 2 a.m.; on his way back he is going with two [or] three girls, dropping them off, doing whatever...They share offices with my firm and I can see it is bad. IT cultural is different,”(qtd in Radhakrishnan 2011: 45). Common throughout the existing literature on BPO work, is the emphasis the young age of the employee (Patel 2010; Upadhyaya 2004; D’Mello and Sahay 2007; Radhakrishnan 2009: 2011) so it was surprising that these women described those taking the late night shifts as older. The interview also offered insight into the night taxis available to women who work after p.m.

FR1: The company does not allow lady employee to go out on her own after p.m. You sign [a form] every day. It’s not as though you sign once and you can go for a week. Even if you are taking your two-wheeler or going on your own you’re not supposed to step out alone after p.m.

FR2: But if we take the company transport it is not the same. We have a security guard coming along with us till we reach our door. So that is the safety component of the company transport.

I: Do you know many other companies that would have this extensive kind of transportation service?

FR1: This is my first company so I wouldn’t know.

FR2: I don’t think so, I don’t think any other company will be giving this¹⁰² because on the way we see other companies and on our way we would see the

¹⁰² This claim does not check out, as per the laws around the provision of night shift for women. Although adjustments to the Factory Act are handled in a decentralized, sector-based manner. In Karnataka, these rules are laid out in response to Section 25 of the 1961 Karnataka Shop and Commercial Establishments Act. Women who work between 10pm and 6am must be given adequate safety while commuting and

roster because all of them will be standing outside the compound waiting for the bus and so they don't have a parking lot which is available, what we have, this service. I'm assuming, because I've seen them standing for eight years, waiting like anything, waiting outside the compound, in public. It is not that safe.

This was my first and only conversation with women working in the BPO departments and using the firm's cab service. These women considered it a benefit of working for the firm, an advantage to other firms in Electronic City. My original assumption was that it was an effective and favored policy. Through other conversations however, I learned that some considered it a nuisance. One young woman in Research and Development (R&D) the policy as nothing but "a big pain in the butt". She spoke about this in the context of working on a project that had a fast delivery execution and entailed working late with her team. As the only woman in the group, she felt singled out for having to go through so much paperwork to get home, while her male colleagues just went to the parking garage and got on their scooters. The woman in R&D was in a different life stage and professional path than the women BPO workers and these differences are reflected in the attitudes expressed toward firm policies that required women to sign forms and take permissions when leaving after p.m. The BPO women framed these protective measures as necessary precautions while the young woman viewed them as overbearing. While it was not asked, one wonders what the woman in R&D considers an appropriate or alternative solution to the issue of women working late.

Mr. Nagarij, the head of the firm's taxi division told me that night services provides almost 550 trips per day and requires 300 vehicles for night transport. This is

failure to do so results in penalties against the company. Two other large firms with a presence in Electronics City were contacted to ask if night taxi services were provided for women employees, it was confirmed that they were.

not a small operation and must cost the firm some amount of expense. However, during conversations with facility heads, it seemed clear that, even in the face of budget cuts, this service would never be compromised. Ironically, a transportation service that was supposed to allow a woman more flexibility to work late involved so much paperwork it required necessary forethought and brought further brought attention to her gendered position as a woman. In theory, she could take a ride home with a colleague who was also staying late but the colleague would also have to fill out the paperwork. As most of the colleagues were male, the woman in R&D felt that security personnel might pass moral judgment if she was to take a ride from a male colleague.

I highlight this particular policy because it begins to chip away at the nuanced differences and positionalities of women within the firm. These positions, everything from age, education, class, place of origin, and caste, affected attitudes, preferences, and identities of womanhood. For example the R&D employee and well as one of the women from the BPO group also have two-wheelers. The former, a young Malayalam with family in Dubai, loved using her two-wheeler on the weekend and her favorite area to go to was Kormangala, a hip neighborhood with many bars and restaurants. She spoke of her two-wheeler as a feeling of freedom, not constraint. Yet, while continuing the conversation with the BPO group I learned that although the second woman in the group had a two-wheeler, she did not like to use it.

FR2: Yeah I have a two-wheeler.

I: And do you use the two-wheeler on the weekend?

FR2: I used to but if you look at the traffic, it's a bit scary. We are not sure if we will go and come back safely. They see a lady and will take advantage over traffic, they overtake, over ride.

I: Do you find that when you ride the two-wheeler, it's mostly men riding, do you find...?

FR2: They will always try to overtake us and we might get scared and we might lose control over the two-wheeler. It's quite, it's maybe that safety, the confidence, we might lose the confidence of driving.

FR1: And two-wheeler is not good for long distance

FR2: We can use it for short distance.

I: What do you use for longer distance?

FR2: BMTC

FR1: Yeah, BMTC that is the public bus company here. Or auto.

I: And what about your sense of personal security?

FR3: That is still there. People still stare at us and comment but since we have grown up we don't care about that. When we were teenagers men used to stare at us and comment on us but we used to give more importance to it. But now we have grown up and we don't need to care about that. But that is still there. Men will still stare and they won't give space to you. Especially in public bus but there are men who will not compromise. They say 'ladies first' but they don't go with that. They will stand, stare.

I: To conclude, if there was something that could be done in the public buses, what could be done to improve?

FR2: I think men should not be allowed to sit in front first of all. If it is a lady's seat, it shouldn't be given. Even if a lady is not there it shouldn't be given. It will be a safety part. If a man is sitting next to a lady, it doesn't make sense. We don't feel comfortable.

While some aspects of the night cab service for women might seem excessive, particularly the presence of a security guard, consider that in 2008, a woman BPO employee of Hewlett-Packard was raped and murdered by the driver of a vehicle provided by the firm. The case was taken to the Supreme Court, who found the head of

the company guilty of neglecting the safety of employees.¹⁰³ During the time of doing this research, stories have come up in the media regarding the sexual assault of women who are affiliated with the IT sector. A second incident that has been covered by the media is one in which a young woman was found dead outside a Hyderabad firm's parking structure at 10:30pm. I highlight these events as evidence that the rise of a global sector in which women form a substantial part of the employment base is coupled with a backlash that occurs in the form of gender based violence and second, the sector is warranted in its concern for such violence against employees.

While senior management did not confirm it, it seemed that stricter policies, such as extensive sign out paperwork for women after p.m., was a direct result of the 2008 rape at Hewlett-Packard. Also not confirmed by senior management, I was told that the company bus used to have a last departure time of 8:15pm, however, after rules came into place about women receiving guaranteed rides home after p.m., the last bus departure time was changed to 7:45pm. The checks and balances in place for women's transport are an undeniable hindrance but, perhaps, a necessity. Particularly if the sector wants to retain its image as safe, accountable, and respectable. In the next paragraph I illustrate a conversation with the head of facilities management. In this interview I shared my findings that most of the women I interviewed commuted by the company bus and preferred it for several reasons, suggesting that facilities management was doing a good job in respect to addressing women's safety and security concerns. He responded with a personal opinion.

There are two buses one is the company bus and the other is the general public bus and the general public bus is not safe anywhere. Like my wife and kids travel in the public bus many times it's just that it's a public bus so you know, it's just

¹⁰³ <http://www.rediff.com/money/2008/feb/21som.htm> [Accessed 23.10.2017].

that you have to go prepared to travel. When we travel in the public bus, me and my wife and my kids we both enter through different doors. You know, there is a different door for ladies and for gents. So we decide before, which is our stop so I tell my wife be careful of your bag be careful of the kids and I say I'll be behind and I'll buy the tickets. It's very important that the girls who are traveling really know where they are going, what they are doing, they must plan in advance. They cannot just take the route...you should know where you are going. And you should know what is the transport network of that route. You shouldn't go to a place where the network frequency is less. You must do some bit of work before you travel. If you go to Majestic [the main bus terminal in the city, state buses enter here] you will see thousands of women. Thousands of women of Karnataka who travel by bus. I should say by millions they travel, in a day's time. And they all travel, they travel long kilometers but in my opinion it's a travel skill they develop. So what I'm trying to tell you is that the women must know what is the best time to travel and how to make the best use of the bus. After a certain time the frequency reduces, so you must plan accordingly.

What I'm saying is to make your journey more memorable to make it without any hassle. To make your journey hassle free, use the right frequency. The bus stand is safe the buses are safe but you have to be careful of pickpockets so you'll see, all our trousers have these buttons and you'll see these backpacks, you can keep your iPod in one place and your phone in another place and there are all these fancy pockets but you would be crazy to take this on a BMTC bus, or any bus in the world for that matter. So, you have to pack your bag accordingly, you have take the right amount of cash you can't take out, so for example the bus to Majestic is 12 rupees so as soon as I know I'm traveling by bus I take out 12 rupees, keep it in my pocket and give it (29.8.13).

Our conversation went from a discussion about company provided transport, to his opinion of the public buses, his admiration for the women coming to the city from long distances on a daily basis, and finally to the general precautions an IT worker or anyone with a bit of money should take while traveling by public transportation. It is an honest assessment about the realities of commuting in the city. He points out that women must do their homework, that is know the frequencies and routes of the bus network and take precautions that ensure they do not go somewhere the frequency is less. Whether or not this is true is irrelevant, the point is that in this view, the responsibility falls upon the

woman, not on the infrastructure or those who plan or provide it. Responsibility is a personal rather than societal issue.

Perhaps even more telling, in several semi-structured interviews around the topic of women's safety and security and what should be done to address it, a common difference in responses was observed between men and women. To paraphrase these responses, men usually explained to me that you can't change one's behavior. Given that bad things happen to women, better policing is needed, with a tendency to advocate for CCTV cameras inside buses and bus stops and even a police presence. More law and order would prevent gender-based incidents from occurring and keep women safe. Women on the other hand had a completely different opinion. "Nothing will change until the mindset changes," one young woman told me. "It starts with the education in the household. Until that changes nothing will change," (13.7.13). The term "mindset" was used both by men and women with a common agreement that the "mindset" of some men wasn't correct. However, for women it was the mindset that needed to change whereas for men it was the mindset that warranted better policy and protection of women.

Section Three: Discussion

2.3.1 Transportation as accountability: Industry perspective

The work environment of the global IT sector is typically ascribed qualities of non-hierarchic, openness, transparency, and a sense of casualness. However, in a campus of 20,000 employees, morning arrivals look more like the opening scenes of Chaplin's *Modern Times* than the slick covers of *Wallpaper** magazine. The firm has its own bus depot, where, starting around 8am, a new bus pulls in every five minutes. Employees, with their ID cards ready, swipe in through a turnstile, walk through a metal detector and

place their bags on a conveyor belt. Once they reach their building, they again swipe their ID badge to clock in and start the day.

HR explained that unless an employee was beyond a certain employment ranking¹⁰⁴, the work day is from 8:45am-5:45pm, with the expectation that he or she has swiped in by 8:45am.¹⁰⁵ This early start is particularly traumatic for new hires that must quickly adjust to Bangalore traffic. For the new hire then, the company bus is both assurance and a form of insurance. Unlike the public buses, all company buses have GPS tracking; employees receive real time messages if the bus is running late, allowing them to wait unnecessarily at the bus stop. More importantly, if the bus is late an employee is not penalized for a late arrival to work. As one entry level woman told me: “we cannot give reasons if we are taking a public bus. If there is a breakdown in the company bus we can always give a reason to our manager. If it is a breakdown in a public transportation then we cannot give a reason to our manager. It is our responsibility to get here and reach office,” (23.8.2013).

No employee who was interviewed spoke badly of the firm’s company bus with many expressing gratitude, even in the face of possible fare hikes. Men tended to emphasize attributes such as A/C and comfort while women added to this the safety and accountability mechanisms in place. From the firm’s perspective, investing in the efficiency, safety, and the ability to track the going and comings of a large percent of the workforce seemed in line with the larger IT ethos where a firm’s success is evaluated on profit and growth as well as corporate well being.

¹⁰⁴ There are 10 level rankings in this particular firm.

¹⁰⁵ Follow up conversations in 2017 suggest that due to the relentless traffic of the city, even the large IT firms had begun staggering arrival and departure times and allowing a work from home option on set days, neither of which were available at the time of doing this research.

In the introductory literature review, I discussed how women's safety in urban India is often framed within a context of protection and respectability, relying primarily on the work of Phadke et al (2011). Radhakrishnan's work on women working in the IT sector illustrates that the global knowledge worker is embraced so long as she remain "appropriately" Indian. However, these interviews with senior management illustrate that protection in the context of the company bus is industry protection. Company transportation is protection from legal repercussions of having women work late hours and, more generally, it is assurance of a productive workforce. Senior management stated that although roads and the public bus network had improved since the early years of Electronic City, the firm preferred employees to use the company bus. It ensured that employees arrived in a timely and safe manner and, given the comfort and ease of using it, it meant that the morning commute did not affect an employee's mental health and subsequent work performance. In one conversation with the head of transportation logistics, this last point was continuously emphasized. He felt it his personal responsibility that employees should not arrive already feeling tense and "high BP" as the work was already stressful enough.

In an industry that is evaluated on the grounds of innovation, growth and profit, an efficient and happy employee is essential. An employee is most efficient when he or she does not need to engage with the chaotic, Caliban city and is able to arrive on time and relaxed. It is an employee who is appreciative of the firm's concern for his or her wellbeing and willingness to facilitate transportation mobility. De Kosnik's (2014) understanding of tech privilege as perceptions and policies that elevate both individuals and things associated with the tech sector plays out in the Bangalore context wherein

privilege *is* and *requires* protection. To this extent I will briefly consider the different “logics” used by industry elites to justify certain transportation modes, policies and infrastructures for the IT sector, if they frame their policies as a privilege that comes at the expense of the rest of the city, and how they view the sector in relation to the city more broadly.

One example is that management did not overtly frame transportation in the context of protection but more as a technical problem with technical solutions—a view that reinforces tech privilege as one of cognitive privilege. Several conversations indicated a genuine awareness of and concern for the polarization of Bangalore city, but, similar to earlier writings (particularly Peter Hall’s *Cities of Tomorrow* 1988) on the industrial capitalist city, concern was not directed at the genuine inequality pervading the city but rather the potential threat dissatisfaction among the lower classes could cause to the economic and social functioning of the city¹⁰⁶. Early into the project I was encouraged to meet with Rathi, a senior level woman who was instrumental in the construction of the Electronic City Flyover (also known as Hosur Road), a private, 10 kilometer overhead road that provides direct connectivity from several central residential neighborhoods into Electronic City. Although this was not her original role within the firm, she proved to be a good interface between political leaders, the elite public, and the firm.

Speaking with Rathi on two different occasions it was clear that she was committed to well being and social cohesion, but in a way that was at times amorphous and contradictory. One of her biggest concerns during the construction of the flyover was

¹⁰⁶ A dissatisfaction that came to reality in 2016 in which an unorganized, impromptu strike among women garment workers effectively shut down the city for three days as the people from other groups joined the strikes and riots broke out.

the impact it was having and would have (once completed) on the residents within the locality of which it was built.¹⁰⁷ Rathi spoke to the divide between those who lived in Electronic City prior this designation and those who commuted for work. “Prior to Electronic City, this area was all villages and agricultural lands. After the flyover was built the largest issue has been that people [i.e. local residents] must walk through Electronic City or under the large flyover to reach their homes.” This particular firm spearheaded the flyover, which was initiated by several firms in Electronic City. As a toll road, not open to non-motorized transportation or autorickshaws, no one from the locality benefited from it. Furthermore, given the need to show employment IDs in order to enter Electronic City campuses, it was not clear to me how one could walk through in order to reach their homes. I was told that the construction of the flyover added several kilometers of walking to the average local resident.

Rathi told me about the work she did during the flyover construction, working outside of regular office hours, meeting with local panchayats¹⁰⁸ who helped form community groups to share inputs on how they felt about the flyover. Yet when I asked, in light of the flyover and current issues, what she felt could be done to improve inclusive growth in the city she gave me a four-point response. First that the city needed to develop new roads for the local population. Second that industry elites and city politicians needed to join hands in order to influence state government. For example, she wanted to see more institutional support for the fact that Electronics City needs alternative roads for

¹⁰⁷ At this particular point in time, the areas in which the flyover were being constructed were not part of the official city boundary. The areas affected by flyover construction were considered peri-urban, rapidly changing from agricultural to commercial and residential. While there is no quantitative evidence of this, it is a general impression that most of the people effected by this project were not employed or working directly in the IT sector.

¹⁰⁸ Local level authorities

commuting. Thirdly, a strengthening of the public transport sector, and an assessment of issues like shuttle needs and last kilometer connectivity. She thought, like many others, that BMTC should switch from a point to point to direction-based route network. Lastly, for city agencies to be open to inputs¹⁰⁹ from the IT sector, specifically suggestions for integrated transit systems, including maintenance for the private transport sector and toll roads.



Figure 2: Example of flyover construction in Bangalore

¹⁰⁹ In 1999 the Bangalore Agenda Task Force (BATF) was set up as a PPP think tank by the Chief Minister. The purpose was to initiate city projects that benefited the growing city. However, as an extra constitutional authority, none of the members—of which most were from the corporate IT sector—were elected by the public. This drew great criticism from civic bodies who thought BATF served only the interests of the tech sector. BATF was dismantled during the time of conducting this research but it was observed that several senior management—including Rathi—thought favorably of the BATF and wanted to see a new, similar body reinstated. For information on the BATF see the edited volume: Pani et al. (eds) (2010). *Bengaluru, Bangalore, Bengaluru: Imaginations and their Times*.

Although Rathi expressed concern for the well being of the local resident, it was in an abstract sense. Emphasis was given to a sort of trickle down version of transportation equity through a vision of increased efficiency, a vision that reflected a similar attitude around the logic of the company bus. In short, an emphasis on economics, a particular economic sector as the bearer of positive urban change. As a woman and influential leader in the sector I asked for her perspective on women's issues around employment and commuting in the city. According to her:

Choice of mobility is high. If both the man and woman are working in IT then it is most likely that they have two independent vehicles, there is definitely a preference from a convince perspective. When trying to decide where to buy, land cost is the first factor, connecting to others is perhaps second or the partner's connectivity. It's usually based on wife's location, as she should be closer to the home. But also school, portable water. The real issue is the last mile [for the woman]. For example, in the city proper there are good streetlights but in these new [residential] developments there are no lights so a woman might not feel safe during that last bit home. It would be good to know if there is any hostility toward women commuters and to better understand the influence of shift timings. But when traveling by company bus women are not going to have the same problems as the public buses because it's a homogenous crowd. It's about accountability, on the public buses anyone can misbehave [8.1313].

It was interesting to note that she felt a residential location was decided based on a wife's location, this runs counter intuitive to antidotal evidence, but speaks to existing research in which a woman's employment location is generally closer to home (Ericksen 2013; Rosenbloom 1978; Neto et al 2014). Furthermore, her response recalls the quote of Arkaja Singh, the female lawyer in Delhi, who doesn't feel unsafe because she travels by car but is aware that safety, for women, is a serious issue. In both cases, beyond the fact that both drive to work, safety is an issue, but not their issue. In a different interview, this time with the head of facilities management, Rathi's name was used in the context of improved transportation, but from the perspective of public transportation.

Now public transport in Bangalore has really picked up, they have done a wonderful job. It's crowded, but buses are available, everything is available during working hours, though on weekends and holidays the frequency is lower. I mean it used to be that the buses didn't have doors but now the buses have doors and they get closed and you have A/C buses. I have a Volvo bus [for my commute] and the firm has done a fantastic job in terms of, I don't know if you know Rathi, she's done a fantastic job (29.8.13).

BMTC structures its bus fares according to distance, and type of bus. The buses he mentions, that is the A/C Volvo buses, are typically double the fare of the "ordinary" buses and thus, for a majority of the non IT population, unaffordable. BBPV, the Bengaluru Bus Prayanikara Vedike, an activist group focused on ensuring affordability of public buses for all segments of the population, has, since the late 2000s, protested against the rise of luxury bus at the expense of increasing the fleet of affordable buses. When I questioned the affordability of the Volvo buses, facilities management gave me the following reply: "They are expensive, yes, I cannot disagree with that because they have raised the prices but see it's an increase in the cost of living, it's a standard increase but there are, the way it is....you always have a way to work around the problem...it is a standard increase, like anything because see, it's very important that they are offering the service and that the services are happening on time."

Conversations with the BBPV, who work with groups such as street sweeper unions and women garment workers confirmed that while there is a student bus pass, there is not a senior citizen pass and disagreed with the statement that fare increases, are correlated with standard increases. Their work illustrates that BMTC is one of the sole bus operators in India to be running with profit and this profit has come at the expense of lower and middle income populations who see their routes being decreased in order to provide a greater proportion of the bus fleet to fare generating routes such as those that

service the IT crowd. While facilities management believes that these fare increases are justified along lines of cost of living increases and the assurance of punctual services, evidence suggests that frequency has declined significantly within poorer neighborhoods and routes that do not include tech park destinations. During the attendance of a bus Adalat¹¹⁰ held at the Shivajinagar station on July 4th 2016, I heard from several “ordinary” citizens who complained that travel times had gotten much longer and the frustration of waiting at a bus stop and watching as AC Volvo buses went by every 10 minutes. Even if these buses serviced their route, the fare was 50 instead of 20 rupees, making it an unaffordable service to use.

Sabapathy et al’s 2011 quantitative research comparing the transportation mobility of individuals working in the IT and PSU sector find that spatial and infrastructural inequality in the city of Bangalore is growing so that “Transportation in work travel patterns in the globalizing city of Bangalore have resulted in greater inequalities,” (2011: 165). This claim was based on findings from the quantitative data which compared the transportation mobility of individuals working in the IT and PSU sector with evidence it was the work travel patterns of those in the IT sector that significantly contributed to these inequalities. While most of this chapter illustrated that gender does figure into the transportation decisions of women in the IT sector, decisions are shaped by embedded, multilayered positionalities that cannot be reduced or generalized to gender only, in many ways the company bus “flattens” out the gender inequality by creating a larger inequality within the context of the city and the modes available to the tech and non-tech worker. It seems that for the elite in the IT sector, there is a tendency to view the sector as having a positive influence on the growth,

¹¹⁰ Grievance

development, and prosperity of the city overall. Both senior level management and mid level employees I spoke to gave the impression that BMTC should be thankful that the private sector was choosing to hire the public buses—even if none of them used the service. Nevertheless an attitude was maintained that this public-private partnership was most probably of greatest benefit to the public sector. A more nuanced investigation would suggest that public transportation has improved for those already having access to modes other than the public buses, for those who can afford Volvos and Varaja buses that cost up to three times more than the “ordinary” buses. Part of the problem is that the industry elite do not seem to recognize this polarization, focusing on what the sector has brought into the city as opposed to who can access it.

2.3.2 Hierarchies and differences

Is the IT sector an urban group?

In his discussion of “classes on paper” Bourdieu (1987) argues that the desire to classify can be traced back to the scientific community in which classification of the natural world was an attempt at order and making sense of it. In Bangalore, the political elite create a class on paper¹¹¹ by pushing infrastructure projects designed to make life for the knowledge worker easier (e.g. flyovers, signal-free corridors, the ability to pay utility bills online), the real estate sector creates a class on paper by constructing gated communities that offer “sylvan tranquility” (Prestige Silver Oak), “Ambience within a

¹¹¹ And I’ve found it interesting to observe that any incident in which an IT employee is involved will be covered in the media and local news under the heading “Bangalore Techie”, this is in contrast to more general coverage in which it is the event that receives the headline, not the ‘type’ of person it happened to. “Techie commits suicide”; “Techie assaulted, robbed near Forum Mall”(2016); “Elephants had trampled Bangalore techie after trek”(2012); “How WhatsApp saved Bangalore techie’s life”(2014) and so on. In The Hindu (a daily paper in English) there is a column called “It’s a Techie Life”

valley” (Stone Park), and home buyer expos “Exclusively for Corporates” (The Big Indian Dream Festival). The local media also creates a class on paper when using headlines that place primary identity as someone belonging to the tech field. In the US, rightwing media and politicians create a class on paper through negative stereotypes of the job stealing Indian IT engineer, a stereotype that is transcended thanks to the broader, global IT class on paper who is perceived of as being united in a shared belief in individual and societal improvement through efficient and errorless technological advances (Wilson 2014). Lastly, in the context of this dissertation, a class on paper was created in order to be interrogated.



Figure 3: Bangalore's targeted real estate sector



Figure 4: Targeted lifestyle advertising in Bangalore

For Bourdieu, this classification occurs in the social world through “group-forming practices.” In this instance, it is not “an actual class, in the sense of a group... at most, it might be called a probable class,” (Bourdieu 1985: 725). Groups are, for Bourdieu, intimately tied to capital and struggle wherein classes are constituted by the idea that there are different forms of capital: economic, cultural, social, and symbolic capital (1987). If we revisit the earlier definitions of “consumer citizen” (Phadke et al 2011) and “tech privilege” (Wilson 2014; De Kosnik 2014) it is evident that all employees who were interviewed and surveyed for this research share several different forms of/access to capital that may not be available to other residents of the city. Yet let me complicate this with Radhakrishnan’s observation that, “The knowledge economy produces individuals who are self-disciplined, educated, enterprising, and rational; they strive for...autonomy in their professional and personal lives” (2011: 119).

Her argument is that the individualism and autonomy associated with the IT sector is a departure from cultural notions of India as being a “collective”¹¹² society as well as India’s previous middle class and the collectivity associated with government; Radhakrishnan’s research shows that having a sense of individual self upon which achievement and success are cultivated, is key to the IT sector, particularly in India.

Do individuals within this particular group, broadly known as the knowledge worker, or colloquially as the “Bangalore techie”; see inequality, hierarchy, or privilege between the tech sector and the rest of the city, (which for now I will call the general public) and his or her place within it? During my 15 weeks on the firm’s campus I developed the sense that many individuals in the sector have a sense of “how things should be”, a sense coming from a combination of higher education, working in a global sector, and spending time off shore in geographies such as the US, UK, and Australia. As suggested in the interview with Ajay, many people in the sector feel that they “should have” a car not because that is the mode the majority of people commute by or because the current road infrastructure has been developed for car use but because that is what someone of their background should have. In this instance, the mentality of “How things should be” car and road infrastructure go hand in hand, one should have a car because that is what people in the global tech world have, and Bangalore should have roads that are designed for cars because Bangalore is a global city. Beyond better roads, Bangalore should have less corruption in the government, no trash in the open, and 24-hour power and water. Though it must be emphasized that this sense of what should be was not

¹¹² Cultural capacity training is a significant part of India’s IT BPO sector, particularly for mid level employees who are expected to go offshore. While Hofstede’s model of cultural literacy is considered outdated at the time of conducting research, I found that there was still a strong emphasis cultural difference through binaries and buzz words such as hierarchy (India) and flat (US) management and particularly in respect to collective (India) and individualistic (US) culture.

inherently negative and it is important to draw attention to the tremendous amount of civic activism that comes from the city's middle class broadly, and those in tech in particular.

Deep engagement with the firm allowed me to observe the many ways in which employees were willing to put the time and effort into changing the city, particularly in regard to the delivery of city services, cleaning up of Bangalore's lakes, stopping the construction of a steel flyover, and the felling of trees. This is a result of collective protesting and resistance among the city's middle class who use their tech background for organizing through social/digital platforms such as WhatsApp and Facebook groups. Countering this however, is Nair's observation while attending the Bangalore Summit. Calling the Summit a "corporate will to political power" (2000: 1512), the invited "stakeholder" citizen identified road conditions, garbage, mosquitoes, and pollution, framing these as specific problems rather than attaching them to more inclusive public concerns (e.g. road condition instead of public transportation, mosquitos instead of public health), Nair concludes that "Questionable sampling methods apart, the strongly middle class profile of the meeting itself could have accounted for this order of priorities" (Ibid). In a city that is notoriously corrupt when it comes to urban resources coupled with an obtuse and shrouded planning process, it is only these individuals with their range of literacies who seem capable of exerting influence. While it hard to argue against trying to hold civic bodies and polluting industries accountable to the increase in the city's toxic lakes¹¹³, some argue that this middle class environmentalism (Adavi et al. 2017) is directed toward a more dangerous vision of cleanliness, which includes the removal of

¹¹³ <https://scroll.in/latest/824498/bengaluru-residents-demand-action-as-toxic-froth-rises-in-varthur-bellandur-lakes-again> [Accessed 23.10.2017]

slums, hawkers, and other denizens who do not (or cannot) conform to the image of the word class city.

I encountered several positive examples of collective organizing within the firm's campus¹¹⁴. In one such example I went with a group of engineers, one of who was originally from a small village in central Karnataka, to distribute school supplies. The firm purchased the schools supplies (under its Corporate Social Responsibility mission) and this group of engineers went, every year, to the village to donate the supplies. There was equal excitement among all parties throughout the day with several students proclaiming their desire to be a future engineer. While it was impossible to feel cynical in such an uplifting environment, it did not escape my attention that all the wall clocks in the school bore the logo of the IT firm. However, my point is that none of these efforts—neither the engineer nor the firm, nor the #Steel Flyover Beda (no steel flyover) campaign are ill intended.

The danger is not necessarily these efforts, rather it is the way in which a particular population is able to speak for the entire city, and this population seems to have very similar forms of capital, a danger that is certainly not unique to Bangalore. Writing on structured inequalities among different classes in India, Peace fears: “the consolidation by the middle class of control over scarce resources concentrated in the government bureaucracy...The key mechanism here concerns the ability of the middle class to informally influence resource allocation within the government bureaucracy,” (Peace 2006: 155). In the case of Bangalore, it is not only the middle class but it is also the

¹¹⁴ Examples included everything from schoolbook and supplies drives for children in neighboring villages and the city to campus wide cycle days.

corporate sector, both of which are particularly attractive to a political class committed to developing their own version of Singapore.

There is a tendency within transportation planning and research to create “classes on paper” for the purpose of making sense and bringing order to the inherent chaos of movement. However, given urban and transportation planning’s long history of implementing infrastructure based on normative assumptions of generic users who tend to be male, middle class, and able-bodied, it is important for feminists to challenge the tendency toward classes on paper. The company bus is a transportation mode emerging out of the need to create/delineate a class on paper, which, in turn, reinforces this delineation. While the industry elites largely seemed to uphold this delineation, in more open ended conversations with employees, I found wide variations regarding personal opinions on the physical and symbolic place one occupies as an IT employee in the city. Some men and women felt deserving of better infrastructure and transportation and wondered why the rest of the city was not like the firm’s campus. Most however, expressed awareness and concern over the several polarizations that resulted from Bangalore’s identity as an IT capital. In a telephone interview with one man who had recently transferred from Bangalore to Chennai I asked for his thoughts on the two cities, in relation to the IT sector and transportation:

MR: Bangalore is a new city in some sense. [It] is a migrant city and the city has developed according to economics. So this is a city based on greed in some sense. Because they see a migrant population that needs to live here, so developers come with restaurants, malls, with the singular purpose of making money. But that’s not how a city develops and works.

I: Changing the subject, how do you find the public buses in Chennai in comparison to Bangalore?

MR: Chennai is definitely cheaper. From what I know, Bangalore is probably the most expensive.¹¹⁵ I think it's too expensive for the common man, especially the Volvo buses.

I: How do you see transport developing?

MR: Here in India it's not what you do but what you seem to be doing. As a pedestrian your life is constantly threatened, and many have to walk because they don't have an option. I walk I am transport but that is completely forgotten. So he does not get that inch that he deserves. So example, there is a road and there is no footpath. It's a highway but it's not a highway in the sense that it's in the city itself and there are residential homes alongside it so people obviously need to go from one side to the next but you've barricaded the whole thing except for very few places. So it's very difficult for a person to cross. And with IT you know, the companies want that for them, they just wanted a quick way to get transport but for the people living here they have a different perspective. For them, they've been living there all these years and then somebody comes and now this person doesn't even know how to cross the road. And here you start seeing this against development. See, for us it seems like what is his problem? I do the hard work and I pay but then you get to feel his life indirectly.

Let me contrast this with a second interview, this time with two young women.

I: And since you are both from Bangalore, what about the city has absolutely changed? What observations do you have?

FR1: Well, I can say that traffic has gotten really bad. I don't know, it could be a general comment to say that there was no proper planning or something like this but then you see so much of flowing from people from other states coming to these companies which are booming so even the city has to accommodate these people, so all your infrastructure all your greenery is going. It's all buildings buildings buildings. Greenery is getting lost; traffic is increasing day by day.

¹¹⁵ He is correct.

FR2: It's not designed for that actually, it was designed for smaller actually. So you can't really blame them.

FR1: And implementation has also been a problem. If you take this Electronic City flyover, it took almost four years to build.

FR2: I've been with the company for 10 years and at first it was traffic, it took me one hour 15 minutes to reach here and then they started constructing the flyover so another four years it was really slow and now it's done. But now, after you get off the flyover you get into so much traffic and so now again it takes one hour and 15 minutes, there is no change in the timings. Now again, we probably need to put up another flyover because of the traffic so it's like after you find a problem you try to tackle it and then I think that is where the delay is.

FR1: But then I think the company is in general doing many great things, like they did a lot to get that flyover in place.

These contrasts are interesting for several reasons. First, I draw attention to the male respondent's observations. Although he is not from Bangalore, he has observed the physical and social changes brought on by the IT sector and the way in which the sector has had a largely negative impact on residents who do not work for the industry but are impacted by it. In particular he notes that the buses have become too expensive for the common man and that the highway leading to Electronic City has torn up residential neighborhoods making it very difficult for residents to even cross the road. This man works for the IT sector and sees the way in which the sector—comprised of individuals—has operated as a cohesive group in order to change the city to its advantage, but he doesn't necessarily self-identify with this group. In fact, his tone conveys disappointment and scorn. In the second example these two women, originally from Bangalore also note the changes that have occurred, many of which are negative. They distinguish between the people who have lived here and the people from other states who have come to work

in the sector. So we have multiple groups. First the Bangalorian and non-Bangalorian, but the non-Bangalorian also works for the tech sector, which forms a third group. When the second respondent acknowledges that “you can’t really blame them” she seems to speak directly of the planning agencies and indirectly of the IT sector, a point reiterated by the first respondent who thinks the company has done a great job putting up the flyover. Those working for the firm, but originally from Bangalore, expressed the changes occurring in the city as mostly negative. Yet, as the conversation with the two women suggest, they see the IT sector as removed from the problem whereas the male respondent sees it as the source of the problem. While gender was the initial source of inquiry for this research, it is clear in each of these exchanges that gender does not always reveal itself and can be subsumed under broader inequalities and hierarchies.

2.3.3 Who was not included?

Evidence suggests that for women within the firm profiled, gender remains at the forefront of transportation decision-making. In a broader look at the IT sector’s presence and influence within the city, it is clear that other positionalities, particularly class, dictate one’s ability to navigate through and participate in the changes taking place within the city. There is a conscious physical and mental divide taking shape between those working in the IT sector and those working outside of it. However, it is not only the knowledge worker or BPO employee who travels to and from the firm on a daily basis. A campus of 20,000 employees needs cooks, office cleaners, security guards, and gardeners to make their work possible. One critical “group” of women who work inside the physical IT campus but remain outside the privileges of this space are the hundreds of service workers who perform a variety of labors: the cooks that make meals at any one of

the 19 cafeterias on campus, office cleaners, female security guards, and gardeners. These are individuals who work for, but not necessarily in the sector. Forget the polarities taking place outside the manicured campus, what about the polarities occurring within it?

It was only through physically being on the IT campus that the invisibility of this labor was revealed, service workers were not considered as part of the study prior to arrival nor during the formulation of this particular case study. The longer I remained on the campus the more apparent this inequality became, how did, for example, the office cleaners who usually arrived in my cubicle as I was packing up for the day travel to the campus and at what time did they leave? How did they get home? Did these women, and men, have access to the same company transportation policies and services as the IT and BPO employee? Despite several requests made to the firm regarding an expansion of the survey and interviews to include these women and men, permission was not granted. This was justified through the rationale that service employees were contract-based and thus not considered employees of the firm itself¹¹⁶. However, later in my research I was told by the head of facilities management that the firm does not outsource to anyone. “We cater to this campus by our own team. We hire people who are from the local villages or the local vicinities and most people will just walk into the campus” (29.08.13). This became a source of confusion and deeper interest the more closed off I was from exploring it further. As a non-Kannada speaker, it was difficult to sustain an informal conversation with service workers and learn more about who pays their salaries and from where in the city they come from. Most conversations did not get further than a smile and broken

¹¹⁶ It should be acknowledged that this perspective toward contract-based employment and amenities granted (e.g. health care, paid holidays) is prevalent across the world, regardless of sector.

questions in my broken Kannada¹¹⁷. By not having access to this population and thus not accounting for it in this study, the invisibility of this labor and these individuals is reinforced.

Returning to the conversation with facilities management, which was the only interview in which service workers were explicitly discussed it is worth noting that in the context of this population I was told that most service workers are “local” hires, that is hires from the land surrounding Electronic City, this is land that visually appears to be in a state of slow flux, transitioning from semi-rural to high rise residential apartments meant to attract IT professionals who want to avoid long commutes. During the interview, facilities management explained that “See it’s all their land actually. The land belonged to these people who work with us. It was their ancestral land which was taken by the government and the government creates a cluster of industries, an IT cluster an electronics cluster you could say, IT companies and electronic companies.” The comment was reminiscent of Rathi’s acknowledgement on the way in which the Electronic City flyover had affected the local population. When probed as to how these local hires get to and from the campus I was told that many of them cycle or walk to campus as BMTC buses within this area (as opposed to this area) would be infrequent. The language used by facilities management was that local hires “prefer to cycle” which gave an impression that perhaps this was a preference over a different mode. When asked if service workers have access to the firm’s transportation, such as the company bus, I was told that cycling will be more economical than using company transportation, a roundabout way of saying service workers cannot afford the company bus. The salary of a service sector employee is between 6-12,000 INR a month, a salary, I was told, that is higher than average for this

¹¹⁷ Throughout the duration of this research, Kannada lessons were taken twice a week.

kind of work. “I don’t know, see most of these guys they don’t spend on transport see at that income group their plan is very tight okay they plan for an optimal effectiveness with that level they would knock off anything that crosses a certain line. So we have a lot of them who have taken a PG (Paid Guest) accommodation, they stay in the vicinity.” He believed that most lived either within a three kilometer radius or more than 10 kilometers. I was told that women security guard shifts usually end in the evening or the early morning, it never ends in the middle of the night. This is one way for the company to mitigate the risks of women working in these roles.

Conclusions

Throughout this chapter I used survey data to compare the transportation mode choices of men and women working at a large IT firm in Bangalore. Interviews and conversations enhanced the understanding of how gender configured into these choices and the extent to which gender “navigates” transportation mode choices. For example, the primary factor for choosing the company bus seems to be based on one’s position as a woman. Ironically, for some, one’s position as a woman was also a factor for not using it, as seen in the interview in which a woman cannot use the company bus because the timings don’t fit with her duties as a mother. The research in this case study supports evidence that women, far more than men, seemed to straddle the two so called worlds of Bangalore, that is the physical city of Bangalore and the virtual IT economy and community and this straddling plays out in respect to gender norms in the office, at home, and while using transportation. This last instance is amplified in the context of the contemporary city of Bangalore in which a simultaneity of times, values, and infrastructures co-exist in ways

that permit middle class professional women more freedoms while also having anxiety toward these freedoms.

The case study also illustrates that while gender norms affect women's mobility, these effects manifest differently according to life stages, socio-economic backgrounds, and being from different parts of India. These views and preferences reflect and, to a certain extent, reinforce one's positionality. Findings from interviews and the survey suggest that regardless of differences, gender is central to women's transportation decisions, though the same does not hold true for men. Transportation provisions such as the guaranteed ride home after p.m. speak to real and perceived concerns around physical harassment and violence against women while ensuring that both the IT firm and the woman employee adhere to gender norms of respectability. This is one example of the way in which physical transportation facilitates a literal mobility of bodies while reinforcing a conceptual immobility in respect to norms around who should travel, for what reasons, and by what modes. It also demonstrates that the bodies of different women are valued differently.

However, gender seems to recede into the background amidst the various privileges afforded to the IT sector which, while impacted by gender, overall give greater literal and conceptual mobility to this class of people than the average citizen. Mobility in this instance refers to ease of daily commute, opportunities to go offshore, and also mobility in respect to consumption, utilities, and political influences. When we compare the transportation modes available to the female knowledge worker with those of the other women who work for this sector (office cleaners and women security personnel for example), the links between class, caste, education, employment, and respectability in the

context of mobility and immobility become more clear. Broadly, both male and female knowledge workers are able to travel comfortably and efficiently in the chaotic, rapidly transforming city of Bangalore on the basis of being a part of a global economy that is valued by city, state, and central government. While there are difference between these men and women, they are homogenized through a similarity of modal choices, which are not available to women (and men) who earn less.

The case study of Chapter Two contributes to a larger discussion of tech privilege in Bangalore by drawing attention to the way in which transportation policies and infrastructures available to the knowledge worker further adds privilege in the context of mobility, in terms of being able to move in and through the city in an efficient and comfortable manner. Interviews suggest that men and women in the IT sector are aware of certain privileges they have as knowledge workers and in the context of this privilege it is less based on gender identity and more along the lines of, as Radhakrishnan (2011) finds, being of a certain appropriate background. This background is largely constituted along lines of language (i.e. English) middle classness, higher education, opportunities and connections to the global economy and community and is reflected in the consumption practices, the political and economic rights granted to this group of people. These factors are most evident in the context of mobility practices outside the work commute, particularly in respect to women who had access to a vehicle, though lesser true of single women who did not have a vehicle at home and thus relied on public transportation.

In respect to the survey, the discussion mostly highlighted differences between men and women, focusing to a lesser extent on embedded differences between women.

Furthermore, an entire population was not included in this research. These are men and women who directly serve the IT sector without benefiting from it. By not including them, this research replicates the violence of invisibility. As the IT sector is a unique and privileged population, the policy intervention of guaranteed rides home to women after p.m. does not extend to all women, nor do all women have access to comfortable, reliable, and efficient transportation like the company bus. What remains unknown is how this plays out within the campus once we take into account the service workers, the multitude of positionalities women in service work at the firm's campus might embody. These women all straddle two worlds, but, unlike the woman IT employee, the night time security guard or office cleaner only services this second world, she does not participate in or benefit from it. Her labor, as a non-knowledge worker, is devalued and this is reflected in her inability to access transportation modes that protect her on the basis of her gender and her economic value. In this way, the IT campus as a case study is, upon deeper inspection, a microcosm of the larger built environment in that it is difficult to homogenize women into a singular category in respect to transportation opportunities and preferences, in respect to the experience of gender while using transportation. However, what I would like to emphasize in this chapter is that while the physical city has changed beyond recognition within the past two decades, there seems to be evidence that gender norms have not changed as drastically.

Chapter Three:

Moving Gender in the Capital: Gender and transportation among working women in Delhi

3.1.1 Introduction: Why Delhi?

The decision to expand this research to Delhi, the capital of India and third largest city in the world seemed appropriate for several reasons. Given that gender norms heavily influence travel decisions as does concern for personal safety, despite the perception of Bangalore as a “good” and “safe” city for professional women, what happened if these research questions were asked in a city dubbed “the rape capital”¹¹⁸ of India and the most dangerous city globally for women in respect to sexual violence (Reuters Foundation 2017)? Unlike Bangalore, Delhi’s urban form or transportation network cannot be attributed to the entrance of a single economic sector. However, Delhi has a new metro system, the first and only metro system of such scale in India, leaving an impressionable impact on the physical and mental environment and, in 2012, the metro introduced women only cars in order to address issues of women’s safety¹¹⁹.

India’s metro projects

Several other cities in India have metro projects¹²⁰ in the works, however most are characterized by severe delaying due to ballooning costs (e.g. rising cost of steel), political corruption, issues of land acquisition (Ramachandran 2011), and resistance from a public largely left outside the planning process,¹²¹ As this type of delay seems inherent

¹¹⁸ A headline used frequently in the Indian news.

¹¹⁹ In this chapter I will use the term safety and security interchangeably in the context of women in public. The term safety dominates policy language, particularly after the Delhi Rape case. While transportation research distinguishes between safety and personal security, safety is the term I adopted when carrying out this research as it was a more identifiable term for most men and women.

¹²⁰ Kolkata was the first Indian city to get a metro system in the 1980s. In conversations with transportation planners from DMRC I was continually told that this system is neither ‘state of the art’ nor comprehensive in terms of coverage. Investment in maintenance seems to be one problem plaguing this system.

¹²¹ In the case of Bangalore’s metro, 72 kilometers were supposed to be completed by 2017; by October 2015, the eighth year of construction, less than 23 kms were operational with a new projection date of 2032 (Koshi, thenewsminute, 2016).

to India's metro systems, and large infrastructure projects more broadly, the Delhi metro stands out as an anomaly for its rapid construction and operationalization. It is indicative of the city's overall muscle power, the political control it exerts over the rest of the country and the urban poor living within the physical city. It reflects the political push taken to make Delhi a world city in time for the 2010 Commonwealth Games, Delhi hosted. The metro opened in 2006 with 65 kilometers of metro connectivity and by 2010, Phase 2 of the metro was completed, introducing 100 kilometers of service into the Delhi National Capital Region (NCR) and providing rapid transportation connectivity not only within the central city but also the satellite areas of Gurgaon and Noida. The impact the Delhi metro has had on the reshaping of the city; the physical and mental/psychological mobility of residents makes it an important infrastructure to study in relation to the question of who is allowed to travel and for what reasons. For example, did the introduction of the women only cars in the Delhi metro factor into decisions made by parents regarding whether or not their daughters should travel for their schooling?¹²²

The Delhi Rape Case and its Impact

The second factor to be considered was the ripple effect around gender issues that resulted from the Delhi Rape case. In December of 2012 a young medical student, Jyoti,¹²³ and her male friend had just finished watching *Life of Pi* in a cinema in Munirka, a quickly transitioning neighborhood in South Delhi. Being p.m., the frequency of

¹²² In a recent study on factors that contribute to women's decisions regarding college choices, Girija Borker found that women were more likely to choose a college based on the perceived safety of the route to school as opposed to the quality of the institution (Chowdhury 2017).

¹²³ To protect the identity of the young woman, the name Nirbhaya (meaning fearless in Hindi) was initially used by the media.

Delhi's public bus (DTC) was sparse and the two chose an off-duty chartered bus¹²⁴ after the driver stopped and said he was plying their route. Shortly after boarding, four male passengers in the bus raped Nirbhaya, when her friend tried to intervene he was beaten unconscious with a metal rod. They were dumped naked on the national highway and the woman died a few days later from her injuries (Mandhana and Trivedi 2012; Udwin 2015). Protests exploded across the nation, the incident caused a collective trauma for women across India, horrific proof that Delhi was an unsafe place for women, an opinion long held but seldom confronted, particularly by the government. In the week's after the event, India's Associated Chambers of Commerce (ASSOCHAM)'s study of 2,500 women in Delhi's IT sector found that the productivity of women employees dropped by 40 percent, with many of them leaving before sun down (approximately 5:30pm) or reducing their work hours completely. Newspapers reported a dramatic decline in women's overall participation in the formal labor force¹²⁵ (Thoppil 2013).

Protests again erupted after the four men and driver were caught, arrested, and put on trial. Interviews with the perpetrators exposed the attitudes these men harbored toward urban women. For example, the (only) juvenile of the group expressed no regret in committing the crime when arrested. Paraphrasing the juvenile's counselor, Agarwal remarks that the rape was about the proving of masculinity (Agarwal 2015) that the girl needed to be taught a lesson for going out. In an interview with Mukesh Singh, the bus driver, actions were justified with the logic that "A decent girl won't roam around at nine

¹²⁴ Approximately 40 percent of Delhi's public bus fleet is run by private companies contracted out by the government.

¹²⁵ The survey also found that IT employees who worked in south Indian cities such as Bangalore and Chennai reported feeling more safe than women in Delhi (Thoppil 2013), a finding that is similar to my own research in the IT sector in which many woman thought Bangalore to be relatively safe when compared to Delhi.

o'clock at night. A girl is far more responsible for rape than a boy. Housework and housekeeping is for girls, not roaming in discos and bars at night..."(qtd in Udwin 2015). In her investigative reporting on the public response to the news of the gang rape immediately after it occurred, Trivedi took to interviewing men at bus stops and found that the majority of the men believed it was the woman's fault (2012).

The media played a pivotal role in the Delhi Rape case, the incident validated assumptions that the capital was patriarchal in nature; it created awareness of the extent to which gender based harassment permeated the daily lives of women in subtle and overt ways, but it also instilled, perhaps, an increased sense of fear.

Related both to the Delhi Rape Case and the Delhi metro, was aggressive transportation infrastructure and policy interventions on behalf of the Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC). The last of the eight-car train was reserved for women. A women-only waiting area on the platform was also initiated. While these initiatives were entertained by DMRC during Phase I construction, pressure from the public continued after Phase II, as the number of users had increased to the point of discomfort.



Figure 5: Rajiv Chowk metro station at p.m.



Figure 6: Crowd in metro

Furthermore, as Phase II now covered areas of the NCR in which there were dramatically different opinions of gender norms, there was concern that crimes against women would increase. However, it was the Delhi Rape Case that became the major catalyst for introducing a dedicated coach for women.

3.1.2 Patriarchy in the Capital

Overt Patriarchy

Despite being the site of the central government, home to a number of prestigious higher educational institutions, research centers, international centers, and exuding an air of general cosmopolitanism, Delhi is consistently regarded as an unsafe place for women, and considered the most unsafe place for working women within the country (Jain 2016). 2015 data from the National Crime Records Bureau shows Delhi to have the highest rate of crimes against women compared to all other states and territories in India (Jagori 2015). While this illustrates why there is general concern for women's safety, it does not answer why this is the case in Delhi and not other metros in India.

As I had never been to Delhi prior to this research, my own understanding of women's mobility and safety in the capital developed from media, academic articles, and conversations with Indian women, particularly during my interviews with women in the IT sector. Any conversation about women, transportation, and being in public in the city was qualified with: *but it isn't like Delhi*, a statement uttered equally by women and men,¹²⁶ individuals originally from the north and those who had just visited once or twice. The answer frequently given when asked *why Delhi* was simply that the capital is

¹²⁶ For example see conversation in Section 1 with a male employee in which he explains that Delhi is about an 8 when it comes to safety of women, and Bangalore is about a 4 (10 being highly unsafe).

overtly patriarchal. Because this can come across as anecdotal, several metrics have been proposed as evidence of overt patriarchy. As mentioned, women's workforce participation in Delhi is significantly lower than other Indian metros. A recent report by Chattopadhyay and Jacob used 2011 census data to argue a direct correlation between entrenched patriarchal norms and workforce participation, finding that workforce participation among women was greater in states that were less patriarchal (2016). The authors found that divorce (an action that carries a high stigma against a woman) rates in India were higher in south India, which is typically considered less overtly patriarchal, than in the north. This was attributed to the greater workforce participation of women in the south and emotional support from natal parents (*ibid*). Second, a focus on sex ratios and live birth sex ratios as evidence of feticide is often used as a metric for varying degrees of patriarchal structures within India. In the case of the latter, India has consistently shown to have abnormal live birth ratios with the census showing continued declines in the ratios despite increased awareness of the issue.¹²⁷

The states and satellite cities around Delhi have some of the lowest sex ratios in the country: Haryana has 834 women to men; Gurgaon district 830 and Manesar, an industrial town in Gurgaon (but still part of the National Capital Region (NCR)) has 776 girls per 1000 male births. During a conference on female feticide¹²⁸ Dr. Manasi Mishra from the Centre for Social Research spoke of her ongoing field research on why the practice not only persists but also seems to be increasing in the NCR. A common thread found among women in poorer neighborhoods was that having a daughter was stressful for a poor family because one had to always ensure a daughter's protection. Quoting Dr.

¹²⁷ One such example. Government sponsored text will regularly send out the message: "The happiness of a nation lies in valuing the girl child. Beti Bachao Beti Padhai" to mobile phone users.

¹²⁸ India International Centre 9.7.2015

Mishra, an interviewee [translated by Dr. Mishra into English) explained, “Safety and security of the woman is so hard that it’s not worth the stress. Maintaining a girl child’s chastity is extremely hard.” This protection becomes not only a mental burden but a financial burden as well. Ena Singh (of the United Nations Development Programme) pointed out that stress of needing to ensure a woman’s safety and chastity has a direct impact on her mobility; both in the sense of who to marry but also where to go, for example where to go to take up work, is it is safe and will it impact her chastity and thus marriageability? So long as the physical environment remains unsafe, Mrs. Singh told participants, the mobility of young women, especially in poorer communities, will be curbed.

In the rapidly changing city women of all strata have more public visibility, be it through taking up employment, education, manner of dress, or opportunities for socializing at home. In the discourse surrounding the Delhi Rape Case, arguments were made that the perpetrators were victims of urbanization and an economic order that excluded the urban poor, particularly in the peri urban areas of the NCR, which are quickly transforming to high-end malls and gated communities. All of these factors contributed to a general sense of lack of control, as the counselor of the juvenile perpetrator explained, causing these men to exert their masculinity. Regardless of whether this argument is correct, it became an opportunity for political leaders, conservative right wing media, and others to shift the blame away from these young men and onto young women who choose to adopt western habits, such as style of dress and socializing. The message was that these women were not being “appropriately Indian”, to revisit Radhakrishnan (2011).

There is a provocative argument of an ongoing history of demasculinization of (particularly upper caste Hindu) men, first under Mughal rule, second under the British and it is interesting to consider that overt patriarchy seems strongest in a capital that has witnessed both. Furthermore, that the self-proclaimed capital of the country and Hindi, the self-proclaimed language of the country is viewed by those in the south as a colonizer itself. In the context of transportation, it has been said that the Delhi metro could be constructed so efficiently because it had the “manpower” to make it happen. In this case, manpower referred to the necessary allocation of funds coupled with, unlike other cities, a need to be accountable to no other governmental power (e.g. City government being accountable to both state and central government). In addition to exerting control over the rest of the country, Delhi, as the seat of government, also exerts a forceful control over its residents, particularly the urban poor. Using archival evidence, Priya (2006) finds very little difference between the top down planning styles of the British and subsequent Delhi Development Authority (DDA), particularly in the attitude and treatment of the poor, finding that development schemes for the poor lacked implementation during both periods of rule. Also similar to the British, the DDA’s full powers, realized during the Emergency¹²⁹ were based on a “freedom from local interference” and became a planning model that “incorporates...the bias against poor citizens, as well as the arrogance and coercive attitude towards all ordinary citizens,”(2006: 237).

¹²⁹ Emergency was declared during Prime Minister India Gandhi rule lasting from 1975-1977. During this time several civil liberties were suspended, as seen in the instance of the Delhi Development Authority, who undertook sever slum clearance initiatives during this time.

Migration to the Capital

While Delhi has always been marked by migration, of the six largest cities in India,¹³⁰ Delhi has the highest percent of migrants as representative of the total population—43 percent according to the 2001 Census (Das and Murmu 2012). Unlike Bangalore’s migration, which is largely a result of specific economic sectors that initially attracted a demographic of middle class, educated employees. Delhi’s migration is historically tied to caste networks, partition (India and Pakistan and Bangladesh), and famines that forced people from nearby agricultural areas. More recently it is for employment that includes both low, middle, high paying sectors.

In their 2012 paper, Das and Murmu compare census data from 1991 and 2001 for all six cities and find that Delhi has the highest rate of illiterate women migrating and the primary reason is for marriage.¹³¹ Although migration of women for employment is over all very low (<10 percent of all cities combined), Bangalore had the highest percent (7.2) of women migrating for employment. The authors found that middle and upper class women migrate to Delhi for education, suitable employment, or improved marriage prospects, factors often considered to be “pulls” to the city though many of these women are already coming from other urban areas. IT was found that rural women tend to migrate within neighboring rural areas, for the purpose of marriage. For the rural poor, migration to the city is a “push” factor, and migration was more likely to be with the entire family. Women from rural areas who were coming to the city without family usually had some network of extended family in the city and would work as domestic help in reputable families as a way of augmenting income. Comparing census data from

¹³⁰ Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata, Chennai, Hyderabad, Bangalore.

¹³¹ The census offers the following categories for migration: Employment, Business, Education, Marriage, Family moved, Natural calamity

two decades it was found that whereas previously girls were expected to remain close to home and primarily engage in family caregiving duties, the substantial changes of economic and physical structuring of cities due to urbanization and globalization have had an affect on migration in general and women's migration in particular. Economic necessities may be in opposition to traditional gender roles. However, it remains that "young men [have] always been permitted and even encouraged to have a social life outside the family," (Das and Murmu 2012: 3). But the same is not true of women. Existing research on migration is an opportunity to revisit the question posed in the introductory chapter: *who is allowed to travel and for what reasons?* In the case of the rural poor, economic deprivation and the marriage market are structural forces that allow/permit women to travel.

3.1.3 Description of the city and public transportation

Unlike Chapter Two in which the research questions were tied to the influence the IT sector had on the spatial development and modal choices available in the city, the spatial patterns of Delhi's urbanization are not the starting point for understanding transportation mobility. Unlike Bangalore, Delhi is an ancient city with roots dating back to 3000 BC. The contemporary form has notable influence from the Mughal (approximately 15th to mid 19th century), British (approximately mid 19th-mid 20th), and post independence eras. Delhi's population grew rapidly from 1947 (the year of Independence) to the millennium, with an increase of almost 1 million people every decade. Today, growth is higher due to in migration as opposed to natural growth (e.g. live births) (Ahmad et al 2013).

Many parts of Delhi developed organically and, unlike cities and suburbs in the West, the majority of Delhi's residential colonies/neighborhoods, regardless of income, are a mixture of land uses, formal and informal housing and economies. Less than 30 percent of the population lives in planned settlements, with many living in illegal colonies, regardless of income level. This is one example of growth not keeping pace with formal planning (Ahmad et al 2013). Produce and general food items, religious institutions, and general shopping are almost always within one or two kilometers of any particular residence regardless of class, caste, or religion. With this in mind, it is understood that most trips made on public transport will be for employment and education. It is estimated that 40 percent of households are self-employed with the informal employment being dominated by trade and manufacturing. Although almost two decades old, Datta found that 46 percent of trip purposes in Delhi were for work and 31 percent were for school (Datta 1998) a factor that explains and is reinforced by the service timings of the bus and metro—the two forms of mass transit in the city.

The National Capital Territory of Delhi, a territory and title that came about in 1985, spans across 1483 square kilometers and has a population density of approximately 15,000 people per square kilometers. Delhi is divided into nine districts, with some of these areas having as many as 40,000 people per square kilometers (Ahmad et al 2013). Public policies that limit floor area ratios in an attempt to decongest and preserve the historic city (Pucher et al 2005) is one explanation for the city's continuous outward sprawl, expanding Delhi's existing polynucleus form and causing most Delhites to travel great distances on a daily basis. Until the late 2000s, buses were the primary source of public transportation, coupled with auto rickshaws and cycle rickshaws for shorter trips.

The exception to this was the political elite who commuted by the iconic white Ambassador car. Partially owing to the presence of this political class, Delhi is often described as a class and status conscious city, one in which displays of money are encouraged [interviews 2-6.2015] and perhaps this is a partial explanation for the city having the highest car ownership in the country (Thynell et al. 2010). Although there is a high rate of car ownership compared to other Indian cities, the proportion of car owners remains low,¹³² particularly in respect to cities in the west, with the majority of residents using mass or non-motorized transit. One important comment on this however is that while car owners remain the minority population in Delhi, this population constitutes the political elite, upper middle class technocrats and experts who govern the city's policy making (Thynell et al. 2010: 428).

While the idea for a metro system had been floated since the 1960s (Randhawa 2012) it was not seriously considered until the 90s, with a primary goal of curbing the mounting automobile dependency (Tiwari 2016) coupled with growing awareness of the air pollution levels in the city, which were some of the worst in the country. Between 1957 and 2002 car population increased 60 times and motorcycles by 200 (Thynell, Mohan and Tiwari 2010). Delhi has the highest rates of motorization in the country (with Bangalore making for a close second). However, it has since been found that the majority of metro users were once bus users; the presence of the metro system has not had a significant impact on car commuters¹³³ (Tiwari 2016). Several critiques around the Delhi metro have surfaced in the years since its inauguration. Broadly, they can be described as:

¹³² 2011 Census of India statistics show that 22 percent of all work trips are done by car and taxi, 27 percent by two-wheeler. 41 percent are done by bus. However, car ownership stands at about 8 per every 100 persons; compared with about 12 per 100 in Singapore and 20 per 100 in Tokyo (Mohan 2016).

¹³³ Which is partially why the Delhi government piloted a heavily criticized even/odd license plate driving plan for the city in December of 2015.

1) It is considered quite expensive for those who needed it the most 2) It services a middle class population, in other words, accessibility is class based. Though it is possible to argue that this is changing as the network expands. 3) The rapid building of the metro allowed for an undemocratic planning process. Very little to no public consultation was done prior to construction. The urban poor were among the most severely effected (Randhawa 2012; Siemiatycki 2006). Lastly, the urban transport sector is structured such that bus and metro authorities are in competition with one another (Ahmad et al 2013). As an agency that receives funds from the government, loans from the Japanese (JAICO loan), and financing through property development adjacent to metro stations, it can be argued that the rise of the metro has been the decline of the bus. In recent years, over 120 bus routes, all of which had run alongside the metro, have been cancelled (Randhawa 2012). Given the higher fare structures of the metro, it is likely that the poor cannot afford to use the replaced routes. Furthermore, Delhi's short lived Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) was effectively killed when influential motorists in Delhi petitioned the government with the argument that motorists should have a greater right to mobility as they are the ones who generate wealth in the city (Ahmad et al 2013).

The current metro network is predominately a ring and radial system with the north-south and east-west lines operational. Stations are on average 1.3 kilometers distance from each other, with some lines running 50 km or longer. With Phase II and now Phase III underway, many major areas of Delhi are serviced. That said, first and last mile connectivity remains a known issue for Metro users. This is why the Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC) is expanding its Metro Feeder Bus service. It is estimated that the metro has a ridership of up to two million daily (DMRC; Times of India 2014),

though some put it at five million; no detailed data regarding ridership of either bus or metro is publicly available¹³⁴. Although the continued expansion of the Delhi metro has increased its overall accessibility to the public, several articles question the metro as a truly public infrastructure.



Figure 7: Advertising on the Delhi Metro

Randhawa 2012; Sadana 2010; Mohan 20016 all focus on questions of equitability of the metro looking at the privileged locations in which the metro stations are located, the rising real estate costs and patterns of gentrification around these stations, the heavy handed slum clearance policies of the Delhi Development Authority for metro construction, and lastly, the fares of the metro. For example, Siemiatycki (2006) notes that after the completion of Line 1, fares were raised as much as 50 percent making it significantly more expensive than the bus. Collectively, the arguments made are that the

¹³⁴ DMRC has, in several instances denied India's Right to Information Act often evoking Section 8(1)(a) of the Right to Information Act that absconds responsibility of providing information on the grounds that it could effect the security and sovereignty of India (Moudgil 2012).

metro project has not addressed the mobility needs of Delhi's urban poor and has instead become the major driver of rising property values, speculative development and a neoliberal gentrification process that is found in mega cities around the world.

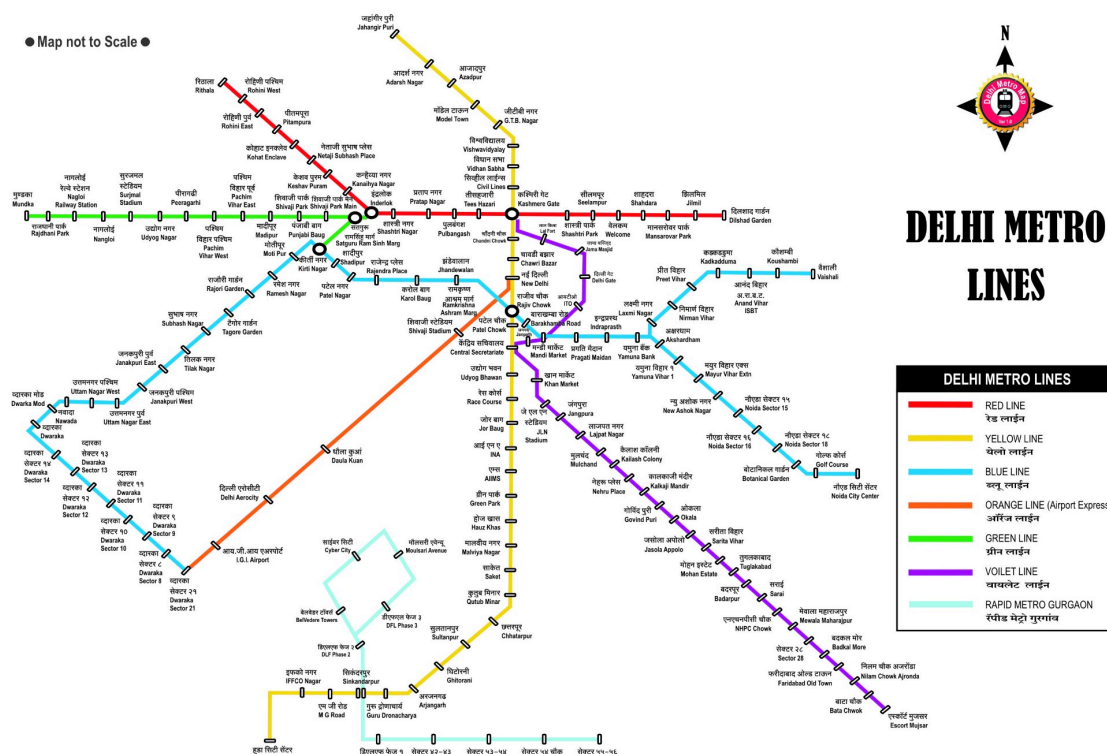


Figure 8: Route map of Delhi Metro (source: www.delhimetrorail.com)

A minimal number of articles have explored the impact the Delhi metro has had on women's mobility. Of those articles that exist (Sadana 2010; Shelly 2011, Rao 2014; Butcher 2011) focus on the lived experience of daily metro commuting, mostly from an ethnographic perspective. None of these articles try to identify the extent to which a woman is using the Delhi metro over a different mode of transportation and how gender plays into that decision. In the realm of the Delhi Transportation Corporation (DTC)—the operator of the city's public buses, Badami and Haider (2007) found that overcrowding

and unreliable service were key problems faced by users coupled with average bus speeds of 10.5 km per hour. Pedestrians walking to and from bus stops had the challenges of traffic laws rarely being observed or enforced, making road crossings difficult. Footpaths (sidewalks) were, and continue to be, clogged with parked cars or two wheeler users who use the footpath as another lane in order to avoid the traffic. Bus stops were (and continue to be) poorly marked with buses rarely stopping at them. No academic literature on the gender usage and dimensions of DTC buses could be found.



Figure 9: Example of parking on footpath 1



Figure 10: Example of parking on footpath 2

3.1.4 Research methodology

Research in Delhi developed in response to the findings from Bangalore's IT sector with the purpose of moving away from a single sector and toward the idea of the women only car of the Delhi metro as a transportation intervention that could be evaluated through a subjective lens of women's modal preferences. As demonstrated in the literature on the metro (see Siemiatycki 2006; Randhawa 2012; Ahmad et al 2013; Tiwari 2016) the Delhi metro has, if not directly, then certainly indirectly, impacted the mobility of all Delhites. To what extent do gender based policies have an effect on the mode choices of women?

The hypothesis was, all conditions being equal (such as destination being serviced by transit mode and cost not being a significant barrier), women in Delhi prefer using the

metro over public buses because of the additional safety and security measures in place. Broadly, safety and security of the metro can be understood in respect to well lit station entrances, exits, buildings and platforms, male and female security personnel at all entrances and mandatory bag and body scans, with separate lines for men and women. Security personnel on the platform, and a designated waiting area for women, CCTV cameras every few feet, signage indicating fines for men if they enter the ladies area, signage with help line numbers, and police presence at all major stations. Furthermore, it is not possible to enter the waiting area without swiping one's metro card, thus eliminating the concern for loitering that occurs at the bus stop. While many of these security measures can be excessive, speaking to a more general disciplinary style, which will be discussed later, it was predicted that these initiatives increase women's perception of safety while waiting for and traveling in transportation. While it is expected that both men and women would prefer the metro for reasons such as efficiency, air conditioning, and overall comfort when compared to the bus, the goal was to try and identify salient features of security.



Figure 11: Delhi Metro Etiquette

To my knowledge, no in depth analysis has been done on basic questions such as who is using the Delhi metro¹³⁵ and why—no academic probing into the attitudes and choices of women metro riders, what mode they were using prior to the metro and how the experiences between these two modes compare. The research in Delhi would try to understand, first, how working women in Delhi commute to and from places of employment given the real and perceived attitude of Delhi as an unsafe city for women. Second, why women choose the modes they do; if an inquiry into mode choice reveals dominant gender norms. Related to this was the desire to treat the women's only car as a conceptual inquiry into how gender based transportation policies and infrastructures

¹³⁵ Early into the construction of the metro, DMRC sought several exemptions from India's 2005 Right to Information Act (RTI), using section 8(1)D and E of the Act which allows Corporation's to withhold information to the public if it is considered with the security of sovereignty. Under this exception DMRC is not required to put Detailed Project Reports (DPR) into the public domain. While it could not be confirmed by DMRC, several other government agencies (e.g. Central Road Research) and transportation academics claimed that is also why DMRC has not made any data on ridership available to the public or other researchers.

simultaneously remove and reinforce gender norms about women traveling in the city. Lastly, to revisit the argument that middle classness is the driving force shaping the contemporary Indian city and the compelling claim that the Delhi metro is a middle class project (Butcher 2011; Ghertner 2011; Randhawa 2012; Sadana 2010; Siemiatycki 2006). Revisiting the arguments put forth in Chapter Two regarding inequality in the context of transportation mobility in Bangalore, I revisit the question who or what allows women to travel, are some working women able to travel more securely or comfortably than others?

The empirical approach entailed three interrelated research methods to capture these broad research questions. First, detailed ethnographic observation of the Delhi metro with an eye toward safety and surveillance, a method achieved by extensive riding of the metro at different times of days and to different parts of the city, coupled with material documentation (when permitted) of stations and adjacent land uses would help answer questions around the women's only car as a mover and remover of dominant gender norms regarding when, where and why women should be in public. This approach was primarily inspired by the existing work of Randhawa 2012 and Tara 2011). The second method was a series of one on one interviews with transportation researchers and senior level employees at DMRC, lasting approximately 45 minutes each. These interviews shaped an understanding of policy logics around gendered infrastructure and mobility as well as the question of whom is infrastructure being built for. The last and most in depth part of this research involved revising the survey used in Chapter Two to suit the Delhi context in order to investigate views and preferences around modal choices for clues as to if and how these choices reveal dominant gender norms. In an effort to maintain the link between mobility and employment established in Chapter Two, it was

decided to focus on modal choices in the context of the work commute with the goal of surveying women across different work populations¹³⁶.

The structure of this chapter is as follows: a descriptive look at the functioning of the metro, specifically from the perspective of being a woman. After this I present key take aways from a series of interviews with individuals working either directly for the DMRC or within transportation broadly. After this I transition into the empirical component of this chapter, structured primarily around findings from the commuter survey. Although these research questions will receive more discussion within the commuter survey section of the chapter, they can broadly be understood as:

- 1a. What are the mode choices of woman surveyed and why are they choosing these modes?
- 2b. Are women willing to report incidents of harassment? What are women's feelings toward traveling after dark, and existing policies aimed at their safety?
- 3c Has the Delhi metro had any discernible impact on commuting choices and preferences?

As this project is concerned with feminist epistemologies of embedded positionalities as a way of better locating difference within the broader experience of gender, conceptual questions of mobility include:

- 1b. Why are these women working?
- 2b. Do they see themselves working five years from now?

¹³⁶ Intercept surveying at the location of transportation was dismissed due to issues of permission from DMRC, difficulty administering a lengthy survey while people were in transit, and potential language barriers. Also, people are not mentally or physically in a position to talk at length about their commuting habits and observations as they are focused on reaching their destination.

3.1.5 A gendered look at the Delhi metro

In 2013, several months after the Delhi Gang Rape, the Government of Delhi released a report, “Making Women More Secure in Delhi.” The report focused on several sectors related to women’s safety in the capital, including the public buses. First, it was suggested that women employees should be permitted to leave the workplace 10-15 minutes before closing and preferably travel in groups. Second, that the first eight seats of the bus should be reserved for women commuters and women should board from the front of the bus and men from the middle. Third, helpline numbers 9604400400 and 1091 were to be displayed inside and outside the bus. Twenty-three “ladies special” buses were to run during peak hours. Lastly, it was requested that there be consideration to put 10,000 home guards on rounds to “keep a curb on eve-teasing and harassment of women commuters..” One glaring problem was that these were suggestions, with little to no enforcement. The document never clarified which routes the ladies special would service, if there were repercussions for men sitting in the first eight seats of the bus and so on. While the DTC was failing more generally on service provision and particularly in respect to women’s safety needs, the Delhi metro, revamped itself in pink glory, becoming the patron mode of women commuters.

As Sadana writes in her autoethnographic study of the Delhi metro: “The metro is a marvel, something to marvel at, for anyone who visits Delhi, but also, and especially so, for its residents. It goes against everything they know,” (2010: 78). At the time of conducting research, it was not uncommon to find, (and often assist) a petrified women onto the slick escalator for the first time, watching as she discovered the simultaneity of balance, motion, and ascension. While traveling in the above ground stretches of the metro, passengers inevitably look out at the city before and below them with eyes of

excitement. It is common to overhear new riders expound on the glory of climate control, the efficiency of the train amidst the heat and chaos of the exterior.

When the train isn't too crowded, the sound of a selfie click can be heard as individuals and groups document one's participation in what some have called the Delhi's modernizing project. Not just modernizing, but disciplining. No metro station is complete without a comprehensive list of what one can and cannot do, or carry onto the metro. But, before one even confronts the elaborate signage of rules and regulations, disciplining begins with male security guards at the entrance of the station, herding men and women into separate security lines. Once reaching (lines can become quite long during rush hour, with sometimes a wait of up to five minutes just to get through security and the turnstile allowing one to enter the platform), security, male and female passengers put their bags on a shared conveyor belt, with women then entering a curtained box in which she is frisked by two women security guards with electric wands and men passing through a metal detector. After physical security, bags are collected and one enters the metro through the use of an electronic smart card or single ride token. In busy stations, multiple guards stand at the platform ensuring passengers form the appropriate queue. The women's car (referred to as the "ladies coach") is always the last car of the metro. This is easy to figure out as one side of the platform is thus reserved for ladies only, an area demarcated by a hanging sign in bright pink featuring a stick figure woman in triangle dress with cartoon flowers appearing above her head.

In her detailed article, "Private Space in Public Transport" (2011), Shelly Tara uses ethnographic observation and secondary news articles to show how "spatiality itself participates in the production of gendered bodies," (73) in the context of the Delhi metro.

Tara argues that the introduction of the women's car in late 2010¹³⁷ has enhanced the mobility of Delhi's middle class woman. Informal interviews with young women suggest that the metro has, in particular, given young women freedom and agency in respect to dress as many feel they can wear certain types of clothing (e.g. western wear) with a safety that doesn't exist in the public bus. She observes that essentially, a woman can, from the time she enters the security queue till the time she leaves the station of her destination, remain in a gender segregated space. Unlike others writing on the women-only car, Tara focuses on the positive ways in which the women only infrastructure of the Delhi metro gives women greater agency. More importantly, she focuses on the interior space of the ladies coach as one of the few public spaces in which women do not need to manufacture their respectability. As the coach only offers 43 seats, it is not uncommon to see strangers sharing a seat or women sitting on the floor if they are too tired to stand, complimenting one another on a piece of jewelry. My ethnographic work had similar observations, I'd hear a stranger asking another where she got her fashionable kurta, or the sharing of a smart phone screen so that multiple people could watch the music video playing from it. In the ladies compartment women let their dupatta¹³⁸ fall, no longer concerned with the need to be modest. Food is prohibited on the metro but it's not uncommon to see women taking small bites of leftovers from their lunch tiffin, or offering a handful of peanuts to another.

¹³⁷ This claim goes against other articles and media reports that argue the women's car came into practice in 2012, after the Delhi Rape case, a point that was confirmed (with some confusion) by metro officials.

¹³⁸ A scarf like fabric that folds over the chest and then to the back, via the shoulders.



Figure 12: Inside the women's compartment



Figure 13: Waiting in the women's section on the platform

This is not to say that women's compartment is all happiness and rainbows, only that there is an undeniable comfort of having a space where one can *just be*. By "just being" I am speak to the argument made by Tara (2011), Phadke (2007) and others who argue that gender norms in India are such that women are allowed to move through public space in order to reach destinations, but, while in public, social norms and infrastructures are such that women are not permitted to feel comfortable or relax. She must treat it as a space to pass through, not linger in.

That said, there are several reasons why the ladies compartment is problematic. As Rao (2014) argues, it is estimated that 25 percent of the metro's five million¹³⁹ daily riders are women, yet only one car is a "safe space" for women. If we consider that the women's compartment can hold 361 passengers (Tara 2011) then it is obvious that not all women can travel in the ladies compartment, even if they want to. The problem is that by giving women their own space, many men feel entitled to the rest of the metro, that this becomes their space. As a woman, it is not an uncommon experience to be asked what you are doing in the general compartment, or be asked to move to the ladies compartment if it is rush hour—even if the ladies compartment is well over capacity. This situation reinforces the idea that men are the majority and by default are entitled to the majority of public space. A woman traveling in the general compartment is at risk of even more intensity of stares and judgment. If she is grouped or harassed, a likely retaliation is that she was "asking for it" or that's what one gets when one is not where one is supposed to be.

Of the existing articles on the Delhi metro (Sadana 2014; Shelly 2011; Rao 2014. See also Butcher 2010; 2011; Randhawa 2012; Siemiatycki 2006) none of these articles

¹³⁹ This is Rao's statistic, not mine.

try to identify the extent to which a woman is using the Delhi metro over a different mode of transportation and how gender plays into that decision. Furthermore, no comparative research between the experience of transportation mobility in the bus and the metro has been undertaken.

3.1.6 Interviews with transportation authorities

As no academic literature on modal choices of women in Delhi was available to help orient the empirical direction of research, the first stage of research involved a series of interviews with individuals and organizations working on issues related to either transportation or women. Over a period of one month I met with two women NGO groups and the head of the National Commission for Women. Over the six-month duration of field research I met four senior employees of DMRC¹⁴⁰. Additional interviews were conducted with members of UN-Habitat, the School of Planning and Architecture, the founder of Delhi's first bike share, a woman's domestic workers union, and two additional NGOs involved in women's empowerment. While these interviews provided invaluable background information, they will not be included in this discussion. The interviews with senior employees at the Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC) provided the most insight into how DMRC as an organization understood issues of women's travel needs. Lasting approximately 45 minutes, these interviews were deliberately open ended but structured around a set of three areas of interest: first, demographic observations and reflections on metro users was requested, the second was observations on women users specifically, and the third was in respect to gender-based

¹⁴⁰ To understand how IT firms operate transportation policies within Delhi, I was put into contact with several Bangalore firms who have a presence in Delhi. While this was a valuable interview for background information, it did not progress into empirical research and is therefore not included in this dissertation.

policy initiatives undertaken by DMRC. I spoke to two men and two women within the Corporation.

According to Mr. Awasthi, who has been with DMRC since the early 2000s, the cost of living in Delhi has gone up such that 80 percent¹⁴¹ of married couples have both husband and wife working, he believed this could also be attributed to there being more opportunities for women to work. Before the metro, the majority of the population went by bus, with government employees frequently commuting by chartered bus. He observed that commutes have gotten longer, with the average person commuting one hour each way and the poor commuting for a longer period of time, explaining that they “spend one more hour to save, that is what many low income Delhites are forced to do, to take the bus.” While Mr. Awasthi acknowledged the hardships of the poor he did not make a connection between the fare of the metro or the geographic placement of stations and the fact that low income Delhites continue to use the bus as their primary mode. He further commented that “the metro is allowing more people to come into the city and more people to travel outward, further” but seemed to think that this allowed for greater upward mobility in terms of job opportunities as opposed to others who viewed it more negatively (e.g. Randhawa 2012).

On the subject of women’s use of the Delhi metro he stated that no record or separate data had been kept on women’s use and said that earlier, there was no coach reserved for women. A second man in the room added some complaints led to the introduction of the women’s coach. It was observed that Mr. Awasthi did not appear to

¹⁴¹ This is not based on any specific data, rather, his own impression. Recalling that women’s participation rate in the formal sector is ranked the lowest of any other Indian metro complicates Mr. Awasthi’s claim, though again, that is only factoring in women’s formal workforce participation whereas Mr. Awasthi’s claim is most probably based on anecdotal evidence with some true that more women are working for economic reasons, though not necessarily because there are *better* opportunities.

appreciate this comment, which he corrected by saying: “No no, not complaints, only that women did not have a space.”

One survey done in 2012 by DMRC reached approximately 10-20,000 commuters and found that time saving, comfort, safety, and punctuality were the primary reasons people commuted by metro—factors that were similar to my own findings later into the research. He observed that the metro in particular advantages women. “If she can afford it, a woman will first take an auto [rickshaw] because it’s crowded and safety is not there.” Given that autos cannot go long distances and are expensive, Mr. Awasthi said the metro was the best solution because safety is there as well as time efficiency.

Several of these points were reiterated in a second interview, with Mr. Rajawat, a traffic engineer with DMRC. While he did not have data, he similarly thought that more women were working outside the home and therefore needed a safe way to get around. “In Delhi, woman are doing some work, they are not idle. In villages it is there but in cities it is changing. Both the family members, husband and wife, are working because they cannot afford to stay in the house and there are a lot of opportunities to work and earn whatever is possible.” Mr. Rajaway made a strong connection between women’s use of the metro and perception of safety.

Well, I’m not a woman but I can tell you that woman perceive the metro as being the safest. It is much safer than anything even at night, there is no fear or anything, no snatching because CCTV is there and immediately if anything happens, the person is caught, I mean the chances are very few. While in the outside, in the bus, it is more. When women enter the metro the safety is there, very strong. There is the CISF¹⁴² [Central Industrial Security Force] and they are almost like the army, they are very strong and they will not allow anything to happen.

¹⁴² CISF is the government organization that is responsible for all security in the metro, the airport, and places of “unrest” such as Kashmir and Maniupr.

When asked if he thought women are willing to pay more for safe transportation, the observation was made that many women come to metro stations by autorickshaw, but not bus. “Here, metro is same for everyone, women, men, everything is same. But this example shows that they are willing to spend more for metro because they are not spending for metro but they are spending to come to metro. You can notice this if you just stand outside the metro station.” He further observed that men are more likely to commute by two-wheeler either for the entire journey or to the metro station, as most stations had parking for two wheelers.¹⁴³

Both Mr. Awasthi and Mr. Rajaway appear comfortable with the idea of women working outside the home, with Mr. Awasthi thinking more opportunities were available and Mr. Rajaway thinking urban women, unlike their rural counterparts, are not idle. Both uphold the belief that women should travel in the city for employment reasons and they should be able to do so safely. Women like the metro because it is safe, with Mr. Rajaway emphasizing the physical strength of CISF forces as a protectionary measure for women. Neither commented on women traveling for other reasons or times of days outside of standard employment hours.

Women in DMRC

Amritleen also works for DMRC and had recently undergone training on gender mainstreaming within the context of transportation. During a talk I attended she spoke of a lack of women in leadership roles and the positive efforts within DMRC to bring more

¹⁴³ One has to pay to park at the metro station, with the average cost of parking the two wheeler being 10 rupees. In theory then, men are also willing to pay more to use the metro if taking into account the cost of petrol and parking, though this would still work out to be cheaper than using an auto both ways.

women into the organization, particularly within planning, architecture, and leadership roles. In the conclusion of her talk, she told the audience, the majority of whom were young female architecture students that “women have different intuitions, they are going to be better at different things than men. This is one reason why the young women in the audience should consider going into disaster planning and sustainability”. Her oscillation between focusing on gender mainstreaming coupled with an essentialist approach to understanding gender caused me to seek her out for an interview.

We met at her office at the DMRC headquarters, located just outside Patel Chowk metro station. She explained that she is presently interested in looking for considerations of gender within the design and layout of the DMRC Master Plan. “Is disability accessibility the same as gender? In many ways yes. If you make a ramp or widen an entrance, this will benefit women who are carrying goods, children, and prams.” I was told that DMRC is taking strides toward gender inclusivity and that to celebrate International Women’s Day, the DMRC invited proposals for a logo and quote reflecting women’s day. She explained that in India, the private sector will provide baby changing facilities, but only in the women’s room. This infrastructure trend is not unique to India, but can be found throughout the world. This suggests that it is only women who would be caring for a small baby, not the man. “This is one example of gender assumption and stereotyping. Why not put the baby changing facility in the bathroom reserved for disabled people?”

When asked for examples of the way in which the metro takes the concerns of women users into consideration, she gave a reply similar to Mr. Awasthi and Mr. Rajawat. Amritleen focused on the importance of Central Industrial Security Forces

(CISF), but with a different emphasis. She explained that the primary reason for CISF is “to create reassurance on behalf of the user.” Unlike the male DMRC staff I spoke to, Amritleen did not overemphasize the importance of CCTV. “CCTV is good for documentation, but it is not personal.” For her, the physical presence of CISF gives the security aspect of commuting a human dimension and put the emphasis on prevention. Having a security presence ensured not only safety but that all users respect the property. “People won’t use derelict infrastructure.” Unlike the men I spoke to, Amritleen also acknowledged the importance of the hawkers immediately outside the station.

Like all officials I interviewed, she highlighted the affordability of the metro with the explanation that “India is a country of social(ist) minds and so the actual ticket fare is subsidized by 30 percent and this is through the government. The question then is how to remain operational, pay for capital costs as well as maintenance.” In the earlier interviews with Mr. Awasthi and Mr. Rajawat, neither knew exactly how the fare structure was established, only that it was decided by a committee and that the first three kilometers were charged at 10 rupees but 30 kilometers would not be costing someone more than 30 rupees.

Like Amritleen, I met Mrs. Saklani at a talk. Mrs. Saklani is senior to Amritleen in terms of title and age and unlike Amritleen, has worked on issues of women’s empowerment and leadership for most of her career. In her short presentation, she shared observations from other Asian countries around women’s travel needs. She came across as confident in herself, her work, and women more generally. In our follow up interview she explicitly reiterated that women are willing to pay more for safety and the metro gives not only safety but also comfort. In her presentation and again in the interview she

emphasized that women will always pay for public transport and that safety and security must be there because women are insecure, especially at night. Implied was that insecure in this context meant both a real and perceived threat of violence against her. While her comments were not meant as a value judgment, Mrs. Saklani felt that urban women faced many problems. First, the problem that men are attracted to women and this is often expressed inappropriately. The second: “basically, we are mothers and you cannot deny that role nor can you accept being at home only, so it is very difficult for us.”

Despite the salient efforts of Mrs. Saklani to incorporate elements of gender mainstreaming in DMRC—particularly in respect to hiring women employees—her attitude toward women’s safety appeared normative in the belief that ultimately it was up to the woman to take precautions and be safe. She emphasized that women are inherently different from men and as men are inherently attracted to women, it is difficult for a woman in the modern city. Like the head of facilities management from the Bangalore firm, who spoke with admiration for the women who commuted daily into the city, Mrs. Saklani’s perspective did not suggest that she thought women were less than men, only that it was their responsibility to take necessary precautions to avoid unfavorable situations.

Like the other three DMRC employees, Mrs. Saklani spoke about the presence of the CISF force as the primary mechanism through which safety was established, but as an architect, she was sensitive to other features such as the toilets, which always had an attendant to ensure that no “antisocial behavior” took place in the restroom, and lighting immediately outside the station. Similarly, she reiterated that there was no separate data on women commuters. She thought that at several of the stations, women’s ridership was

higher than men. She felt that those were the stations that should first have metro feeder service, so that more women would feel comfortable traveling the 3-4 km distance to reach the metro station. Her statement reiterates the observation made by Mr. Rajawat that more women came to the metro station by auto, and thus wound up spending more to use the service. A metro feeder bus would charge 10 rupees each way. The conversation about spending more to reach the metro invites a secondary conversation, this time on socio-economic characteristics. She explained that woman in better socio-economic brackets, don't face any problem to use metro and can spend to commute to the metro. "But the women in the little lower category, if they can get some help or assistance then they can take the change to travel." In a follow up to that statement, she admitted that most women who are better off do not use the metro anyway. Unlike the previous discussions with the other employees, Mrs. Saklani seemed genuinely interested in finding ways for the metro to reach, and be of benefit to women in lower socio-economic categories.

All four employees tended to focus on the positive benefit the metro had on the city and lives of those living in Delhi. Security was framed largely in respect to the presence of CISF and CCTV, though both Mrs. Saklani and Amritleen emphasized the more subtle features (e.g. street vendors, lighting, and toilets) as qualities that contributed to women's feeling of safety. While no data existed on the proportion or percentage of women users, empirical observations suggested that women, more than men, were willing to take a secondary form of transportation in order to reach the metro station. No one directly framed the metro as being unaffordable, though comments made by Mr. Awasthi suggested that the urban poor might be taking bus over metro in order to save money.

Several reiterated that the user cost of the metro was substantially subsidized. Neither Mrs. Saklani nor Amritleen brought up the women's only compartment of the metro. Although the DMRC headquarters was located adjacent to a major station hub, senior level employees do not commute to work by metro. Many are given a car and driver due to their rank and position.

Three interviews with women's organizations in Delhi help to understand additional perspectives on women's transportation issues among those who were not directly invested in transportation themselves. The first interview was with Mrs. Kaur, a leader within the National Commission of Women (NCW). A government agency whose primary role is the promoting and protecting of women's interests. Mrs. Kaur's office primarily deals with settling domestic disputes. In most instances it is issues of estrangement and violence wherein the woman does not want police involvement for fear that it could have a negative impact on her reputation. When necessary, NCW has lawyers and representatives but 50 percent or more of all cases are solved without outside assistance. In the case of extreme violence, where the woman is bloody and needs hospital, Mrs. Kaur prefers to involve the court and police, and to initiate a formal separate through court. When probed, she said that yes, even this is hard to have families agree upon, a point that supports the research findings from Chattopadhyay and Jacob (2016) in which the lower incidents of divorce in the North were attributed to a stronger patriarchal structure.

The Commission receives on average about 100 phone calls a day, all from within the Delhi area. When I asked if men are complicit with the efforts of NCW. She smiled and said yes and no. Sometimes when it is a case of dowry and the marriage hasn't yet

taken place the man is complicit because it is usually his parents that are after the dowry. My primary purpose in meeting Mrs. Kaur was to ask about the unique problems urban women face while in public. Although the NCW is more involved in domestic disputes Mrs. Kaur believed that the main problem of the urban environment is that people in Delhi prefer to not involve themselves with strangers, something she doesn't think is true in rural situations. "No one knows who you are and if you see something happening you just let it be."¹⁴⁴ Media reports would seem to back up Mrs. Kaur's point; a bus driver beaten to death, a woman raped at p.m., a man hit by a speeding vehicle.¹⁴⁵ Most of these incidents were recorded by passer bys and uploaded onto social media, but no interference took place. A 2010 report done by Jagori and UN Women found that 54 percent of women and 69 percent of men surveyed said they would not extend help if they saw a woman facing harassment. Mrs. Kaur was certain that the number of rapes has significantly increased but this was because women feel more comfortable reporting. Now there is a special grievances cell and more police sensitivity. When asked about problems women face using transportation she replied that transportation is good. The city can be dangerous for women, but there is nothing unique about transportation itself. It is only when women use transportation at odd timings or find themselves in outlying areas, it can be a problem, particularly in unlit areas where "criminal minds" and "drug addicts" hang out. Unlike other conversations, her reply does not reveal any value

¹⁴⁴ Her point is an interesting counter observation to Phadke et al (2011) who found that women were more confident reporting or retelling against issues of harassment in neighborhoods they did not belong to.

¹⁴⁵ In each of these incidents, the commonly cited reason for non intervention is a fear that those instigating the attack are "goons" and one doesn't want to get involved in the mafia or second, a fear that they might be implicated into a court case or questioned by the police. So pervasive is the attitude of non intervention that in 2016, the Delhi government began offering auto drivers a reward for bringing victims of crime (primarily road accidents) to the hospitals with a "no questions asked" policy. Part of this initiative was justified by the traffic situation and inability for ambulances to reach hospitals quickly due to traffic congestion.

judgment on whether or not women should be in these situations, suggesting that she understands that for many women, these are not choices or decisions but circumstances. In other words, it's not a question of being allowed or able to travel, it's about traveling out of economic necessity. When asked about policies she felt improved the lives of urban women, she said without hesitation, "Work, some job. Only then can women feel self-sufficient and independent, through earning income. Then they won't rely on men. This is the primary way for the improvement of women."

A separate interview with two senior researchers at a leading NGO on women's empowerment shared the sentiment that employment is indeed a necessary component to improving the lives of urban women. Collectively, they had a different take on transportation. One said that for poor urban women, safety and accessibility are often in conflict with one another. "When you consider one, you have to forget the other." They, like several academics, saw the metro as part of Delhi's gentrification narrative, pointing out that metro was not researching areas in which public transportation was already lacking. They used the example of Vasant Nagar, an area that developed into a diplomatic, affluent place with many people are having more than two vehicles. But it used to be a slum. Those who were not forcibly moved work mostly in domestic service of the affluent class, however, as the affluent class did not need public transportation, it was those who could not afford private vehicles who remained isolated from the rest of the city. According to organization, about 40 percent of rape cases are reported in Vasant Vihar, around Puri, with the observation that there continues to be no lighting, no police presence, even after several cases have been reported. The digging up of the road for the construction of the metro (which will pass through the area) has put a lot of concern on

women's safety as it is easy to abduct a woman.. Because of construction there is no footpath, street lighting, and all of the hawkers and informal sellers have left that stretch of road. When asked who is walking these routes it was explained that it is mostly domestic maids and those working as service providers. I was told that these women will always take the cheapest mode so they can save money; they are committed to their children's future and want to see them in a better situation. The researchers from the NGO thought that even if you give these working women a lump sum of money for transportation they will still walk to and from her job in order to save that money for her children. A second component to this is that harassment happens on the bus. As these women are low caste, they are particularly vulnerable to all kinds of harassment, including group harassment where others will watch but not do anything. Based on the organization's work, these women thought that smaller, point-to-point transportation of 5-6 km, would benefit women the most.

Section Two: Surveying Women at Hostels

3.3.1 Accommodations in the City

In this section I focus on women who have come to Delhi for either employment or educational purposes and live in a woman's hostel, a form of shared accommodations that provides food and lodging. This particular population was chosen to research several reasons, which will become apparent through a discussion of the existing literature. I begin with some general points about employment based migration in India as an entry point into discussion about urban shelter options available to men and women who come to the city on their own. The purpose of this discussion is to highlight the gendered nature of these shelter options and why some accommodations are considered appropriate for

men but inappropriate for women. This sets up questions and linkages between employment, transportation, and shelter—a link made in Anand and Tiwari’s (2006) detailed study on poor women in Delhi and Jain’s (2015) study on full time working women. Anand and Tiwari conclude that time poverty due to household responsibilities and a lack of access to private modes of transportation forces women to work close to home. While the shelter connection is less explicit in Jain’s study, survey findings show that the majority of these working women (more than 60 percent) had children at home, shorter work commutes, and were more likely than men to trip chain for childcare duties. Pothukuchi’s (2003) study of life in young women’s working hostels in Bangalore tuned me into the idea of looking at the employment, transportation, and shelter link among a population of women who, given their lodging in a woman’s hostel were in a life stage that did not include reproductive responsibilities associated with family and caregiving. Given the elimination of caregiving (also referred to as the sexual division of labor) it was predicted that factors such as trip chaining would be eliminated. How might these influence modal decisions?

It was expected that the shelter, employment, transportation link would be very strong, given that these women are in the city on their own for the purpose of work or education, they would not need to consider the mobility needs of anyone beyond themselves. Yet complicating this slightly was evidence from Phadke et al’s (2011) work suggesting that young, unmarried women are particularly vulnerable to public scrutiny and thus more concerned with “manufacturing respectability” than older or married women¹⁴⁶, a factor that could further complicate travel decisions. Singling out women

¹⁴⁶ Phadke et al. (2011) argue that one reason for this is the visible markings (bindi on forehead, manglasutra, and other forms of jewelry) a married woman wears thus signaling her “belonging” to a

who stayed in a hostel provided a way of focusing the research empirically and conceptually. These young women occupied a unique position of both mobility and immobility; mobility in the ability to be in the city on one's own, be it for educational or economic purposes coupled with an immobility derived from the family's fear of letting their daughter come unaccompanied to, what is considered, the most dangerous city for women in India. A women's hostel embodies many of the tensions discussed in Chapter One and Chapter Two, particularly the tension between a social acceptance of a modern working woman coupled with anxieties around the influence this might have on traditional values and roles. Like the assumed respectability of the IT firm a "good" working women's hostel is viewed by the public as a respectable place for respectable women, thus upholding not only the respectability of the young woman, but her family.

While the hostel population I would work with represents a particular freedom; for many women, and men, coming to the city for employment, it is not a freedom but rather economic necessity. I will touch upon this in the opening section by showing how housing and shelter is connected to larger mobility or migration to the city as well as the micro ability of daily commutes of women and how themes of surveillance and protection are connected and multidimensional.

Why it is less common to stay with one's extended family

household. A married woman would "invite" trouble were she to transgress invisible boundaries but she is allowed more autonomy in public as it is expected that her reproductive duties will require her to be in public.

In the post independence years (i.e. After 1947) migration to the city was largely dictated by family, caste, community, religious, and language ties. Urban neighborhoods of this first wave urbanization reflected these ties, becoming homogenous enclaves amidst the diversity of the city (e.g. Lajpat Nagar in Delhi, Vile Parle East and West in Mumbai, Malleswaram in Bangalore). They acted as a support network for newly transposed residents and individuals migrating to the city who often stayed with extended family, taking advantage of established connections. This was almost exclusively a migration pattern reserved for men; if already married, the wife and family would join only after the male was established enough to provide shelter for them (i.e. Move out the extended family's house).

While neighborhoods in India, and Delhi in particular, continue to reflect homogeneity in the context of religious identity (many neighborhoods remain predominantly Muslim on the basis of being discriminated against from entering other parts of the city) many of these older neighborhoods have, like cities across the world, experienced radical change (see Ghertner 2015), reflecting homogeneity along economic and class lines. As early as 2003, Pothukuchi notes that rapidly escalating costs of living in urban India, including housing and rent, coupled with smaller living spaces make an additional person in the house more burdensome. Furthermore, middle class families who send their sons and daughters to the city for either education or employment resist sending them to stay with extended family in order to avoid being implicated into familiar situations of reciprocal obligations. This is particularly true for women, (who in the current era do come to the city on their own) but might be expected to perform household and caregiving duties if staying with extended family.

Only in the last couple of decades has the concept of shelter autonomously obtained through market relations taken off on a much broader scale for Indian women. Until recently, acceptable non-family forms of shelter were restricted to boarding schools for girls, homes for destitute women, and scattered hostels for migrant women in a narrow range of female occupations (nurses or teachers, for example),(Pothukuchi 2003: 92).

Though literature to support this claim could not be found, it is also possible that people coming to the city for employment or education are not staying with extended family for the reason that a more diverse range of housing options are available. Based on the first section's research on Bangalore's IT sector, in which several interviews with individuals who were unmarried and had migrated to the city specifically to work in the tech sector, it is suggested that we can conceive of four different shelter accommodations available to urban migrants:

- Living with extended family (increasingly uncommon)
- Shared housing with friends or acquaintances
- Paid guest accommodations
- Hostel accommodations

Despite this diversity of shelter options for men and women it is understood that these are “temporary” shelters, an opinion expressed during informal conversations with men and women throughout the research process. In contrast, a “permanent” form of shelter, no matter how precarious (e.g. informal settlement in a slum) is based almost entirely on marriage and the family. Melkote and Tharu explain:

For a man in India...a house is also a mark of his lineage; his ancestry derives from birth and may not be questioned. For a woman...In a house she belongs to one man—father or husband—and is protected from all other males...she achieves position within a property structure, often as property through the patriarch who takes her into his house. Her status and her value is entirely dependent on this housing (1983:169).

This quote supports the claim that permanent shelter is tied to the family for the man, and for the woman, tied to marriage. It also demonstrates the inherent gender hierarchy to and within shelter arrangements.

Low cost sharing options

National Sample Survey (NSS) data from 2007 estimates that approximately 191 million people in India are internal migrants. Different from the post Independence era, contemporary urban labor migration is increasingly semi-permanent, seasonal or circular—largely indicative of migration from rural areas due to crop failure, drought, lack of employment outside the agricultural sector as well as more general poverty, politics (e.g. Maoists), religious or communal violence. In these scenarios, individuals, most often men¹⁴⁷, come to the city for months at a time to work in sectors that do not require significant education or vocational training¹⁴⁸ (Abbas and Varma 2016; Census of India 2005).

¹⁴⁷ Though in the case of the North East and Chhattisgarh women also migrate on their own, usually becoming live in domestic servants.

¹⁴⁸ This is in contrast to post independence migration, which was marked by the partition of India and Pakistan and opportunities to work in the newly formed government at all employment levels and skills. A typical migration structure at this time is one in which one family member would migrate, often the eldest son, establishing himself in a part of the city that was occupied by members of the same community (often caste and/or religious beliefs). Over time, more family members are incorporated into the urban fabric for employment, education, and perhaps long term residence. In this sense, for many, the first ‘landing’ in the city was with family or extended family, keeping in mind the flexibility and expansiveness of family to include relationships that might have been intimate in the village but are not necessarily marked by blood. In his memoir, Ooru Keri, Dalit writer and activist Dr. Siddalingaiah (b. 1954), tells about how he was able to leave his village and first come to Bangalore in the 70s.

“My mother admitted me to R. Gopalaswamy Iyer Dalit Hostel in Sritampura [a locality in Bangalore]. She worked as a sweeper at the hostel, and that gave me some courage...My father, who was poverty personified, visited our hostel once in a while...Hostel life gave me new experiences. Three hundred students stayed there. Anywhere between ten and thirty slept in a room. Eczema was rampant. Boys applying ointment and warming themselves in the sun was a common sight,” (Ooru Keri, 2003: 140).

I reference this passage for two reasons. First, it shows the way in which one family member, in this case it is the mother, finds an opportunity in the city which then opens a pathway for another family to come to the city. Although Siddalingaiah is not staying with extended family, he is staying in a hostel for Dalits and thus

Bare bone accommodations ranging from many sharing a single room to a bed in a large hall is common among men who migrate on a cyclical or seasonal basis for employment such as construction work, security guard, cleaner, restaurant staff, food seller as it is cheap making it easier to save earnings. However, it is often crowded and unsanitary, making it inappropriate for families and women. Given the physical expansion of cities such as Bangalore and Delhi coupled with rising costs of public transportation, it is not uncommon for men, regardless of marital status, who live close to or even within the city to take up cheap shelter closer to their place of employment in order to save on time and cost of commuting. This point was illustrated in Chapter One during the interview with the firm's Facilities Management director who explained that because of Electronic City's location, service workers, with salaries of 8,000 INR or less per month, find it easier and cheaper to stay in a shelter during the week and return to their families on the weekend. This form of shelter is not available to women from the city for several reasons, notably because of care giving responsibilities (regardless of age) and general concern for safety in such arrangements. Both of these factors are evidence but not sufficient explanations¹⁴⁹ as to why fewer women migrate for these positions.

Bachelor pads and inappropriate girls

In direct opposition to the accommodations discussed above, the "bachelor flat" is increasingly popular among a young, already urban, middle class population raised on

general locality in Bangalore that was informally designated for this particular caste. The passage also provides a brief glimpse into hostel accommodations.

¹⁴⁹ Another obvious factor is lower wages.

sitcoms such as *Friends*¹⁵⁰ and *Sex in the City*. Though this is counteracted by the fact that many home owners and housing societies¹⁵¹ are unwilling to rent flats out if it is co-ed cohabitation. Young women find it particularly challenging to secure this type of accommodation, even more so to secure accommodation if she wishes to live by herself. So much so that a documentary, “Bachelor Girls”, addresses exactly this subject. Released in 2016, the film is based on director Shikha Makan’s own experiences of trying to rent an apartment as a middle class, educated, single woman in Mumbai. The realization that despite the range of opportunities present in what is considered India’s most liberal city, the stereotype of the bachelor is considered unacceptable when transposed onto the female body. “Women have come a long way in their struggles to define their identity and assert their individuality, but clearly the Indian society does not want to accept this version of a new independent woman, who is on her own,” (Makan quoted in Gupta 2016). The documentary profiles several women from different parts of India all of whom work in different sectors but shared the commonality of earning enough to afford a “bachelor flat” and being past the acceptable age of being single. In other words, these women should be married and living in “permanent” accommodations. As one woman in the documentary says, “Despite me having a banking background and coming from South India, so a sum of all conservatives coming together [laughs], they were not okay with that [being unmarried].”

¹⁵⁰ Both programs are incredibly popular in urban India with restaurants and cafes thematically dedicated to either; “Friends” nights are also common in bars.

¹⁵¹ “Society” is the term typically used in India to describe an apartment building in which decisions are collectively made by residents, regardless of whether it is a cooperative or private developer.

In a more humorous take on the situation, two female comedians of Bhartiya Digital Party recently made *Aaplya Baapachi Society*¹⁵² (Our Father's Society) a YouTube video about two “modern” women trying to get an apartment in a co-op, also in Mumbai. The girls have submitted their paperwork and deposit but, upon seeing that one woman has a sleeveless kurta on and the other wearing shorts, the building secretary explains: “These clothes, they are not allowed...Non veg is not allowed”. He continues: “By the way, cigarettes are not allowed in this society, for women. It's bad for pregnancy. Pregnancy is not allowed, unless you are married, and boys are not allowed”. The video delves further and further into circular absurdity. As several viewers commented: it would be funny, if it wasn't so true.

Both Bachelor Girls and Bhartiya Digital Party cater to, and reflect a specific urban demographic who has global cultural literacy and awareness. They can document, even joke about norms dictating where and how a woman should live, even if they cannot change it. In fact, the first part of the title “Bachelor Girls” refers to the colloquial term used by classified ads, home good stores, real estate brokers and sitcoms to describe a studio or one bedroom apartment in India. Take for example an excerpt from the Sunday section of *The Hindu*, a popular middle class English language newspaper. I quote at length from the article “Heard of a bachelor's decor?”

When a space is explicitly owned by a bachelor, the expectations regarding the design and décor are different from conventional space. Given the low inclination to indulge in daily maintenance, the space is best decorated to suit this...Black being a masculine color, can feature in the space as a leather couch or recliner, while bar stools double up as breakfast stools...The living area, besides a comfortable couch and recliner, can house an entertainment unit that holds, besides the television, a state-of-the art [sic] music system. Contending that drapes require regular cleaning, something not suitable for a bachelor's lifestyle... (Sundar 2017).

¹⁵² <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9Wc17MmFGGg> Accessed 10.3.2017

The article reinforces the numerous, socially sanctioned stereotypes of the gender of an individual accommodation in the city, their economic position and personal tastes. That this individual would be decidedly urban, middle class, and male with a proclivity toward drinking (e.g. bar stools) and hi-fi listening and viewing experiences (e.g. entertainment units and state-of-the-art music systems) has been linked to American popular culture of the 1950s and 60s in which the bachelor pad was a domestic space devoid of family reproductive duties, focused solely on the consumptive desires of the bachelor man (see Osgerby 2005).

Unlike the urban male bachelor, the unmarried urban woman is allowed to be in the city but she must choose a shelter option that reiterates a commitment to traditional values, upholds a certain level of respectability, which, unlike her male counterpart, is directly tied to the respectability of the family. Whether a woman would prefer a flat, PG, or hostel is irrelevant; choices are dictated by larger gender norms, as seen in the case of *Bachelor Girls*. *Bachelor Girls* documents the irony of being an urban, middle class, financially successful, independent woman who cannot get an apartment for herself on account of being an unmarried woman.

My decision to focus on women who stayed in a women's only (i.e. hostel) accommodation was an attempt to survey a different population of "independent" women by which I mean those less likely to come from urban middle class families. These women were most probably in their early to mid 20s, independent in their ability to come to the city on their own, but situated within family and societal norm about marriage and appropriateness of life as a single woman in Delhi, best represented by the fact of staying

in a “respectable” women’s hostel. These are women who are “allowed” by their families to come to the city for personal and professional opportunities, but in what ways might these women navigate complex gender norms through daily routines of commuting through the city, experiencing a simultaneity of freedoms associated with urban life coupled with worries and pressures of parents back home?

Overview of women’s hostels

The terms PG (Paid Guest) and hostel are often used interchangeably, with a few key differences. Both refer to a room and board living arrangement but a Paid Guest accommodation ranges in size (anywhere from two to, say, 100 rooms available) and can refer to an informal arrangement in which a family rents out rooms in a large house, or it can be an entire building constructed in a dorm like setting. Small, informal PG accommodations for women appear less popular than for men. Melkote and Tharu present one explanation: “To a house owner, the single woman represents a liability he would rather not assume,” (1983:164). Liability in this instance refers to the body of the woman, a body that is unmarried and living away from traditional family structures. However, as more women come to urban areas for employment and education, women’s dormitory style PGs have increased considerably, a reality reflected in the range of PG fliers one finds affixed to bus shelters, trees, and sides of buildings advertising important details such as North Indian food available, cable, 24 hour water supply, and so on, with what they provide being an indicator of the type of person suited for that particular PG. It should also be observed that fliers for men are often quite different for women, for example, a woman’s PG will almost always advertise 24 hour security, and emphasize

“quiet”, “respectable”, accommodations whereas a male PG will often focus on TV, Wi-Fi, and cable services. While no evidence was found in the literature, it has been my general observation throughout this research that monthly fees tend to be slightly higher in all female accommodations, perhaps because, in keeping with respectability, they tend to emphasize cleanliness, quality food, and security.

Although there has been a proliferation of PG accommodations, there are few specific legal mechanisms¹⁵³ to monitor the functioning and accountability of such accommodations, making it potentially risky.¹⁵⁴ Hostels on the other hand tend to be run either by a government or charity with more formal arrangements and accountability. A hostel is a formal, dorm-like setting often accommodating a larger number of occupants. Many of the hostels in India have some origin in Christian charities, such as the Young Women’s Christian Association (YWCA) and represent the narrative found elsewhere in the world of a safe haven for young women (and men) coming to the city and needing some sort of support. As Pothukuchi (2003) explains, “Hostels are favored over other forms because they are typically single sex, collective residencies and usually government run by strict rules,”(91). A shelter of strict rules can be considered a response, protection, or safeguarding against the perpetuated myth of the single woman as ruleless, unhinged, promiscuous, any of these adjectives in which freedom is associated with unruly, having negative future impacts on important social relations and

¹⁵³ In theory one needs to obtain a trade license from the Municipal Corporation; but this does not seem practiced.

¹⁵⁴ For example, in March 2017, women in Bangalore launched a campaign for safe PGs. The campaign formed after a repeated sex offender was caught sexual assaulting women staying in a PG. The focus of #SafePG is twofold. First, the installation of CCTV and security guards inside women’s PGs and also the demand for a separate licensing system for PGs, which currently only need a trade license. (Staff, The Hindu, March 2017). This campaign came on the eve of three boys and one security guard dying from food poisoning, after eating a meal at the PG. What is interesting is that no connection has been made between the two incidents and the larger question of safe PGs and appropriate licensing. #SafePG is solely focused on the protection of women from gender based harassment and unwanted male attention.

obligations such as marriageability. Research done by Melkote and Tharu suggests that what is advertised is often not there in practice “What a hostel resident pays for, therefore, is not really food and board but the respectability the institution provides her” (1983: 169). In this way, the hostel is taking on the “liability” of the unmarried woman.



Figure 14: Working women's hostel in Delhi



Figure 15: Women's PG in a student area of Bangalore (note style of dress)



Figure 16: PG room for single woman in a private home, Bangalore (note advertisement on gate)

In her work look at 12 hostels throughout Bangalore, Pothukuchi (2003) found three women sharing a room that was 8 by 10 feet and a bathroom being shared by up to 15 women was somewhat common. Unlike male accommodations, which tend to be anywhere and everywhere in the city women's hostels will be located in better areas of the city, adding to the expense (due to land prices) but this also has the disadvantage of being more difficult for a woman to find a hostel that is also conveniently located to her place of employment. So while there are many instances of men who chose their accommodations near their workplace with sole purpose of saving on transportation, women might wind up spending on transportation and long commutes in order to stay in a hostel that is considered respectable. As there are far fewer accommodations for

women, and even fewer “good”¹⁵⁵ shelters, women’s hostels often have long wait lists to get into and a set time limit of stay (i.e. Usually two years). Safety is generally attributed to a warden, who is “responsible for the physical and ‘moral protection’—and control—of the women,” (Pothukuchi 2003: 95) coupled with male security staff who are in charge of recording everyone coming in and out of the building. Therefore ensuring her physical safety.

Pothukuchi finds that most hostel residents in Bangalore were between the ages of 20 and 29, unmarried, and tended to come from educated and lower to middle income families (2003). One in four respondents had extended relatives living in the city but choose not to utilize this shelter option due to a lack of physical space and wishing to avoid future reciprocal family obligations. Larger or more expensive hostels tended to have a pseudo kinship network with many of the women coming from the same town or region. Applications to the hostel superseded the number of spaces available, having a recommendation from an existing girl or family increased one’s chance of acceptance.

Krishnaswamy and Kulkarni’s (1997) research examined sources of anxiety for women living in these working women’s hostels with specific focus on 1) difficulty in commuting to and from work and 2) perception of place of origin as affecting the ability to adjust to the hostel environment. The authors found that of the 200 respondents, 41 percent suffered from high anxiety (according to the criteria established in Sinha’s Comprehensive Anxiety Test). Many women, all of whom were unmarried, were concerned with how much money they were able to save from working with the primary purpose of saving for their future dowry or sending remittances back to the family. To

¹⁵⁵ In this instance “good” refers to the opinions expressed by interview respondents from the existing research wherein a hostel is sanitary, provides decent food, has a good community of women, and kind staff.

save money, many did not eat breakfast or take snacks outside the hostel and were entirely dependent on the food served at the hostel, which was frequently described as being of poor quality. It was found that several respondents walked to their place of employment in order to save on commuting costs.

Respondents...felt highly anxious whenever they missed the bus or faced difficulties in getting an auto rickshaw to reach their office in time. Similarly, during evening peak hours, if they missed the regular bus, they had to face a lot of difficulties even in getting an auto rickshaw to reach the hostel within their prescribed time. If they were late, they had to take permission to enter the hostel premises. On many such occasions, they were put under lot [sic] of unnecessary embarrassment by the watchmen and the warden (1997: 6).

Melkote and Tharu (1983) look at hostels from a feminist lens to examine how and why this form of shelter fails to advance larger concepts of gender freedom and equality. "Far from supporting women in the all-important effort to enter the work force, the hostels actually extends the restrictions against which an Indian must constantly fight,"(165). The authors found several hostels to be authoritarian. Wardens received their salaries from organizations and had only to answer to boards and committees, not to the residents. As residents were not invited to board meetings, their issues go unheard. Several of these issues related to the warden shaming girls for being inappropriate wherein inappropriate referred to, as found in Krishnaswamy and Kulkarni (1997), arriving after evening curfew, hanging up underwear to dry in places that might be visible by others, or wearing sleeveless and inappropriate clothing in the hostel, where male security guards might see them. As it is a paid accommodation the assumption is that if a resident is unhappy with the service she can go elsewhere, an approach that either overlooks or acknowledges the fact that there are few alternatives available. Collectively, the literature suggests that the hostel exerts a disciplining structure that ironically does little service to the actual

security of the girls. As cited in Melkote and Tharu, one woman hosteller said she woke up to the security guard sleeping next to her. When the girl tried to raise the issue with the warden, the warden put the blame on the girl, believing her promiscuity to be the problem.

3.3.2 Research methodology

Utilizing a commuter survey as the primary instrument for empirical research was so that questions addressed in the Bangalore case study, particularly in respect to mode choice, could be evaluated within the Delhi context. Additionally, the target population was young working women who would have some degree of independence by default of having to commute to work on a daily basis. The survey instrument was designed to focus on social aspects examples of mobility, how immediate social relations within the family intersected with a woman's relationship to navigating the city literally and conceptually.

The survey targeted two different populations of young working women. The first was young women who lived in a working women's hostel and the second population was young women working in the retail sector. A conscious decision was made to conduct research in sites that was serviced both by bus and metro. Further questions included those addressing forms of harassment experienced (e.g. staring, physical, verbal) and location (e.g. bus, metro) as well as qualities within the built environment that contributed to women's perception of safety. Factors that contribute to perception of safety were culled from existing literature regarding interventions like better lighting, footpaths, etc. (see Klein 1980; Jagori and UN Women 2010). Lastly, the survey was expanded to include questions addressing embedded mobility (e.g. why are you

working?) and gender norms (e.g. clothing worn while commuting) to arrive at richer understandings of the physical and psychological dimensions of quotidian mobility. The survey was be complimented with individual interviews and focus groups with residents and interviews. In section one, I focus on women living in working women's hostels and in section two I focus on women working in retail. Going off the finding from Dunkel-Graglia in her work on "pink" public transportation in Mexico City that informants are less inclined to readily discuss opinions when interviews are structured (Dunkel-Graglia 2013), it was decided ahead of time that any interviews conducted with either population would be unstructured and contextual, that is based on the environment in which it took place. Once again, the primary research questions were designed to be:

- 1a. What are the mode choices of woman surveyed and why are they choosing these modes?
- 2b. Are women willing to report incidents of harassment? What are women's feelings toward traveling after dark, and existing policies aimed at their safety?
- 3c Has the Delhi metro had any discernible impact on commuting choices and preferences?

As this project is concerned with feminist epistemologies of embedded positionalities as a way of better locating difference within the broader experience of gender, conceptual questions of mobility include:

- 1b. Why are these women working?
- 2b. Do they see themselves working five years from now?

Finding the research site

Locating hostels in the city as a way of reaching a specific population of women was the devised research strategy. As surveys and conversations would take place within the hostel as opposed to interception at place of transport, more time could be permitted for answering questions and completing the survey. In the following paragraphs I introduce the methods used to find and survey different women's hostels in South Delhi. This is followed with an overview of the two hostels in which the research took place.

There are a handful of government run hostels in Delhi, with about three that are specifically for women who make less than 15,000 INR a month. According to the Government of India's Department of Women & Child Development website (2015), there are 19 working women hostels in Delhi that "provide safe and suitable accommodation to working women, unmarried women, widow, divorced and separated women." One of these hostels is a YWCA, two are associated with universities, and another two are associated with hospitals and nursing colleges. Further described by the Department's website:

The aim of the scheme is to provide a dignified proper and affordable shelter to women who are employed and do not have any living ¹⁵⁶accommodation. The present number of Working Women's Hostel are full and not in a position to accommodate the large number of Women who are waiting allotments. Hence, there is an increasing need for constructing more Working Women Hostels. Presently there are 11 Working Women Hostel run by voluntary Organization. 13 new Working Woman Hostels to be constructed on priority.

The research began by approaching several of the hostels listed by the government, with five being identified as ideal research sites due to their geographic location and proximity to public transportation. After continuous follow up for a period of six weeks with no permissions obtained I abandoned the idea of soliciting government run hostels and tried

¹⁵⁶ In so far as the Department of Women and Child is ideologically constructed around traditional ideas of family and extended family, it possible that women must demonstrate some "proof" of hardship and lack of existing family and extended family ties in Delhi.

to find private sector hostels that would grant permissions. Eventually two hostels were identified as feasible research sites, one being privately run and the second having government affiliation. After meeting with the board of the first hostel I was granted permission to conduct research in the lobby of the hostel for three consecutive evenings. A short form survey (included in the Appendix) would be administered to every woman entering or exiting the hostel between the hours of 5 and 8:00pm, a time frame that captured the period in which most women were returning home from work. Each woman was asked to fill in the form and return it back to me by the third day. Additionally, each woman was asked to participate in a short 10 minute, oral interview. Several women entered or exited the hostel with their friends and when approached about the interview asked that I interview both of them at the same time. As a result, these interviews were unstructured and highly contextual. Questions were fielded on the spot according to receptiveness, if a topic was not well received than it was not pursued.

The same methods were applied to the second hostel survey with two differences. First, permissions were granted to spend only one evening conducting surveys and interviews. As this was a smaller hostel of approximately 45 residents, a decision was taken to not do individual interviews but rather pursue a semi-structured focus group discussion with about 20 women present. Some women arrived later into the evening and these women were interviewed individually. The short form survey was distributed to all women who were given time to complete it before the focus group discussion began. Surveys were collected after the focus group ended.

Saket hostel

Located in a recently middle class neighborhood in South Delhi, mostly due to the proximity to a recently opened metro station but also close to a major bus stop, this hostel was visibly “respectable,” a well-maintained brick building, next to a bank and a short walk to a popular open air food and cinema complex young people and families alike “hanging out” until about p.m. After p.m. most all eating establishments closed and the character of the plaza changed considerably.

It should be noted that permission to do this research came only after attending a board meeting to present my research to the all female committee. Given the ethnographic nature of existing literature on hostels I include a brief description of this experience as it illustrates points brought up in the work of Melkote and Tharu (1983) and Pothukuchi (2003). Having a board is common to many hostels, this particular hostel board held bi-monthly meetings on Sunday morning with the dual agenda of interviewing possible residents and discussing hostel issues. As I waited for the board meeting to begin I was one of several women sitting on a plastic chair in an open foyer. The major difference was that while I was alone, every other woman was waiting for an acceptance interview and accompanied by parents. All these young women wore a traditional salwar kameez, alongside a mother with a freshly pressed sari. A more subtle observation was that the parents seemed more nervous than their daughter, who was for the most part, busy on her smart phone firing off Facebook updates and WhatsApp replies. I later learned that this particular hostel, being fairly new in construction and located in a good neighborhood, has a long wait list, with many girls applying a year before going. Given that most of these young women are from outside the NCR, for the entire family to travel to South Delhi on a Sunday morning would require advanced planning, financial

consideration, and thus allowed a subtle glimpse into the socio-economic category of the girls staying here. Informal conversation developed between myself and the families in waiting as a natural curiosity led them to ask if I was also trying to find accommodation at the hostel. I learned that one girl was a recent pharmacy graduate and starting her career, another was coming to Delhi for one year to do coaching classes in order to do well on government entrance exams. Another had just landed a tech job in Gurgaon. Although the hostel was quite far from Gurgaon, the girl had a friend from university who was staying at the hostel and she wanted to be close to her. None of these women were over the age of 25.

During the board meeting (which was conducted in English), material indicators (jewelry, dress) suggested that all of the board members were married, over the age of 40, and upper class/caste. Initially, my project was treated with great suspicion, which helped me better understand why I didn't get very far with the previous hostels. The initial assumption was that I was there to do an evaluation of the hostel conditions. Permission was given after I reframed the research as concern for women's safety in respect to difficulties young single women in Delhi have commuting with the justification that when a girl's safety is compromised, so also is the reputation of the hostel.

Conducting the research

I arrived around 5:30pm, to a mostly empty hostel. The few women present wore lounge clothes, bright printed pajama bottoms and tee-shirts, walking in groups of two or three, sharing a packet of crisps, glued to their smart phones. These women seemed to be the youngest of the hostel residents, roughly the age of 20, most in the city for their

“coaching” or training for a specific future employment sector. The first wave of “professional” women began arriving around 6:30pm, these women carried large purses or backpacks bulging with laptops and paperwork. Some wore western style office wear but the majority wore a variety of kurta styles, an observation that will be discussed further in the context of transportation. None wore a sari, a subtle indication of age, marital status, and urban mindset. All looked visibly tired. Some carried small packets of milk, bananas, fruits, food items that were picked up from the vendors on the adjacent street. When I approached the women regarding the project several said they would first like to go up to their rooms and change.

The general response to the project initially ranged from disinterest or indifference, to shyness. Many said they were too tired, and asked if they could do it a different day. About seventy five to eighty percent of the women spoke English with ease, the rest understood most of the conversation and would ask a friend for clarity when needed. The process seemed more successful when it evolved (or devolved) into an informal small group of about two to four girls. This format allowed friends to lean over and ask when they didn’t understand what was being said, though a noticeable challenge of this approach was a tendency to move toward “group response” where one woman responded and the others nodded in agreement. The second night went better than the first, however, it was my impression that the majority of the women were disinterested in the topic, especially the younger women. Commuting in the city was a fact and reality with a general sentiment that one took precautions and that was the way it was....aren’t there more interesting things to talk about?!

RK Puram

The second hostel in which research was conducted was a public-private partnership with the public aspect being associated with the Delhi Public Schools¹⁵⁷ located adjacent to a Delhi Development Authority (DDA) residential colony in RK (Rama Krishna) Puram. The hostel is off a major thoroughfare, Olof Palme Marg and a two minute walk to the Munirka Bus Stop, which serves several major routes. It is about three kilometers from Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU), one of India's leading universities, but about four kilometers from any one metro station. The hostel has accommodation for about 47 women. Like the Saket hostel there is a wait list to get in. Women can stay a max of up to three years but most stay six months to a year. The hostel warden, referred to colloquially as "Madam" by all residents who said I could come for an hour and speak to the girls, gave informal permission.

The RK Puram hostel gave off a very different impression than the Saket hostel.¹⁵⁸ The older DDA housing and lack of contemporary shopping centers suggesting a lower middle class neighborhood. This hostel building was visibly older, and more enclosed. The front door opened into a small reception area with a couch, staircase, and male security guard. Further back from this room was the common area, which is also the cafeteria/mess. Most of the women leave around am in the morning, with the earliest, a teacher, leaving at 6:30am, and the latest leaving at 10:00am. After 10:00pm the girls are not allowed out, nor, ironically, are they allowed in. If a hostel resident is going to be out

¹⁵⁷ This particular hostel was registered with the Indian Council of Social Welfare a non-profit that works on social justice and development. It was inaugurated by Sheila A. Dixshit, the former Chief Minister of Delhi, in March of 2006. Apart from her political career, Dixshit is also known for having her work setting up hostels and have promoted programs around the general empowerment of women.

¹⁵⁸ This is also reflected in annual costs whereas RK Puram has annual fees of approximately 50,000 INR and, while exact figures were not found, Saket charges closer to 100,000-120,000 per annum.

past 10:00pm, no matter what day of the week, she must call ahead and inform the warden; otherwise she won't be let into the hostel, irrespective of reason or circumstance.

One working women recalled a time in which she hadn't intended to be out past 10pm but she went out after work with her co-workers and as she worked quite far away she only realized too late that she wouldn't be back before 10:00pm as she hadn't phoned in advance she was forced to spend the night at a friend's place to avoid the humiliation of pleading to be let into the hostel. After recounting this story several of the girls pointed out that if the hostel was really truly concerned with the safety of the residents, they wouldn't have such an absurd rule. In this instance it seems that safety is the word used to describe discipline.

According to Madam, the main reason women move out the hostel is a job change or marriage, with the latter being more common. Most of the girls are from states in the North, from places that are fairly close to Delhi. In fact, on the weekend there are usually only about 10-15 girls as many go back to their families once or twice a month. It is also common to spend the weekends with extended family or friends who are in the city.

In a further conversation with Madam I asked what she feels are the biggest hardships working women in Delhi face. She explained that the main issue is safety and security and this is serious because when safety and security is compromised it affects not just the girl, but also her family—a belief that corresponds with findings from existing research. According to her, this is the responsibility of the girls because, after all, “we know how men are”. I'm was that, ideally, women in Delhi should travel with their husbands but since the women at the hostel are on their own then they must take precautions and the girls can do this by being mindful of her clothing. “She [a working

girl] can be safe on her own if she doesn't wear small dresses and all those things." She went on to tell me that in the hostel, the girls are not allowed to wear shorts in the common areas of the hostel as there are male security guards and staff who might see these women.¹⁵⁹ I later observe that none of the women are wearing western clothing, even if they indicate working in the private sector.

As I only had one evening at this hostel and it was decided to take an informal, focus group discussion approach. There were approximately 25 women present for this discussion, which took place in the mess (cafeteria). I noted that these women seem slightly older than those at the Saket hostel and it was observed that these women seem far more engaged in the topic. Unlike the Saket hostel, none of these women were there for coaching classes. Informal introductions indicated that two women were pursuing doctorates at JNU and everyone else was in the workforce. Many were JNU graduates and, perhaps carry that stereotypical JNU sensibility: left, liberal, and feminist. Some were working for NGOs, others as architects or educators. Fewer seemed to be in the private sector when compared to those at the Saket hostel.

3.3.3 Demographic profile: Hostels

In this section I present findings that came from the surveys that were distributed to women at each of the hostels. The data from both hostels were combined into a single dataset and analyzed jointly. Twelve surveys were collected from the RK Puram hostel

¹⁵⁹ Melkote and Tharu's 1983 study mentions a hostel in Hyderabad that had similar rules about enforcing the modesty of residents on account of men who were on or nearby the hostel premises. This particular hostel was run by a woman warden and her husband, who lived on the premise. "Presumably out of respect for his male presence, the residents were not allowed to hang their underwear out to dry or to dress informally at meals. Any resident who questioned these conditions was verbally abused by the [female] warden, who called the woman a liar; questioned her upbringing, breeding, and status; and claimed to know all about her dark past,"(166).

(or 29 percent response of the total hostel population) and 38 from the Saket hostel (or about 32 percent response rate). The fairly low participation rate was not due to women refusing to participate, but, in the case of the Saket hostel, women forgetting to return their completed surveys within the three day time period and, in the case of RK Puram, the majority of women preferring informal conversation to solitary survey responses. Because both research sites relied heavily on informal interviews and conversations, this analysis section will rely equally on findings that came from both the survey and the conversations.

I begin with an overview of demographic information that was obtained in the last section of the survey. Unobtrusive demographic questions were asked toward the end of the survey as a way of framing mode preferences and views toward safety and security in relation to a larger theme of mobility. As mentioned in the previous section, a different atmosphere was observed while visiting both hostels, and this was largely reflected in the survey responses. Comparing the survey data from both sites, it is observed that women from the RK Purim hostel tended to be in their mid to late 20s as opposed to those at the Saket hostel where women were in the early 20s. More women in the Saket hostel tended to work in the private sector and the RK Puram hostel, though smaller in size, had a greater diversity of women from different states.

Age

Sixty-eight percent of women are between the ages of 19 and 25. Twenty-eight percent between the ages of 26 and 32 and the remainder of women in their mid thirties with the exception of one woman who was 18 and another who was over the age of 40. The latter

worked as a financial consultant for an NGO. Originally from Madurai, Tamil Nadu, she had been in Delhi for the past 13 years working at the NGO on issues related to public health. Her husband and children had also been in Delhi for most of this time but her husband and son moved to Chennai a year back as the son had recently joined a private sector firm. While it is not uncommon for parents to stay with their young professional children it is frequently the mother who follows (in order to provide household support), this woman stayed on in Delhi, explaining she was committed to her work. When her husband and son left Delhi she moved to the RK Puram hostel. She was the only respondent who was married and with children.

Length of time in the city

The average length of time that women had been in Delhi was just over two years (26 months; 28 months if the woman mentioned above is included in the average). Seventy-eight percent of women surveyed were from northern states, close to Delhi. Examples include Uttar Pradesh, Punjab, and Haryana. Most women, especially those who had been in the city for a year or less, had come to the city specifically for a job or their coaching (to be discussed). Many who had been in Delhi for longer had first come to the city for education; doing their BA and then choosing to stay on, either pursuing a higher degree or finding work. Several women at the RK Puram hostel said that after experiencing the independence of university life, coupled with the joys of communal living with women of a similar age, there was a determination to continue this lifestyle; returning to one's place of origin and living with parents was considered oppressive and there was the likelihood of being pressured into marriage. Two women in the RK Puram hostel were originally

from Delhi (and thus not included in the calculation of length of time living in Delhi). They were in the hostel in order to be close to their place of employment. Both said the reason for staying in the hostel was not only to be close to employment, while this was the justification in the eyes of their parents, for the young women it was also an opportunity for gaining “some independence.”

How often do you return home?

The hostel guardians from both Saket and RK Puram confirmed that there were significantly fewer women at the hostel on the weekend as many returned to their families. Those whose families lived four or less hours away from Delhi tended to go home monthly, usually by bus or train. One woman at the RK Puram hostel worked six days a week, every Saturday night after work she took the bus to Uttar Pradesh (a neighboring state) arriving around midnight, spent Sunday with her family and again took the bus back into Delhi Sunday night, arriving just before curfew was enforced. Thirty-five percent of women visited their families once a month or more while 45 percent visited several (i.e. more than five) times a year. Women from South India tended to visit their families less frequently because of the physical distance but said they visited at least once a year.

Types of employment

As mentioned, one unanticipated factor in this research was that a significant number of women, 40 percent to be exact, at the Saket hostel were in Delhi for a coaching program, meaning they were not formally working. Coaching is a broad term but generally

considered a form of tutoring or preparations for entrance exams, either into government service or into a MA program,. Several respondents wrote that they were employed in the private sector without specifying in what capacity. Some were pharmacists, others were engineers, one woman was an accountant, another working in HR, there were teachers, a few working in research and development. One worked for the Ministry of Civil Aviation, another was a green building consultant. Another was in Delhi for her Teach for India Fellowship where she was teaching in an underprivileged government primary school. The diversity of employment reflects the diversity of women sharing their shelter with one another; it alludes to the wide range of backgrounds these women are coming from and the diversity of aspirations.

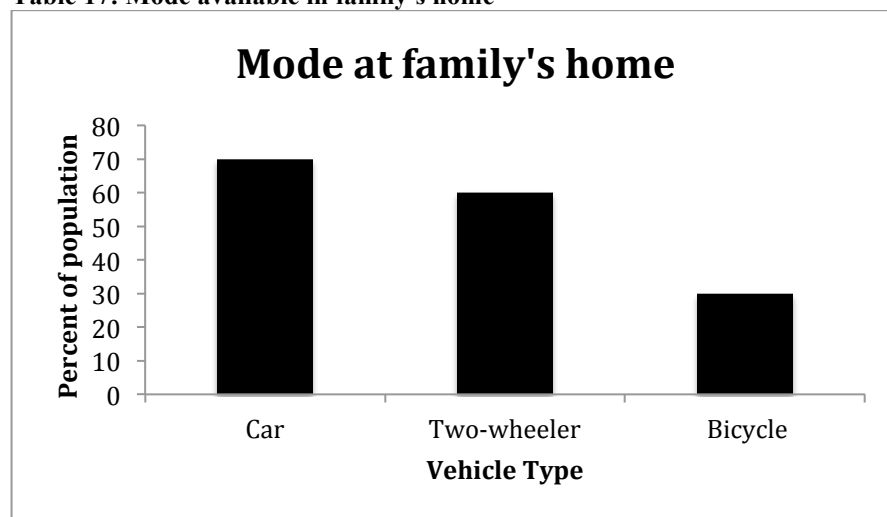
Income

Several respondents from the Saket hostel, who, being in the city for educational as opposed to employment purposes, interpreted this as the monthly income of their family, with most writing in “don’t know”. After isolating these surveys as well as those who were in the city for coaching and thus not receiving a salary I was left with a sample of fewer than 30 respondents. Based on the revised sample population, 75 percent made between 20,000-50,000 rupees per month. No respondent made more than 80,000 rupees per month. Those who did fall into the higher category (51-80,000 INR) all listed “private sector” as their employment category.

Mode available in household

Again there was an issue where many women left this question blank, making the sample size less than 30 respondents. Of those who responded, the majority of them had a car at home, that is to say, a car among their family. This is a good indicator of the class background these women are coming from if we consider that the 2011 census found only 5 percent of households across India owning cars.

Table 17: Mode available in family's home

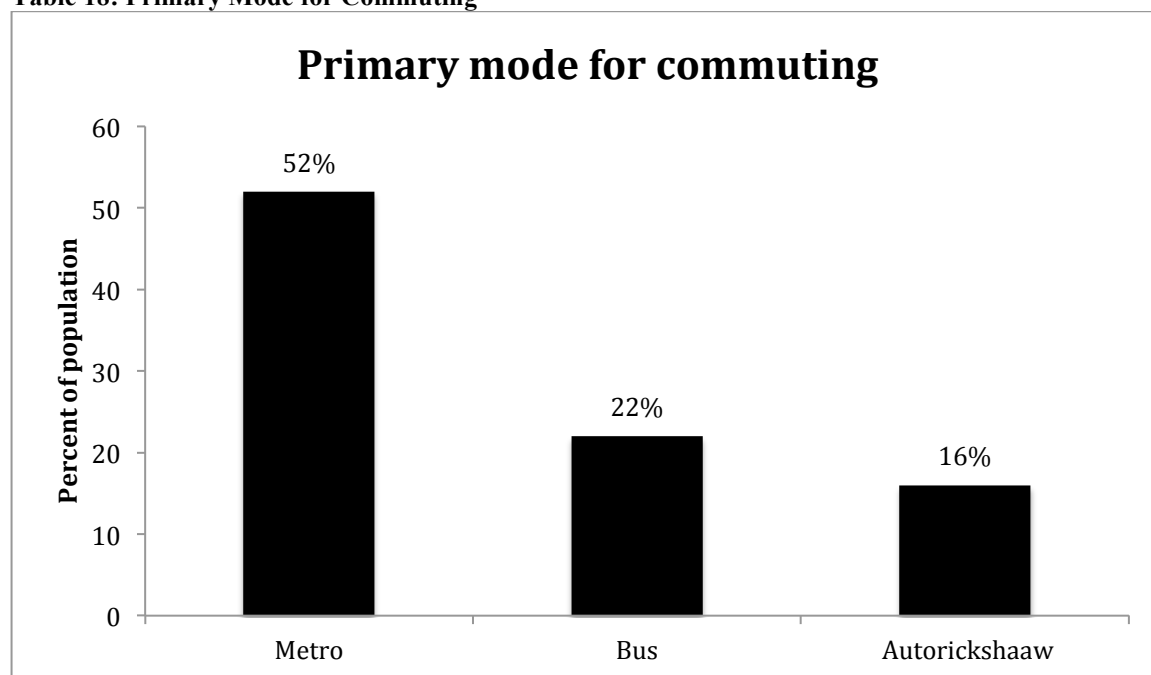


License:

Forty-three percent of the women did have a driving license and 57 percent did not. This finding can be compared with Jain's 2015 study on mobility patterns of working women in Delhi in which it was found that while 72 percent of men surveyed had licenses, only 52 percent of women did with a two way ANOVA test illustrating a strong correlation between increased income and increased likelihood of having a license. Similarly, it was found that those having a license also had a car at home, a strong indicator of income and class status. With the exception of one woman, no respondent had a vehicle of any kind at the hostel.

3.3.4 Mode choices and reasons for choosing

Women were asked to choose their primary mode of transportation from a list of 11 options, including the option of writing in a mode that wasn't listed. As it was known from work done by Jain (2015), working women in Delhi used, on average, 2.2 modes per daily work commute (in contrast to 1.6 modes used by men) a follow up question asked about a secondary mode. Due to the survey being on paper, many women wrote in more than one mode for the first question and left the second question blank. Therefore, when analyzing the data all responses in the first box were given equal weight, even if more than one mode was listed. This can also be understood by the fact that many women do have more than one primary mode. For example, some commute by bus in the morning and by metro in the evening, this was particularly true for residents in the Saket hostel. Similar to Chapter Two, the top four categories were chosen for analysis. Given that more than four modes were presented, totals do not reach 100 percent. The most common mode was the metro, followed by bus, and then auto. One woman at the Saket hostel took a company provided mini bus as the office was located about 30 kilometers away, in Gurgaon. The bus stopped near the Saket metro station, picking up only employees of the company, the journey took about one hour without traffic.

Table 18: Primary Mode for Commuting

While only 16 percent of women used an autorickshaw for their primary mode, 26 percent used it as an intermediary mode; that is for first and last mile connectivity. For example, the RK Puram hostel is more than 1.5 kilometers from the metro station and so those who commute by metro often used a shared auto to reach the metro station.

Departure and Arrival times

The average time of departure was 8:30am (8:25am) and return home was 4:54pm (5:00pm). The return time was skewed to an early time of day due to the number of women at the Saket hostel who are attending coaching classes. For these women, the day ends earlier than the typical work day. If this population is removed from the data then the average arrival time back to the hostel was 6:30pm. One woman who worked as a

teacher in the public schools left before 7am because of the early start time coupled with an unpredictable bus commute. Leaving so early meant that she wasn't able to have breakfast at the hostel, even though she paid for it in her monthly fees.

Average commute times

Respondents spent an average of 30 minutes commuting one way. 90 minutes was the longest commute cited and 10 minutes the shortest. Those who commute by bus typically gave a range as opposed to a set amount of time as the commute depended on frequency of the bus, traffic, and weather. Several of the women from the Saket hostel lamented that it took longer to wait for the bus than it did the actual commute time. One woman from RK Puram explained that she usually commutes by bus but if it doesn't come after 20 minutes than she is forced to take an autorickshaw in order to reach her workplace on time. While she prefers to commute by autorickshaw it is too expensive to make a daily habit. One woman did commute daily by autorickshaw because there was no metro and no good bus route. The distance was less than five kilometers and would require three bus transfers. No shared auto service was available so she spent 40 rupees each ways, every day. "It is too much," she told me. Particularly frustrating about this approach was the amount of time she waited for a bus that never came. It was time and money wasted. Another bus commuter explained that during rush hour, even if the frequency improves so that the bus comes every 10 or 15 minutes, these will be too crowded to get on. One woman from Saket explained that her work location was only 2.1 kilometers away; she commuted by the 615 bus and it took her over 30 minutes if taking into account wait time. One woman who commutes from RK Puram to Gurgaon pointed out how commute

time changes according to the season. A bus journey that takes 30 minutes normally will take two hours in the rain as the rain causes roads to flood. This increases the traffic jam.

Women who rely on the bus as their main transportation mode shared several commonalities, the most important being that no other mode was available to them, either because the cost was too high (e.g. auto or taxi), the distance too far (e.g. to walk), or there was no metro station near the destination.

Although many complained about long wait times and the uncertainty of the bus coming, one advantage of the bus was that it was most often a direct route and didn't require an additional mode (e.g. taking an autorickshaw to the metro station). This finding seems to coincide with a study done by Suman et al (2016), which found that 65 percent of the bus users in their study chose this mode because there was a direct service available.

Quality of life due to daily commuting

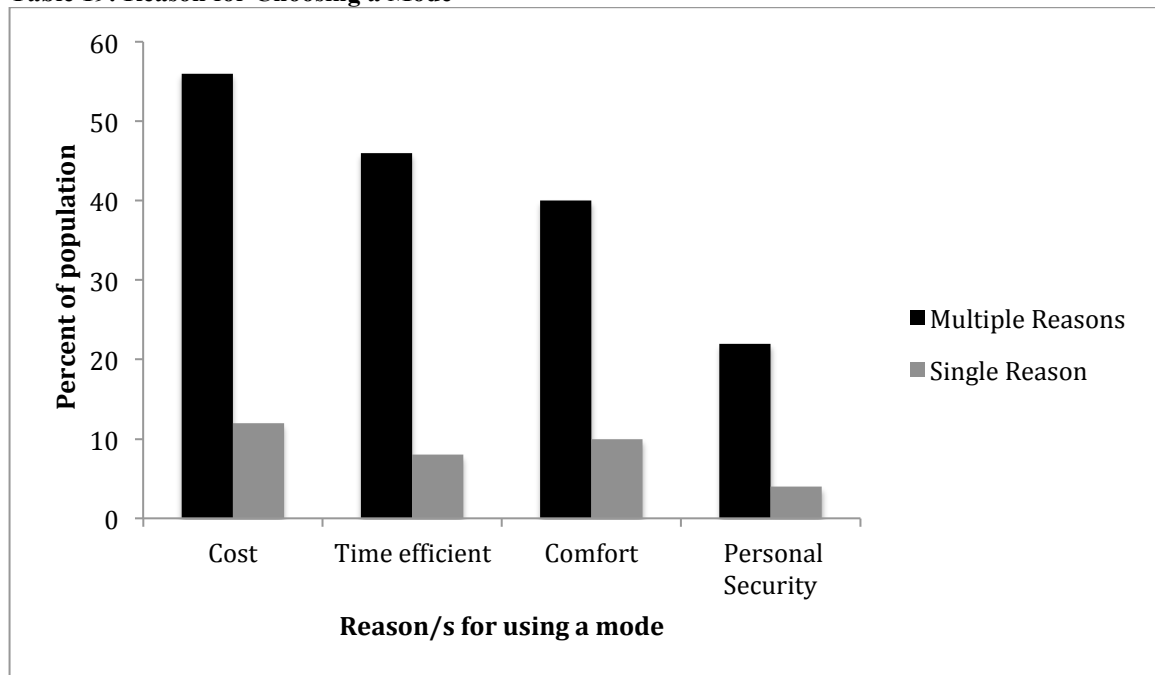
Women were asked if their commute affects their quality of life to which 77 percent of respondents said yes, daily commutes have a negative impact on their energy and quality of life. This is understandable given a climate as brutal as Delhi, where winters are frigid and summers are brutally hot; where buses and metros are crowded well beyond capacity, and traffic is often at a gridlock. Respondents who commuted by metro were less likely to report that the commute affected quality of life, perhaps best summarized by one woman who explained, "had it not been for the metro I would have felt it." Bus users on the other hand were the most likely to report commuting having a negative impact on quality of life.

Declining a job

Women were asked if they had ever declined a job due to difficulty of commuting. Only three percent of women agreed to this statement. This isn't surprising; given that a hostel is a temporary form of shelter/accommodation and it is not likely that a woman would chose to stay in a hostel if the commute was excessively difficulty. One woman from the RK Puram hostel confirmed this logic, explaining that she first found her job and then looked for a hostel nearby. "The only reason I haven't declined a job is that I looked for a hostel close to my work so that I wouldn't have to spend hours commuting."

Reasons for using a given mode

Similar to Chapter Two, respondents were asked to choose the reasons for taking the mode they did, with the option of choosing as many responses as deemed appropriate. Because there was no option to give a ranking of importance to the reasons it is difficult to draw comparative conclusions regarding the choices of these women.

Table 19: Reason for Choosing a Mode

In Table 19 the column on the left represents the frequency a particular mode was cited among respondents who cited multiple reasons. One way of speculating what was considered the most important factor was to isolate those who gave just one response, the right-hand column represents this. __

Existing literature supports the claim that cost factors strongly into the modal decision of women. Recalling findings from Bangalore's IT sector, women who were in the firm's lowest income category cited cost as the primary factor determining mode choice. In the context of Delhi survey, if we isolate the data and look only at bus commuters, we find that 100 percent of these respondents cite cost as a reason for commuting by this mode. Of the 16 percent who commute by autorickshaw only, time efficiency and flexibility, but not cost, were listed as the reasons for choosing this mode. Several of those who did commute by autorickshaw wrote in the optional space

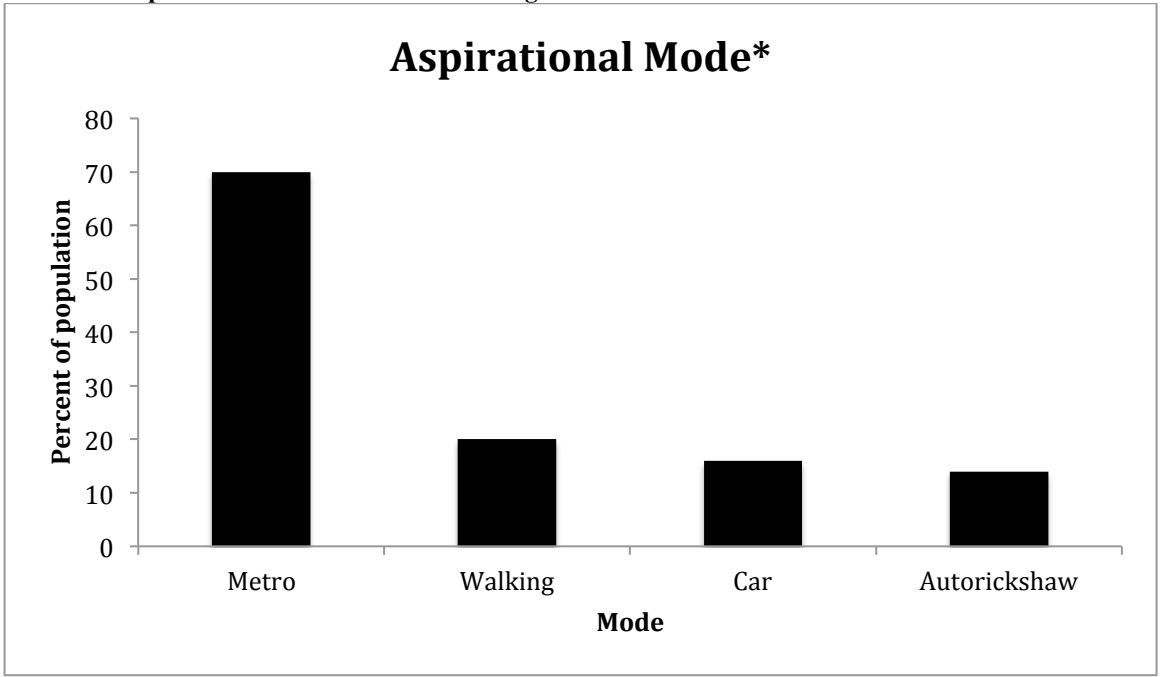
comments such as: “Only way to reach”, “Not much options available”, “No bus or direct metro”.

Why isn't personal security more valued?

As indicated by the break down of reasons for choosing a mode, personal security figures quite low. For most women at the hostels, concern for personal safety isn't an issue when choosing a mode because it already factored into the decision of whether or not to travel, or where to live in Delhi, that is choosing the particular hostel and making sure the commute to one's employment or coaching was safe and secure during the time of day in which the woman commuted. Certain modes, particularly the bus, are perceived to be safe up until a certain time of day, after which these women don't use that mode. Given the prevailing gender norms about where women should be at night (i.e. home) and hostel policies that dictate when women are allowed to be out, it is unlikely that a woman would be using transportation at a time of day considered a risk to her personal security. Furthermore, a mode possessing security and safety also tends to have several other advantages. The metro is largely considered safe, secure, and climate controlled, qualities that collectively make it quite comfortable with comfort in this instance referring to both physical comfort and comfort of the mind.

It is worth recalling that in Chapter Two, the primary reason women used the company bus was because it was perceived of as being safe and secure. So even though Bangalore is culturally perceived of as a relatively safe city for women and women in IT tend to have incomes that allow greater mobility choices, security was at the foreground of transportation decisions.

Table 20: Aspirational Mode of Women Living in Hostels



*Multiple responses permitted

The majority of respondents would prefer or aspire to use the metro; this is in contrast to 30 percent of women aspiring to commute by a private mode. Some respondents chose more than one mode, the most common combination being metro and walking. For those who cited metro as an aspirational mode but wasn't using it, this was because no metro station was near her destination. It is interesting that the second most favored choice was walking. Conversations made it clear that this mode would not be feasible given the long distance required for commuting and that it is simply not practical—with the reality of heat, pollution, and poor footpaths. Women who gave this response cited it in relation to the environment, suggesting that these particular respondents were making broader connections between themselves and the overall city. The aspiration was perhaps less about herself and more about her vision for urban life. Car did not capture as many responses as anticipated; this is surprising considering that 70 percent of respondents

cited having a car in their family's house. It is possible that these young women see a car as impractical in their current life stage, with nowhere to park it at the hostel or the intimidation of driving in aggressive traffic. Perhaps the car is associated with family, either being with their family and thus as a daughter/passenger and therefore a mode that is acquired with age—a claim that was made by several men and women in the context of the IT firm.¹⁶⁰ Is it possible that a car was not an aspiration but rather an integral part of one's life stage? Future research should explore this further..

Why not taxi?

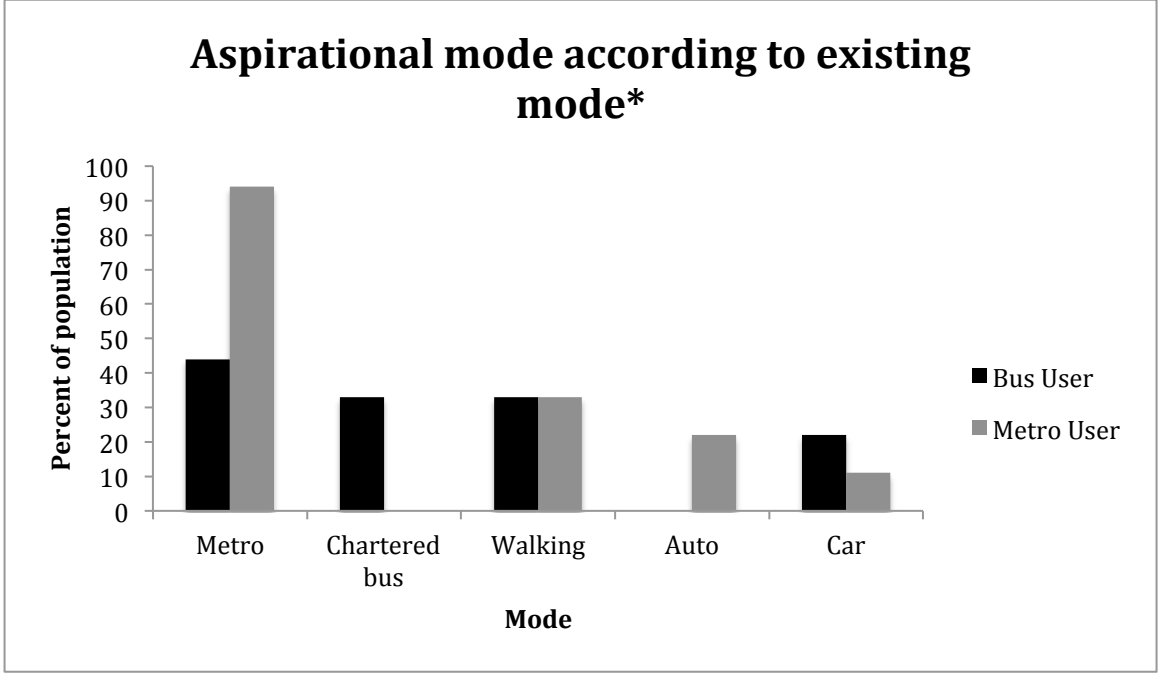
Taxis did not factor into the aspirational mode for commuting. Again, this needs to be contextualized. At the time of conducting this research, Uber was banned from Delhi, a ban triggered by the Uber rape case in 2014, which caused concern over accountability, licensing, and the company's failure to scrutinize the police records of drivers. It was observed during the time at both hostels that the majority of these girls did own smart phones so in theory they would have the ability to use app-based taxi services, but rideshare taxi services (i.e. where fares are significantly reduced because you pool your ride with other passengers) were not yet available, making the cost of commuting by cab prohibitively expensive for these women. Taxis are also perceived of as a mode used for non-employment or educational purposes. The parents of these young women allowed their daughters to come to the city on their own for employment and education and traveling in the city was allowed for these purposes. Taking a taxi would be perceived of as frivolous and expensive, perhaps an disrespectful act on behalf of the young women.

¹⁶⁰ Evidence of this trend was found in the earlier research on women in the IT sector in which there was a distinct difference of car ownership between those who were unmarried and those who were. The car is part of the household.

Consider Manu Joseph New York Time’s editorial (2014) about his impression of what Uber meant for urban Indian women: “An Uber driver told me that they were considered so safe that boyfriends “could drink and dance with” their girlfriends “all night and didn’t have to drop them home — they just put them in Uber” (Joseph 2014). The very context, that is a woman drinking, dancing, and having a boyfriend, coupled with Joseph’s more general comparison of why women prefer Uber to their own chauffeurs suggests a very different class of women than those who were part of this survey. For a start, the women in Joseph’s article are going out at night, they are either able or allowed to.

Survey data was segmented to look at the aspirational modes of those using the dominant forms of mass transit—bus and metro.

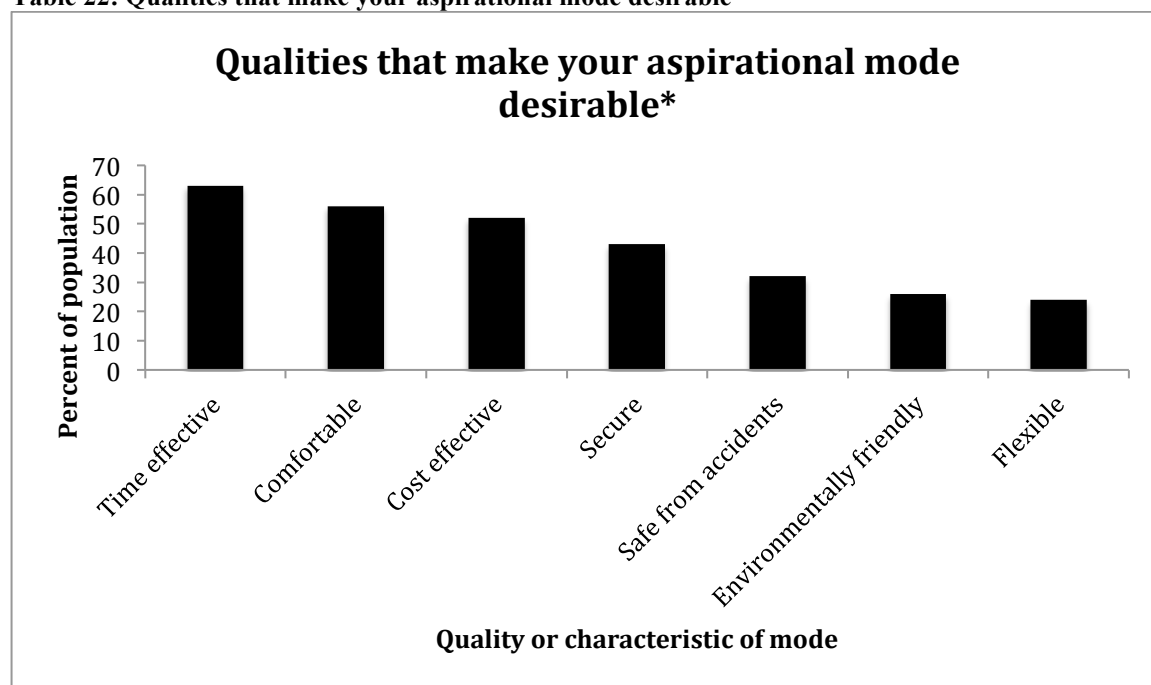
Table 21: Aspirational mode according to existing mode



*N less than 30. Respondents were allowed to choose more than one mode

It is telling that those already using the metro for the primary mode identify this as their ideal or aspirational mode. As the metro is both more modern and more efficient than the bus it is interesting to find that a smaller percent identified the car as their aspirational mode than those who are commuting by bus. One woman went so far as to say that even if she had the option of using a car she would prefer to commute by metro in order to avoid the Delhi traffic.

Table 22: Qualities that make your aspirational mode desirable



* frequency of response as percent of total population

Nineteen percent of those who cited time effectiveness as the reason for choosing their aspirational mode chose this reason and no other, suggesting that this is a crucial aspect of commuting in a city like Delhi. Furthermore, we see that security is given higher priority in respect to how it is valued in relation to current mode. Those who chose the car as their aspirational mode cited time effectiveness, comfort and flexibility,

particularly in the context of “climate control”. For the few who cited walking and metro as their ideal mode, “environmentally friendly”, was a quality referenced.

The opportunity for women to comment on aspirational modes of transportation offered a glimpse into the personalities of these young woman, a reflection of aspirations more broadly. The aspirational modes of these women reflect the personalities and individual aspirations that may or may not be directly affected by their background. There are some who are working at NGOs focusing on social inclusion and others are there for their coaching classes, hoping to pass the rigorous Indian Civil Service exams and secure a government job. Then there are those working in finance or the corporate sector, a commute that typically takes them to offices in the new high rises, nearby the high end malls of Gurgaon. Each of these women have different aspirations different visions of what urban Indian will look like how she will access it, each are influenced by her familiar background, her modal aspirations will, perhaps fit in with a larger aspirational project, her choices cannot be summarized or reduced to a set of conditional statements.

3.3.5 Distinguishing between the bus and metro

Every woman traveled by metro and bus frequently enough to comfortably comment on the salient differences between the two modes, particularly in respect to personal security. In the survey, women were asked to rate both metro and bus on a scale between one and five, with five being the best and then provide a short description as to why that ranking was given. To further capture nuances and opinions, this became a central objective of the informal interviews and focus groups.

The bus had an average rating of two (two = satisfactory) while the metro had an average of four (four = very good). One noticeable difference in the conversations with women at the two hostels was that while the women in RK Puram were direct and articulate with the ranking and the reason for doing so, women in the Saket hostel seemed initially indifferent to articulating why something was “good” or “okay.” Only through prompts did more descriptive or specific antidotes started emerging. I would attribute part of this to the quotidianess of commuting, where nuances and annoyances are endured to a point that it becomes unnoticeable. However, as the women in RK Puram were generally more conversational and had, in general, lived in the city for a longer period of time, they had more familiarity with, for example, the expansion of the metro, the bus routes, and thus offered more detailed observations.

Reviewing the written surveys there were significantly fewer comments made as to why the bus was rated in such a way. One possible explanation is that the challenges, anxieties and annoyances of using public buses anywhere in urban India is commonplace for women, especially considering that most of these women would have been bus users even prior to coming to Delhi. While safety and security didn't figure as a primary reason for choosing one particular mode, it was included in the comment section. Several made comments that when the travel by metro they feel secure, or pointed out that it was both safe and cost effect, safe and fast. One woman explained “I can't think of Delhi without the metro services, for traffic congestion but also from security, comfort, and flexibility points of view.” Another added, that “it is flexible and there is separate woman coach where we can have seat and feel comfortable.” Others just said it was better than other modes of transportation. One said she appreciated the separate compartment for ladies

but wished there was more disciplinary action for boarding and deboarding as it was too chaotic.

This is in contrast to those who commuted primarily by bus. Several said bus service is never reliable, theft is a common occurrence and who travels by bus is likely to experience this. One said you have to be mindful, even fearful of others who travel by bus. Another added that “Sometimes even driver behavior is also very inappropriate for ladies.” Several mentioned the uncomfortable conditions due to heat and the crowds. In fact, Overcrowding was considered a negative attribute of both modes. Women who had been in the city for longer commented that the metro used to be comfortable and not overly crowded but with the latest phase completed, the metro was excessively crowded. Buses tended to be crowded during peak morning and evening times but for women who were in the city for coaching, crowding was not an issue on the bus because they traveled at off peak times. Unlike the metro, buses fluctuated between being too crowded in the evening and then not crowded enough, with fewer and fewer women after p.m. This made this made the bus less desirable according to time of day. In their article on crime in public transport, Smith and Clarke (2000) distinguish between crime that occurs due to overcrowding and crime that occurs from a lack of supervision with the argument that both are a result of lack of finance in the system. Crime in this instance refers both to theft and crime in the form of bodily harassment or assault. While Delhi’s public bus (DTC) certainly suffers from lack of supervision and lack of finance in the system, the same cannot be said of the metro (DMRC). Media reports on personal theft in the metro suggest that it is a fairly regular occurrence and has increased with the increase in number of passengers. While no public data on crimes against women in the metro exists, there are very few incidents which have been picked up by the media and the DMRC claims that gender based harassment is not a concern for women using the metro—a point I will return to further into this chapter.

3.3.6 Understanding safety and security

Several questions related to safety and security was asked of respondents. The first part of this section in the survey focused on gender-based harassment in the context of time of

day and transportation mode and frequency at which these instances occurred. The second part dealt with how one dresses while using public transportation, awareness of helpline information, and whether or not one would report an incident. Gendered harassment is difficult to experience, difficult to discuss, and difficult to quantify given the conscious and unconscious, physical, emotional, and psychological effects. Most women did not fill out this section of the survey in a systematic way but rather wrote in the margins about general impressions and experiences (e.g. “Usually at night”; “When doesn’t it happen?!”) as a result, analyzing the time of day of occurrence information was discarded. This section also elicited in depth conversations either as individuals or in an informal group discussion, with the caveat that many women are uncomfortable sharing personal experiences and thus chose to present information anecdotally (e.g. “I see this happening a lot”). Information that was correctly entered as a data point within the physical survey was quantified in the following manner.

Verbal Harassment

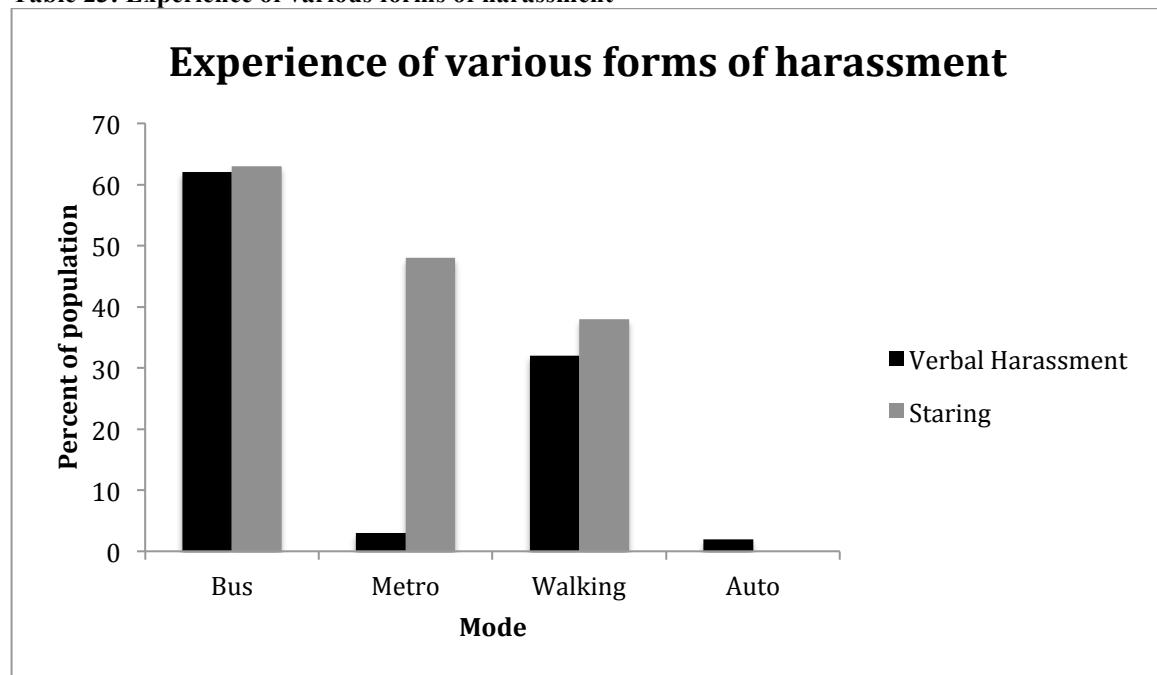
Forty-two percent of respondents specifically reported experiencing verbal harassment on a particular mode and wrote in on what particular mode they experienced it.

If one does not use a particular mode then it would be difficult to experience harassment on it. That said, if we know that the majority of users do use the metro then it is telling that the mode that reported the most accounts of verbal harassment is the bus, followed by walking.

Staring

Similarly, 42 percent of respondents reported that they experienced uncomfortable staring while using transportation. A closer examination of the data showed that it was the same individuals that answered this question as the previous, meaning that it's not 42 percent of the total population who has experienced some form of harassment but a reflection of the percent of respondents who correctly filled, or wished to fill out this section of the

Table 23: Experience of various forms of harassment



It is important to note that in the section about staring, many respondents wrote in multiple modes, this was not the case in the section on verbal harassment where multiple modes were not reported, hence having percentages totaling 100. The other point to make about staring is that in conversation, most women, far more than the number of entries in the surveys, said that staring was a quotidian part of urban life as a woman. Regarding instances and frequency of occurrences of gender based harassment, several women said something to the extent that it was a reality but did not volunteer to recall specific instances. As one respondent put it, “How to talk about it, everyday there is something

uncomfortable.” It was such a common occurrence that one, at least on the surface, became immune to it in the sense of keeping track of occurrences. It was generally accepted that one could not do much about it¹⁶¹.

Why might staring be higher in the metro?

Staring is the most common form of harassment experienced by women, and the least likely to have action taken against. For most women, staring is designed to make them feel uncomfortable and self-conscious and thus simultaneously the most salient and invisible form of gender harassment. A fact that is reinforced by a pervasive attitude among many men that staring is just “no big deal.” Related to staring is stalking, with the two often going hand in hand. While stalking isn’t always an intimidation tactic and often an approach used by men to talk to women, it is increasingly recognized as inappropriate behavior, behavior that does make women uncomfortable. Consider a recent interview with Tamil film director Ram: “I’m over 40 now and I’ve seen many rapid changes. Until 2007 it was like our whole State didn’t know stalking was wrong...Even our filmmakers didn’t know stalking was a crime.” (qtd in Menon 2017)

Going off the data, staring is reported to be more commonly experienced in the bus, but a woman commuting by metro is far more likely to experience staring than verbal harassment. This finding is warranted for two reasons. First, with the completion of Phase II and start of Phase III of the metro, there is a wider socio-economic spectrum of users. A knowledge professional and daily wage laborer may both hold the same steel poll while traveling on the Yellow Line toward Gurgaon.

¹⁶¹ In 2016 Kerala’s Excise Commissioner did try to do something about staring, declaring more than 15 seconds of staring at a woman unacceptable and a punishable offense. This proposal was mostly met with ridicule by the media and other politicians (Express Web Desk 2016).

Given the historical segregation of class, gender, and caste hierarchies in India, it is likely that the metro brings together a diversity of people in a way that was previously impossible. While this should be cause for celebration it can also have a negative affect in the context of gendered harassment, where there is more opportunity for visual interaction with different members of society, who may or may not approve of one another, how they dress or the time of day they are out. Staring may also be higher than verbal abuse on the metro because general group discipline is enforced through institutionally driven measures such as security enforcement and surveillance. Although verbal harassment is a common occurrence, it is not a socially sanctioned behavior and thus more regulated on the metro. On the other hand, it is very hard to regulate staring. During the informal conversations several women acknowledged the daily pains of being stared at, attempts made by men of all ages to make them feel uncomfortable. However, unlike the conversations that took place at the Saket hostel, several of these women also spoke about forms of subtle defiance and resistance, which typically entailed staring back—something many women would consider uncomfortable and potentially risky. There was a general concession amongst the women at the RK Puram hostel that it was up to women to come together and stand up against this type of behavior.

Theft

Of those who completed this section of the survey, 33 percent reported a theft of personal belongings, almost all of them occurring on the bus, but two of which were on the metro. According to Central Security Force (CSF) data, women commit the majority of thefts occurring on the metro.

Time of day

Which leads to the next question, that is how time of day affects one's feeling of personal security while traveling. 55 percent of women said that yes, time of day did affect the feeling of personal security while traveling. At the RK Puram hostel women said they preferred to be home between 7:30 and p.m. The absolute latest was 9:30pm and of course there wasn't much option as the hostel had a 10pm curfew. However, in conversations with the women at the hostel, and more broadly, throughout this project, many said that as a general rule, they avoid traveling after dark, or after p.m. when the crowds become sparser. This means less women, not necessarily fewer men. Less women in public and on public transportation after p.m. can be understood as a result of the sexual division of labor in which women are expected to cook the evening meal; even if a married woman with children works outside the home it is expected that by this time of evening, she *should* be in the home. Revisiting the work of Phadke et al., women gain access to public space by demonstrating respectability and this respectability is based on a demonstrated connection to the private, domestic sphere (thus not only working through gender but class as well; a slum dwelling woman has a domestic life, but no private sphere). Respectable women use material indicators to demonstrate this, indicators that usually connote marriage ("Prominent amongst the signs that women use to underscore their private location are symbols of matrimony worn on the body," (2011: 33).

The steep decline in number of women in public transportation after p.m. further discourages women from using it. And thus the idea that women shouldn't be traveling after p.m. is reinforced. This sends a signal that traveling after p.m. is a transgression of

respectability and norms. Many women in conversation initially said, no, time of day did not affect their feeling of personal security but it was precisely because they wouldn't travel passed p.m. Furthermore, women at both hostels made a point to say that part of the reason they chose the hostel was because it was in a much safer area than other parts of Delhi. In this instance time of day referred to evening but not to using transportation. Rather, it referred to being in a residential neighborhood and the ability to go out in the neighborhood with other women. In the context of Saket, "safe" neighborhood referred to the class of people, that it was considered a wealthy neighborhood whereas in the RK Puram hostel was in a "safe" neighborhood as there was a government residential colony (thus home to a population of educated people) less than 200 meters away, but, several added, the larger area was not considered as safe, as there were slums and liquor stores off the main road.

Do you know who to contact?

If an incident happened while using public transportation 66 percent of women said they knew numbers of who to contact. When probed further, it was apparent that most women were referring to 100, the general number for the police throughout India. Some mentioned the hostel or friends as a number they would contact. Those who commute by metro acknowledged that there were numbers for women posted in the metro stations and inside the metro cabins—brightly displayed in pink. One or two had saved these numbers in their phones but the majority had not. Some women "thought" they had seen a helpline number in the bus, usually a sticker or worn hand printed sign. Many expressed skepticism that someone would answer these women's help line number or "what they

could do” to actually help. The visible presence of security personnel in the metro stations gave women more confidence of a claim being addressed, and that a woman security guard was preferred over a male security guard.

Would you report an incident?

After the Delhi rape case more public awareness about the effect lack of reporting had on the ability to raise awareness of the problem coupled with outreach to address fear and discomfort of reporting, led to an uptick in reported incidents. Given that women in the hostels represented a population of educated, working women whose parents had allowed them to come to the city on their own to pursue their careers it was hypothesized that these women would have the awareness of and confidence to report an incident should one occur. Yet only 50 percent of women surveyed said they would report an incident, 45 percent said they would not report an incident and the remaining 5 percent said they were not sure if they would or would not. Women who said they would not report the incident offered remarks such as: “Reporting is a hassle and embarrassment”, “I deal with it in my way as no one else is bothered to help me”, and “No one but me can help in these matters.” Some said what’s done is done and no point in making further hassle. Another said she should be strong enough to deal with it. Several brought up that reporting an incident would inevitable lead to questioning.

Those who said that they would report indicated they would do so out of a larger, perhaps moral obligation, a standpoint in line with the persistence of public protests against gender-based violence since the Delhi rape case. For example: “It’s my right to speak

against any offensive act regarding safety”, “It is the moral responsibility of everywoman to help avoid such occurrences in the future”, “It is my fight as a human being to lead a secured life”, and “I would report because it’s a type of giving strength to others who hesitate to raise their voice”. Some made the connection between the voice of one giving voice to many, and the safety of future generations of women.

The messages women receive, from politicians, the media, even the family in respect to “fault” is very mixed, and regardless of encouragement to report, the fact remains that there is a risk and often a stigma when reporting—a reality that is not just true to Delhi but also across the world¹⁶². When reporting, blame or at least skepticism is often shifted onto the woman with the assumption that she must have done something to warrant the incident. In other words, before the incident can be addressed, the woman must clearly “produce respectability” (Phadke et al 2011). This production of respectability is more important than the actual safety of the woman, and is less about the respectability of the woman and more about the honor of the family.¹⁶³ Even within this population of young, educated, and independent women reporting an incident, if not a hassle, potentially creates further problems for the woman.

Recall Althusser’s classic example of interpellation in which nine of ten individuals on the street turn around when a police officer calls out “Hey you there!”, thinking they are the subject of this hailing. Althusser’s example illustrates the pervasive quality of ideology’s ability to create and maintain subjects: “what thus seems to take

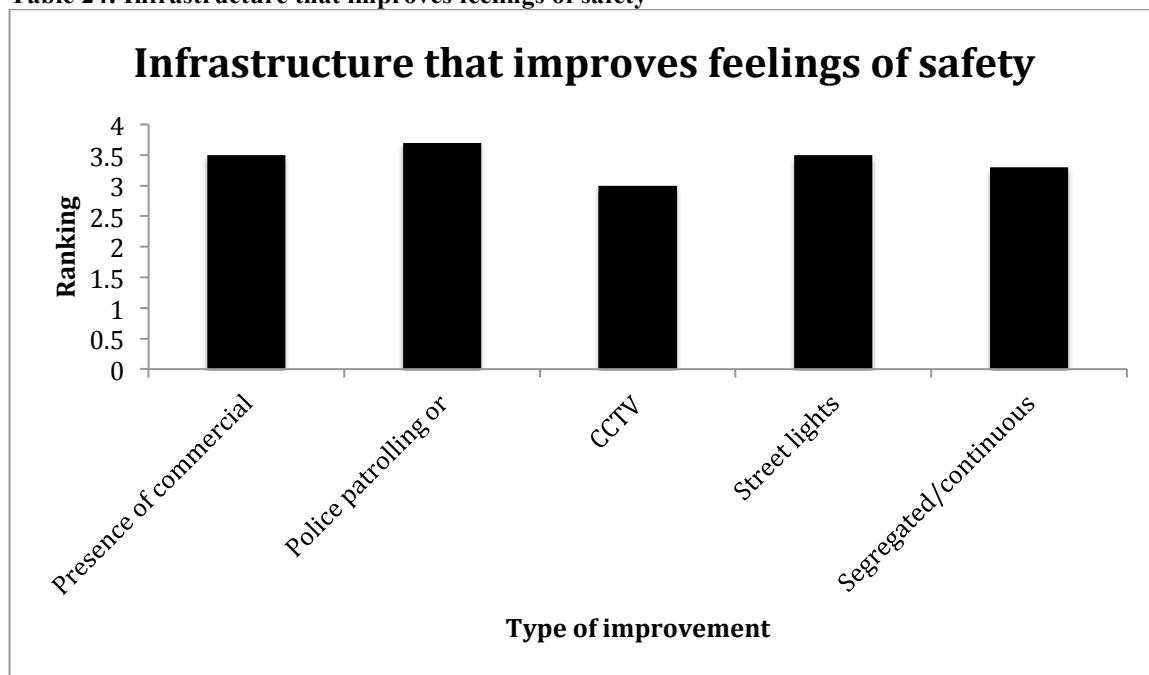
¹⁶² In 1980 the FBI estimated that 90 percent of rapes go unreported (Klein 1980)

¹⁶³ “when a woman is raped, one often finds that the concern is less about bodily or mental harm to the woman and more about its repercussions on her reputation and honor. Shame appears to attach to the victim of assault rather than to the perpetrator of the crime. The reluctance to press charges in actual incidents of assault shows that families are more concerned with the ‘reputation’ of their women rather than the execution of justice,”(Phadke et al 2011: 29).

place outside ideology (to be precise, in the street), in reality takes place in ideology,” (Althusser 2001: 118). In the case of women reporting an incident of harassment, the normative ideology (as illustrated by Phadke et al) is such that a woman must first produce or confirm her legitimacy as a respectable woman wherein respectability is determined by this functioning normative ideology. “I’d be questioned”; “No one but me can help”; and “reporting is an embarrassment” reflect the pervasiveness of this norm. Those who would report the incident did not do so because they had faith in the system, but rather that they felt an obligation or duty to, suggesting awareness and perhaps an unconscious challenging of dominate gender norms. Similar to my argument that one’s aspirational mode is a product of several positionalities, a woman’s decision to report an incident comes from her various positionalities (e.g. class, family background) and the nature of the incident itself.

Link Between Physical Environment and Safety

Survey participants ranked a series of interventions and infrastructures in relation to whether or not they increased one’s feeling of safety/personal security. These various suggestions for improvement were developed in response to existing policy reports and academic literature addressing women’s perception of safety in public (Bhatt 2016; Guillianio 1979; Jaigori 2012; Klein 1980; World Ban Group 2013; Wertheimer 2013; Hamilton and Jenkins 2000; Beebeejaun 2009). Five was the highest possible rank; one the lowest. Women had the option of making additional comments on what helped make them feel more safe and secure.

Table 24: Infrastructure that improves feelings of safety

Despite several “interventions” receiving positive lip service by politicians, transportation agencies, and NGOs as solutions for tackling women’s perception of safety in public, women ranked not a single intervention higher than average. CCTV, perhaps the most commonly cited solution in the context of safety and security in transportation received the lowest ranking among the survey population, a finding backed up by some who argue that CCTV does more for moral policing than it does prevention of crime. Police patrolling or security presence received the highest ranking, this could be counterintuitive given the previous discussion in which women expressed reluctance to report due to the possible judgment or morality policing of officers. However, in this instance we are talking about preventing crime as opposed to reporting crime.

One respondent said traveling with a male companion helped her to feel safe. Another said that crowded places were more comfortable to wait in than those which were desolate, a point often used in the context of presence of commercial activities (and

a strong argument used by social justice activists who argue that street vendors are an essential part of urban India's social fabric). Another woman wrote that confidence is most important for feeling safe in the urban environment, an opinion that reflects a central argument of this dissertation in which mobility is a dialectic between the individual and the socio-physical environment with confidence informing one's relation to the environment and the environment reinforcing one's ability to be confident.

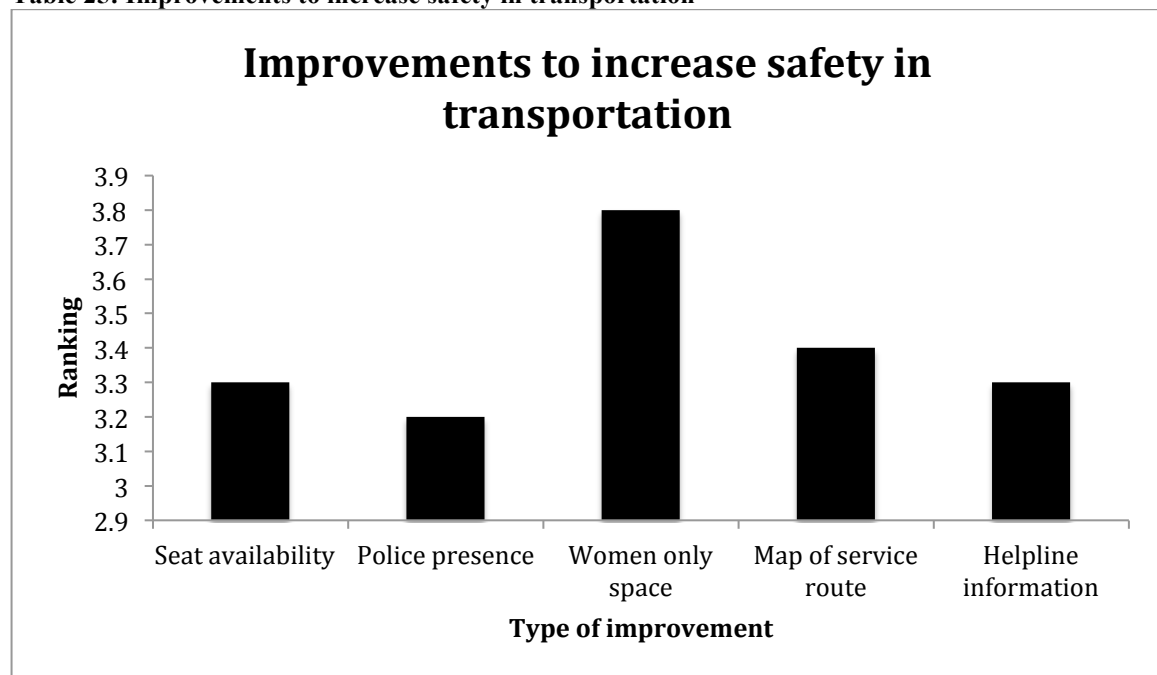
This relationship is not static but constantly changing, just like the physical environment (the city). Confidence in one's self is essential to navigating a built environment of uneven development and provision of infrastructure. In Delhi, much of this inconsistency is determined by wealth. Street lights are present alongside "good" commercial activity and ironically, segregated walkways are usually only present in wealthy neighborhoods where everyone drives. The results from this section of the survey illustrate that it is not any one infrastructure or intervention that is required to make women feel more confident about being in the city but rather it goes back to a larger aim of social equity.

Link Between Transportation and Safety

Complimenting the section on attributes in the built environment that increase women's perception of safety, women were asked to comment on factors within transportation that increase one's feeling of safety and security. That having a woman only space ranked highest was not surprising. The woman only space is a vibrant debate among feminists in India and among the community of women and transportation researchers. While most do not see a woman only space as a permanent solution, having this space undeniably increases

feelings of safety. Many argue that without a woman only space, fewer women would travel, or be allowed to travel by family members. Phadke et al (2011) argue: “in Mumbai, the presence of reserved compartments for women in local trans clearly enshrines their right to be in that public space,” (2011: 68). However, in my interviews, several women made a contrasting claim that only having one car in the Delhi metro reserved for women denied them access to public space, or the entire metro, more broadly. It sent a message to men that only 1/8th (there are eight) of the commuting population should be women. It was not uncommon a man to ask a woman to move to the woman only car if she was traveling in the general compartment during rush hour. Never mind that the ladies compartment is, during the morning and evening rush hour, even more crowded than the general compartment for the precise reason that many women are more comfortable traveling amongst other women, even if it is less comfortable!

Table 25: Improvements to increase safety in transportation



The effect of dress

Sixty-seven percent of respondents said that traveling by public transportation had an impact on the way they dress. Some women wrote that it both does and does not, following up with explanations such as it depends whether they travel by bus, metro or other mode. Those who said it did not impact how they dressed wrote in explanations such as “I always dress in traditional Indian dress”, a comment suggesting that women are always aware that how one presents herself physically matters greatly while in public—again reiterating the argument that women are expected to manufacture their respectability when in public. This was in contrast to those who said yes and offered short summaries of how and why dress and public transportation are related. Below are some of these responses:

-Because here your clothes are one of the major factor to attract these kind of people towards you. You cannot wear short stuff in public transportation, especially in bus.

-Traveling in public transportation impacts me because people staring at you or make comments, even if you are in proper dress, you are not in proper dress according to them.

-Definitely I have encountered while traveling that people stare if you are wearing a dress.

-In public we would prefer to wear clothes that could drape your hands, legs, etc. properly.

-It happens often when we are not dressed very modestly.

-If I have to go for a longer distance I try to dress in an ethnic way.

-It might land to Eve teasing

-The people are staring continuously like that, we are coming from another planet if we are wearing Western clothes.

-It depends on the kind of people traveling in the transportation. If it is bus transportation then you have to be more proper in dressing rather than in metro or personal transportation.

- The way they react, they see, they stare make us feel even more uncomfortable.
- I will not wear dress that attracts the opposite gender.
- Way to wear dress affects while travel because people way to watch and see is not good when it is toward girls.
- It makes you feel comfortable or more safe
- Nobody prefers to be ogled at while traveling. And if in case anyway anything happens the girl gets the blame for the way she is dressed.
- Dressing has an impact while we travel by public transportation as the crowd around you might not allow you to feel comfortable.
- More clothes means less space for somebody to touch my skin. Over the cloth, contact can be ignored up to a certain degree.
- People will stare unnecessarily.

Several of these women rightfully drew connections between Western dress and unwanted attention,¹⁶⁴ Indian wear (sometimes referred to as “ethnic wear”) and modesty. Another connection found reading these responses is a sense of personally responsibility. That is, as it is known that dress carries several connotations, it is up to the woman to dress in a way that elicits appropriateness and respectability. The same of course does not hold true for men. Dress, for some of these young women, becomes representative of the multiplicity of worlds and norms they simultaneously occupy. As young urban women, most have jeans, tee shirts, and even short dresses. But parents and hostel guardians may not permit these clothing articles to be worn out in public. Even if a woman is able to wear such clothing out, there is another layer of social permission, that of public scrutiny.

¹⁶⁴ This connection has also been made by several Indian politicians, including the Union Tourism Minister who, in a 2016 press meeting stated that foreign women should not wear skirts or dresses as a safety precaution.

During ethnographic portions of this work, several differences were observed between women who waited for the bus and women who waited for the metro. A woman without a dupatta was seldom seen while at a bus stop, and very rarely a woman who was not in traditional Indian wear.



Figure 17: Woman boarding a DMT bus outside Patel Chowk

General conversations about safety and security

During the group discussion at the RK Puram hostel the subject of women's safety and security came up. All women seemed in agreement that, it was not or should not be their problem or their fault. Yet this was how society was structured. In so far as a single individual could not change society; it was easiest to work within the established

framework or boundary of what is permissible. With that caveat established, a collective lamentation unraveled in which the women explained that even here, at the hostel, they were forced to embrace an old school form of decency. If a woman relative visits the hostel, she can come up to the room. A man, no matter what relation, must wait in the lobby. This seemed absurd to them as all had graduated college and were in their early 20s or older. Some said they had boyfriends, many had dated, and everyone had men who were merely friends. Yet to bring one back to the hostel was inconceivable. Even to have a man drop you off at the hostel would warrant more than an eyebrow raise from the wardens or hostel ma'am. A collective sense of injustice was conveyed and this injustice was framed in the context that these women were given the freedom to come to the city and pursue their independence. Their parents had allowed them this luxury and individuality in respect to career and yet that freedom was fiercely denied through archaic ideas of decency and respectability.

Women lamented the reality of having to be properly dressed even within the hostel, the very idea that there was “proper and improper” dress inside the comfort of one’s lodgings. But disagreement emerged when the conversation shifted to whether or not it is acceptable to wear shorts and skirts in the city. This conversation was particularly interesting as Madam, who was present for the whole duration of my stay, and had remained silent on the previous comments,¹⁶⁵ interjected with the claim that the “biggest problem for these girls is these girls! They come into the city and think they can where whatever they want, they can travel with men.” She went on to ask what kind of message that sends to the other men. On this point she brought up the Delhi gang rape and said

¹⁶⁵ One possible reason for this was that the conversations were held in English, which was somewhat limited for her.

that is probably what happened, that the girl was traveling with her boyfriend and probably wearing loose clothing. Her statement was “She was busy getting cozy with the boyfriend and that is why she was raped.” It was clear that the young women in the room had heard this opinion expressed before. Individually and collectively, they did not express shock at the statement but all of the women, no matter what their view on wearing a skirt in public, agreed that the Madam was wrong. Their retort was that the media, not the girl, should be blamed. This mention of the media was quite interesting nothing I had read in the media placed blame on the victim. But then I had read only English-medium media outlets. The second finding that came out of this discussion was that as a woman of a different generation, Madam’s opinion might reflect a viewpoint common to her age group.

According to the young women the two problems were the media and the stigmas; and they were one and the same. I was told that the problem is that the media tends to make judgment calls, especially right-wing media. The trauma or aftermath of the initial drama “always follows the girl.” These, the stigmas, were the biggest problem and not only for the girl but for her family. “Most of us, if we face a problem, don’t want to raise these issues because we will be affected, perhaps our family, our family’s honor will be affected.” After some debate, particularly that the sensationalism of the media has a negative affect in further making women and families more protective in allowing women to go out in the city the conclusion was that the media’s role was neither 100 percent good nor bad. As reporting becomes more commonplace the associated stigmas might go down but it’s ultimately a question of how it gets reported.

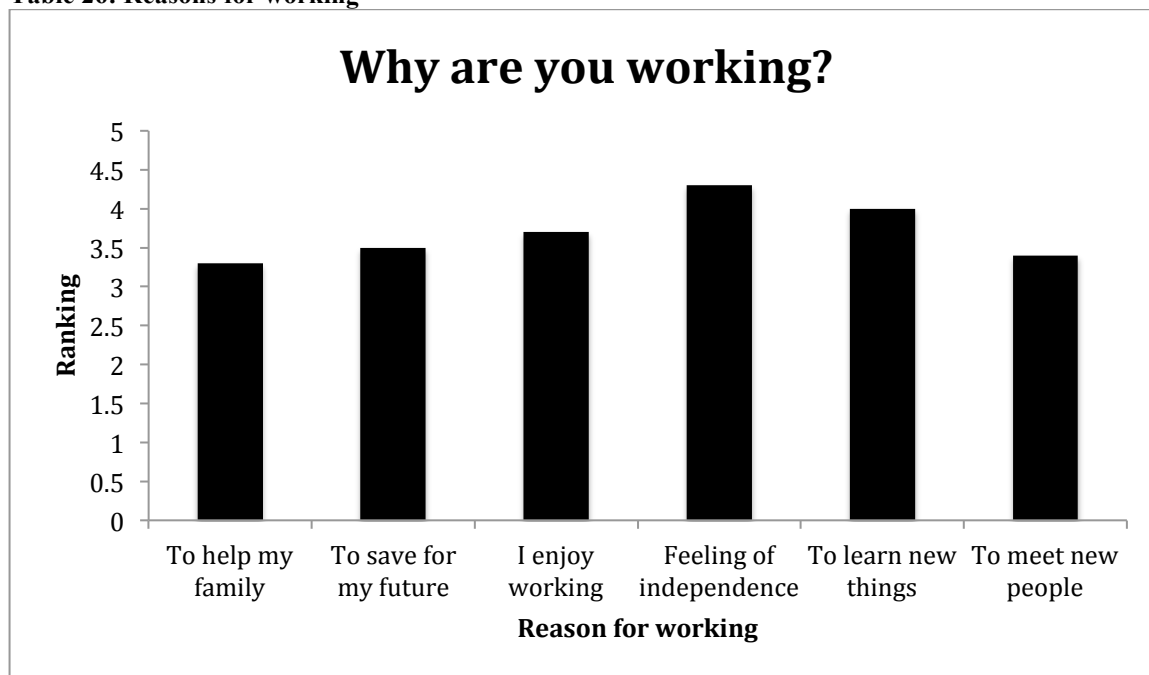
The Madam listened and came back with the claim that the problem was girls who wanted to be liberal, the young women countered with the argument that the problem was men and women who held onto this very mindset that Madam had. Nobody deserves to be harassed much less killed for what she is wearing or for going around with a boy. Witnessing this exchange left me wondering if Madam considered herself a working woman. I knew nothing of her beyond the fact that she also lived in the hostel, in a private accommodation. This was also true of the Madam at the other hostel. I did not know if she had children or a husband. When she left the hostel, how did she travel? What were her concerns while traveling in public?

3.3.7 A larger sense of mobility

Why are you working?

In this research, I conceive of mobility as socialized movement that is embedded and reflected in the individual. Mobility up until this point is discussed in relation to transportation modes and choices but my aim in surveying this population of young women was to understand non-modal understandings of mobility, particularly for these young women who were working in the city on their own. Given that gender norms in India largely place women at the forefront of the family and the domestic sphere, that family should come before employment (unless employment is necessary to support the family), the last component of this survey was to try and understand why these women were choosing to work and second, if these women saw themselves working long term. Women were asked to rank, on a scale of 1-5, what they considered important reasons for working. Five was considered a very important factor and one was ranked as least important.

Table 26: Reasons for working



That feeling of independence ranks highest and working to help the family ranks the lowest. This suggests a class position and level of family support in respect to this independence. Furthermore, the proceeding question asked whether or not the respondent saw herself working in five years with a box asking her to write in why or why not. Ninety-one percent of the women said yes, they saw themselves working five years from now. The remaining nine percent did not. Many of those who saw themselves working in five years connected their being employed to a feeling of independence, giving explanations like such as: “Personal independence is important for women”, “It will be a helping hand for my family and my independence”, and “For my confidence”. Some expressed a desire to be financially independent, the desire to socialize and be in the city. Another said she loves research and wanted to work in her field. Related, one explained “I’d like to make a difference to the organization I work for and will need five years to do

that.” Another said that her family had given her the “proper” education to make her feel independent.

Those who did not think they would be working in five years, tended to leave the qualitative part of it blank or indicate by way of simple statements such as “marriage.” One woman offered a little insight, explaining that “I will be married, most probably with two children. I will be a stay at home mother until the children are old enough.” I would suggest that, regardless of whether a woman thought she would or would not be working in five years time, the decision was not hers alone. The lives of these women are a continuous mitigation between the self, their family, and broader society. This is a point made in the documentary *Bachelor Girls* wherein the choices these women made (i.e. to not marry and live alone) where technically “personal” choices, they had social repercussions, in the form of discriminatory housing practices. As suggested by comments made in the survey, the feeling or value of self-dependence was one cultivated by the family. This is not of course to say that a woman could not develop this feeling on her own, only that it would be particularly difficult for her to see this through. For example, a woman in her early to mid twenties would be hard pressed to secure a spot at a reputable hostel without the financial and emotional support of her parents.

I recall two women from the RK Puram hostel who used an example to illustrate parental concern for their daughters. The first was from Lucknow. She told me she could spend 600 rupees and six hours on the train or spend up to 5,000 rupees on a 55 minute flight. Her father always pays for her to fly, telling her that there is no point in risking a woman’s safety. The second woman is from Kerala. For her to go by train would be a three day journey. She says her family also chooses to have her fly home. “Although it’s

not in the budget. My parents have a hard time paying for this but still they do. For them it is also about safety.” This woman elaborates. She is from Kerala, the state with the highest literacy rate and many progressive policies. But her parents allowed her to come all the way to Delhi because there are more opportunities for her. They let her come “despite knowing what happened, what happens.” She is referring to the rape case. “It starts with the family see. We need to track our boys, our elder brothers. From the beginning they must be taught.” A general agreement on both points seems to silently circulate through the room. It was clear to me that not every woman in the room would come from a family that could financially afford to fly their daughters home but they all come from families who share the support for their daughters to come to the capital but also this concern for their daughter being alone in the capital. Indeed it was the impression in both hostels that these women came educated, supportive families wherein supportive in the sense that families did not question whether their daughter should be educated or employed; whether these attitudes represent the majority or a minority of Indian families is unknown.

Section Three: Surveying Women working in retail

3.4.1 The rise of the retail sector

The question of whether or not the families of these women represent the majority or minority of India is rhetorical, but it locates a starting point to consider the dialectic between physical and conceptual mobility. What are the family dynamics that lead to a woman being allowed to go to the city on her own? To pursue a career of her choice? From a research standpoint, it signaled the need to consider another population of young working women who similarly navigated a complexity of gender norms on a daily basis

but did not share the same educational, class, or economic background. As none of the women in either hostel worked in retail—a sector with a visible presence of women both as consumers and service providers—it was decided to expand the survey population to include a sample from this sector.

The National Capital Region (NCR) has the largest concentration of high-end malls in India. Like Bangalore's early IT parks, these malls require huge swaths of land, often in areas of the city that are quickly transitioning in class structure (e.g. DLF Emporium and Ambience Mall in Vasant Kunji) and into enclaves of gated residencies, gated workplaces, and slick spaces of consumption (as seen in the satellite towns of Gurgaon, Noida, and Ghaziabad). Beyond the obvious class differences, malls tend to be frequented, even dominated by women. Equally, one finds far more women working in the retail shops of malls than in retail shops more generally. Given the number of women in the mall, a significant proportion of the security staff is female, as is most of the cleaning staff. But the women who work in these high-end malls are not the women who shop there. A second point of consideration is that if most consumers are coming to the mall by private modes of transportation, how do employees reach the mall and, given the late closing times of shops, how do they go home at the end of their shift? Srivastava argues that women working in the service sector:

Face the double jeopardy of male attitudes towards women in public places and traditional attitudes towards service providers. Such women are also, thanks in no small measure to the culture of Indian cinema, imagined as 'loose' women who do not mind—if not welcome—male attention. For, the argument goes, by both their demeanor and dress—'friendliness' and western wear—they lack the signs of respectability and moderation that 'characterise the 'traditional' Indian woman (Srivastava 2012: 37).

The question of material dress is a physical example of a more complex “straddling” of multiple worlds and norms that operates both consciously and unconsciously. And also relates to a question of being allowed versus being able. The women who work as cleaners and shop assistants are able to go to the mall as employees but social norms and economic circumstances do not permit them from being consumers at these places. In the case of women working in as shop assistants in malls it was my hypothesis that while these women seem visibly “modern” in appearance (perhaps a requirement of the job), these women were from lower middle class families and thus coming from different family and class backgrounds than the women at the hostel. Retail is considered low skill. While the work location and customers are middle class, monthly wages are, anecdotally, on a similar pay scale to full-time domestic work.

Phadke (2012) refers to this as consumption practices, wherein the middle classes consume but by way of service-based employment and servant culture it is lower middle class women who become exposed to these consumption practices. For the purpose of my research I was interested¹⁶⁶ in this idea of how much of these consumption practices might these young women be allowed to be exposed to by, say their parents. What I mean to say is that as young women, it was expected that their families permitted, or allowed them to work at these retail spaces. These women might be expected to wear jeans or western wear while at their job but were they allowed to wear this at home or in their

¹⁶⁶ This interest was solidified in March of 2014 while attending an elite dinner in the Chanakyapuri, the embassy neighborhood of Delhi. Speaking to a woman from the NGO sector about working women in Delhi she told be the daughter of her family’s driver had recently decided to work in a mall. She told me with confidence that “these women” have some education but not from very good schools. They are from “lower” backgrounds and thus have neither education nor “social capital.” While this woman seemed to view these job opportunities as good for these young women, their salaries were most likely less than 10,000 INR a month. “That is not enough to afford a car and maybe they work till 10 in the evening. That means everyday they are taking a risk [when they commute home].” The comment left an impression both because of her understanding of the demographic profile and the assumption that one needs a car in Delhi.

community? What lines of permission did families draw for daughters who worked at new spaces of consumption with changing material and aesthetic practices of respectability? In what ways did young women navigate this plurality? How layers of “safety” both in respect to daily physical commute as well as social influence of non-Indian values and lifestyles?

3.4.2 Research method

The research approach entailed using the survey employed at the working women’s hostel and informal interview structure with the intention of taking a comparative approach between these two groups of working women. The goal was to see how their mode choices, perceptions of safety and security, and more abstract, embedded forms of mobility, such as reasons for working compared with women staying in respectable hostel accommodations. For added variation it was decided to survey two different geographic areas, the first a newer, high end mall and second, an older shopping area that catered to a lower middle class population but still had women employees.

Research Sites

After a week of ethnographic observation at a handful of locations in Delhi, Nehru Place and Select City Walk were chosen as the two research sites. While no scholarly information exists on either place, they were chosen as each is well serviced by both the metro and the bus. Both reflect very different retail sectors, consumer demographics and also represent different eras of urban consumer culture. Both are located in Southeast Delhi.

Nehru Place

Nehru Place was planned in 1962 as one of 15 district centers that would cater to a new shopping aesthetic catering to the middle classes of the 1970s. This aesthetic took on the post- Independence modernism fashionable at the time, realized architecturally through several large concrete buildings three stories high that formed a square with a large open air plaza in the center. Shops within each of the buildings are rented out as individual retail shops. At the time of inception, several fabric stores occupied the buildings and remain there today. These are perhaps the last reminders of the previous area as Nehru Place is the city's main destination for computer hardware and software. Though there are formal shops it is increasingly a bazaar-like atmosphere where a variety of technology related products and services are available. Bargaining is readily accepted and the police in search of black market dealers occasionally raid the area.

Since the late 90s and early 2000s, Nehru Place, with its handful of large four story concrete structures has become home for small scale IT services and companies, outsourcing and call centers as well as photocopy services, computer parts and repairs. The ground floor establishments tend to be electronics chains, offering "reputable" goods while shops on the second and third floor become more ambiguous. As a technology hub and thriving black market, Nehru Place seems to cater to a predominantly male population, however, women do work as sales representatives in the fabric 'Export' houses, the nearby banks, and mobile phone stores. No women were observed working at any of the informal shops. Nehru Place is located in a predominately commercial part of New Delhi, the Okhla Industrial Area, which employs hundreds if not thousands of women ready-made garment factory workers.

Select City Walk

Nehru Place can be conceptualized as the old approach to shopping aesthetic, representative of post-independent, pre-liberalized India whereas Select City Walk (SCW), 1.3 million square feet of air conditioned retail space dedicated to over 500 national and international brands, can be understood in the post-liberalized, global economy, world city imaginary context. Select City Walk was initiated in 2003 after three individuals from the real estate sector successfully obtained 15884 sq meters of land from the DDA through a bidding process. Select Infrastructure Pvt. Ltd was hired to lay the foundation. SCW, like many of India's high-end malls, aims to be a lifestyle center that fuses together dining, shopping, cinema, and entertainment centers. Quoting the Select City Walk website:

Select CITYWALK is highly focused on giving back to the community. We believe in contributing towards the growth of the society and our initiatives toward the same are a priority. The Corporate philosophy we follow here at Select CITYWALK is not "how many malls you can make," but how well you can make them. Aiming to always make for a convenient shopping trip, the many varied services ensure that the shopper never feels the need to step out of the shopping centre for anything....An ethos that has been especially crafted to suit the needs of the sophisticated urban Indian, Select CITYWALK represents a blend of luxury and high-street shopping, an all inclusive mix of brands in addition to a number of cafés, bistros, restaurants and bars, which together make our shopping centre a popular place among all.

Both Nehru Place and Select City Walk house hundreds of small shops that weave together place with placelessness, domestic with international, and advertising imaginaries that are both embedded in and beyond situated culture. In Nehru Place we find a mix of older, family run businesses, particularly in the context of fabric shops and

independent shops that sell technology products that connects individuals and companies to the global through a virtual medium; Select City Walk houses high end national and international retail chains and restaurants, that together convey values of global consumption.

Both locations rely on contract labor. In the case of Select City Walk, contract employees' work as security guards at every entrance and exit and as cleaners. The employees are sent on behalf of a large scale contract based employer whereas in the case of Nehru Place, which does not have security personnel, street sweepers—usually women—are self-employed and work through informal agreements with local shop owners to sweep and maintain the areas outside the shop.

Project Execution

Ethnographic observation done prior to survey distribution suggested that the women employees in both locations working in retail were, like the women in the hostels, in their mid to early twenties. As I did not know their place of residence in the city the survey was modified slightly to include this information. A second unknown was if the majority of employees were from Delhi originally or if they had migrated to the city for their employment.

1a. What are the mode choices of woman surveyed and why are they choosing these modes?

2b. Are women willing to report incidents of harassment? What are women's feelings toward traveling after dark, and existing policies aimed at their safety?

3c Has the Delhi metro had any discernible impact on commuting choices and preferences?

1b. Why are these women working?

2b. Do they see themselves working five years from now?

An intercept survey was implemented, diminishing the ability to obtain a representative sample of the population. I had neither information on the total number of women employees at neither Select City Walk nor Nehru Place. This research also relied heavily on ethnographic observation; visiting both research sites three times, twice in the morning till afternoon and once from mid-day until evening to develop observations. It was observed that most women in Nehru Place left their workplace by p.m., though several women were observed to still be working at Select City Walk after p.m. Observations were recorded in a notebook, recorded digitally, and captured by camera when appropriate. Intercept surveys and informal interviews were done over the course of one day in each location.

In the case of Nehru Place, the selection process was based entirely on whether or not I saw a woman working in the shop. In the case of Select City Walk I selected the main building with the most diversity of shops (i.e. foreign and Indian brands). There are three floors with an average of 35 shops on each floor, including restaurants and cafes¹⁶⁷. It was decided that at least five surveys from five different shops on each floor would be collected. Shops were subjectively sampled based on what they were selling. The purpose was to try to solicit a diversity of outlets that reflected different customer bases and might, presumably, have different employee “types.” In each location I approached the working women at a time that was less busy and the woman was not visibly engaged in assisting a customer. An overview of the project was explained and a document illustrating my credentials, host affiliation in Delhi, and IRB protocol was shown to the

¹⁶⁷ It is culturally atypical to have women working as wait staff so eating establishments were excluded.

woman. If the woman agreed to the survey, she was handed a paper copy and had the option of completing it while at work or at home, in which case I would return the following day to pick up the survey. Women in stores that were less busy agreed to both fill out the survey on the spot and answer additional questions. Women who were employed in busier locations requested that I read them the survey and they answer it out loud. No one wanted to take the survey home to complete. When this approach was taken the line between the survey and interview tended to blur with one feeding into the other. The survey was available in both Hindi and in English, the majority of women chose to fill out the form in English, the handful of surveys that were completed in Hindi were given to a doctoral student at JNU for translation.

If there was more than one woman working in a shop they often asked to fill out the survey together, even if they lived in different parts of the city and/or commuted by different modes. As a result, some surveys were returned with multiple answers and comments written in the margins. Follow up clarification was provided orally and I created a new survey form for each response.

There were six instances in which a woman would ask me to take permission from her manager, usually a man, who tended to be sitting behind the payment counter. Most managers seemed indifferent to the request, using a hand flick to signal go ahead, with the exception of two. A total of 25 surveys were collected with approximately 11 of these involving an informal interview. Two of the women surveyed were of a different employee demographic. One was an optometrist working at an eyeglass store at SCW and the other was the owner of a higher end (i.e. Selling silks) fabric store in Nehru Place. Both were older than the rest of the woman profiled, had advanced degrees, and drove to

their job. Given the already small sample size ($N < 30$), including them in the analysis skewed the data and so they were removed from the analysis and mentioned only in discussion.

3.4.3 Let's go shopping: SCW in detail

While Nehru Place is a collection of independent retail stores, Select City Walk is a private company with a head office inside the mall. One informal interview with the head of Human Resources helped clarify employment structure and consumer profile of the mall. I learned that Select City Walk is one of the largest malls in the country; a conglomeration of several buildings with some these buildings having global designers and some having middle class Indian brands as a way of catering to a wide demographic while keeping mind of “luxury” shoppers and their desire for a specific experience. This response can be read as a deliberate attempt to curate space in such a way that those shopping at Burberry were kept away from families coming to the food court for the experience of Kentucky Fried Chicken. Due to its size and crowd, SCW has its own “police beat” to closely monitor “who has gone where.” I was told there are “several stand out amenities”, especially by way of parking. There is complimentary parking for the disabled and a woman-only section in the first floor parking lot, indicated by a pink sign with a stick figure woman. This is for the safety and security of women who are shopping by themselves and do not feel comfortable in the parking garage. Pregnant women are assisted while parking their vehicles.

A company called 24-hour Security, an agency supplying security across Delhi, contracts out security workers. In so far as women security is needed in the toilets, at all entrances, and many of the shops selling women's wear, SCW requires an almost equal

number of men and women security. All security guards must get their PSARA, which is a type of license. Generally the women are between the ages of 25 and 35, HR thought that all women security workers are married, some are single mothers. Her statement appears anecdotal; a follow up question regarding the accuracy of this information received a reply that “unmarried women do not do this type of work”. A stereotype that is probably correct given the nature of the work it is imagined to be “inappropriate”. The age range cited was justified as it is work that requires standing, which can be difficult for older women. I asked about the attrition rate of security work given the demands and was told that it is there, but less so with the security guards who work at Select City Walk when compared with those who work at other localities—a natural response for someone working in HR. This is explained by Select City Walk’s good amenities. I asked about these amenities using the example of a crèche, a potentially useful amenity for working mothers and learned that there isn’t a crèche as women don’t want to leave their children in day care, with strangers. A statement that is quite possibly true and revealing of how gender norms operate across cultures¹⁶⁸. Further probing suggested that by good amenities she meant air conditioning, drinking water, good toilets and, most importantly, a good and “respectable” crowd.

All security shifts are for eight and half hours. There is a morning shift, which starts at am and subsequent shifts are staggered. Fewer women work evening shifts. HR was not sure how shifts are allocated as it is up to the contractor. When ask where the women come from, she replied that many of them come from Kirki Village (a lower middle income neighborhood opposite the mall) and other parts of South Delhi. Most

¹⁶⁸ What I mean by this is my assumption that this would be a valuable amenity is possibly misguided in the Indian context.

women don't want to travel far; she imagines it is a maximum of 10 kilometers that women are willing to travel. Lastly, I ask about mode and if 24 Hour Security provides any kind of transportation. As the women are all coming from different areas it is not possible to provide them with transportation. It is up to them so they will have to arrange accordingly, and take into account their safety. If it is not feasible then they won't take the job (according to her). Some male security guards and many of the men working in retail come by two-wheeler. She doesn't think women come by this mode. Metro, she imagines, is preferred for connectivity and comfort but also direct bus and maybe shared autos/hickshaws. I imagine that the metro might be expensive or not in the locality in which these women stay. I bring this up and this causes her to offer her opinion on the metro, which I immediately write down. "The coming of the metro is the biggest influence in Delhi, it is the cause for the influx of people in from other states...it has unfortunately been for the worse." She explains that she is originally from Delhi and has seen how the city has changed. I interpret her statement as a reference to migrants and the assumption of lower class, "backward" behavior. I learned that she comes to work by car but doesn't indicate if she drives or if she has a driver. It is 22 kilometers but, she says, "there is no other way."

The conversation shifts as I ask about predominate modes used to get to the mall. HR says that an equal number of people come by cars and by public transportation, especially since the Malviya Nagar metro station opened up. Now people, especially the teenagers, will come by metro or by shared auto. But many come by car. The parking facilities were carefully designed and there is full valet. "I have hummers pulling up,

BMWs, Beamers, you name it and I've seen it. This is an upscale mall, one of the best. We get it all."

3.4.4 Demographic profile

Like the previous section, I begin with a demographic summary of the women surveyed, combining the data from both research sites. When appropriate, comparisons are made between women working at Nehru Place and SCW and then how this population compares with the hostel women from the first section of this chapter. Despite several attempts to survey women security workers at the entrance to the mall these women refused, saying that I would need to get permission from 24 hour security¹⁶⁹. In the end I was able to interview and survey one security guard who worked as a bag attendant within a high bra store. She will be profiled throughout this discussion.

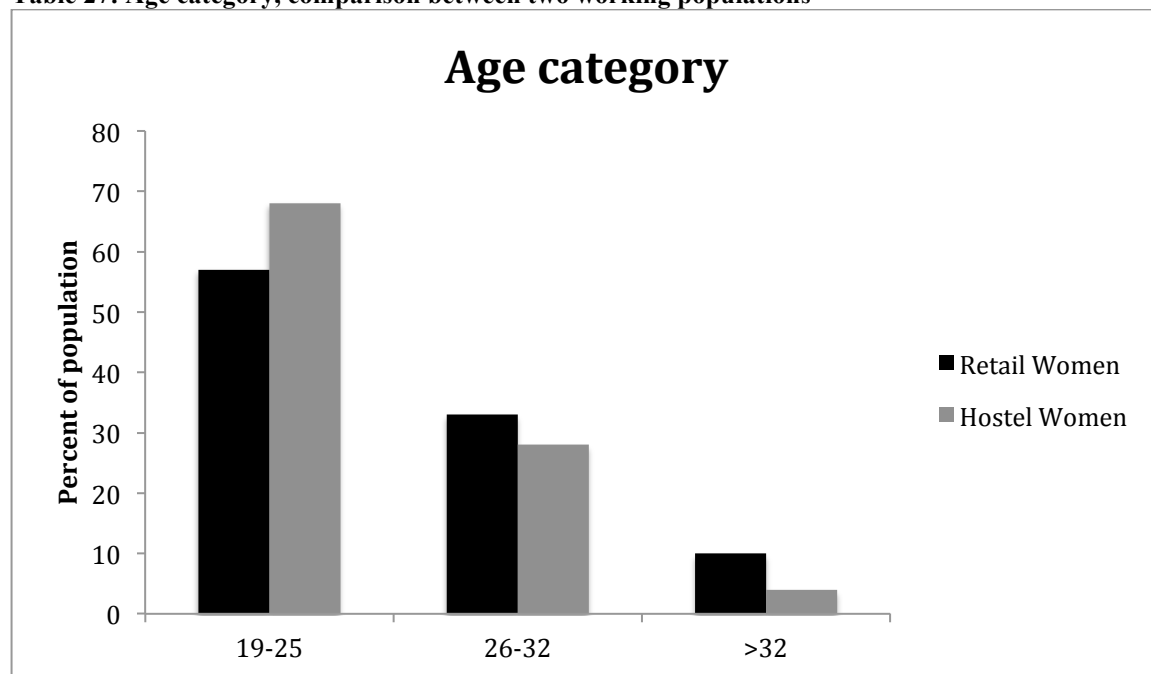
Age and Education

57 percent of women were between the ages of 19 and 25 and 33 percent were between the ages of 26 and 32, the remaining 10 percent were older than 32 years of age, indicating that women working in the retail sector were slightly older and represented a wider age spectrum than the women who lived at the hostel. Education level was not asked on the questionnaire but was asked informally if a comfortable situation arose. Women had completed up to 12th standard, the equivalent of a high school diploma. Several had some form of further education, be it a correspondence course, college, several said they did not complete their further education, though reasons remained

¹⁶⁹ A handful of phone calls and emails to the company to request permission to interview women security guards but I received no replies.

unclear. One employee at “Spunk urban shoe store” elaborated on this question to say that she started a degree in home science and wanted to become a teacher or dietitian but needed more education. She had just started this job and it was her first experience working in retail. She was the only interviewee who explicitly expressed a desire to have more schooling. Of course that is not to say that they don’t have this aspiration, only that it wasn’t expressed at the time. Unlike the women at the hostel, 14 percent of women in the retail sector had children, 16 percent were married.

Table 27: Age category, comparison between two working populations



Place of origin and Length of time in the city

Sixty-two percent of respondents reported being from Delhi, a much higher percentage than respondents from the hostel. The remaining 38 percent were from North India, with 14 percent being from Manipur, a state in Northeast India that is ethnically distinct and has historically sought independence from India. Those who were not from Delhi had

been in the city for a minimum of three years, with the average being five years. In conversation I learned that most women came to Delhi to find work in the retail sector with the purpose of supporting their family; the majority of earnings were given to the family (regardless of place of origin) or saved for their own future. Similar to the women in the hostel, the decision to come to Delhi was not one made by the individual woman but rather by the family. Distinct from the women staying in the hostel however, these women were working for financial reasons, with the primary aim of helping the family as opposed to personal and professional development.

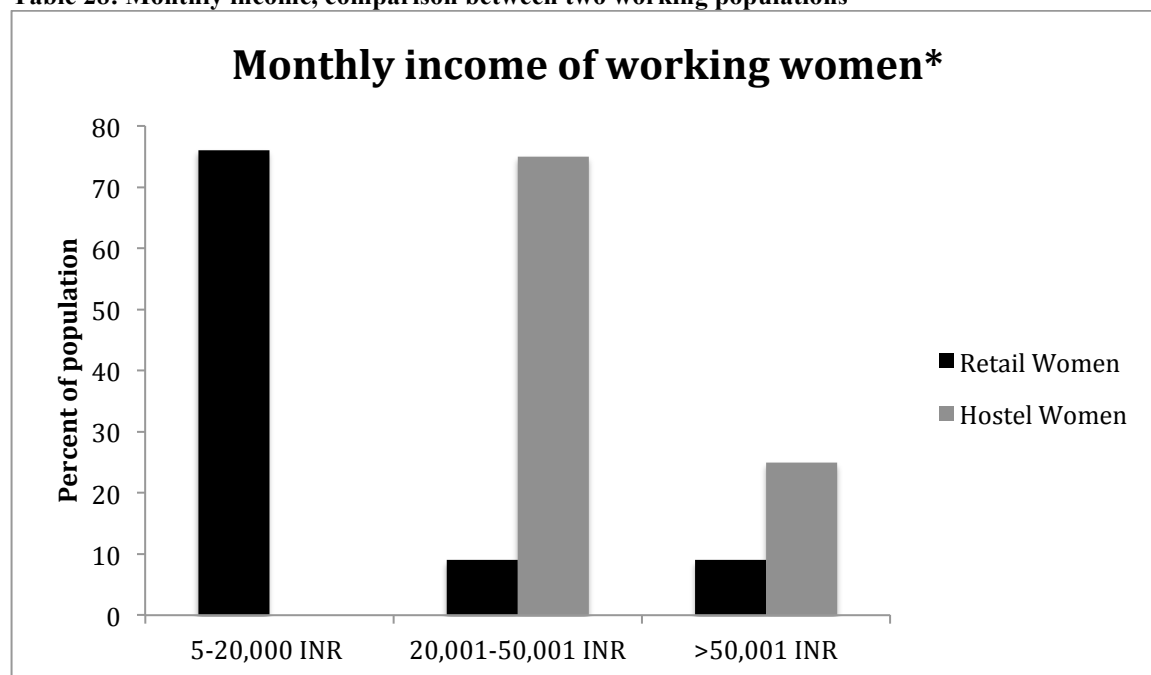
What kind of accommodation do you stay in?

Type of accommodation was informally asked in each discussion but not formally represented on the survey. Women from Delhi stayed with their family, or, if they were married, with their husband or husband's family. None of the women from outside Delhi were staying at a hostel; I was told that a hostel is too expensive and too controlling—a telling response in light of the previous section. Two women from Manipur were from the same village and came to the city together; both found work and accommodations through an established network of people from their village that were already in the city. A woman from Uttar Pradesh came to the city and lived with relatives, her father had arranged this prior to her arrival three years back. She said there are six people total in the Delhi home. In her young 20s, she had to share a room but as she is earning for her future and approaching a marriageable age she now has her own room.

Income

Seventy-six percent of these women had a monthly salary between 5,001-20,000 INR, a surprisingly low salary. To give some context, several state governments have set the minimum wage of domestic workers to 8,000 INR per month, or about US 110 a month. A food delivery boy (a comparable job in the context of age, education and qualifications, and representation of a new employment sector) can expect a salary between 20-25,000 INR a month. Most women reported working forty hours or more a week. Given these low salaries, future research should include questions on why women chose to work in retail over other sectors. Given that the pay is comparable to other low skill professions, it is hypothesized that it is the connection to global consumption populations and practices that draws young women to this work over other sectors.

Table 28: Monthly income, comparison between two working populations



*N less than 30

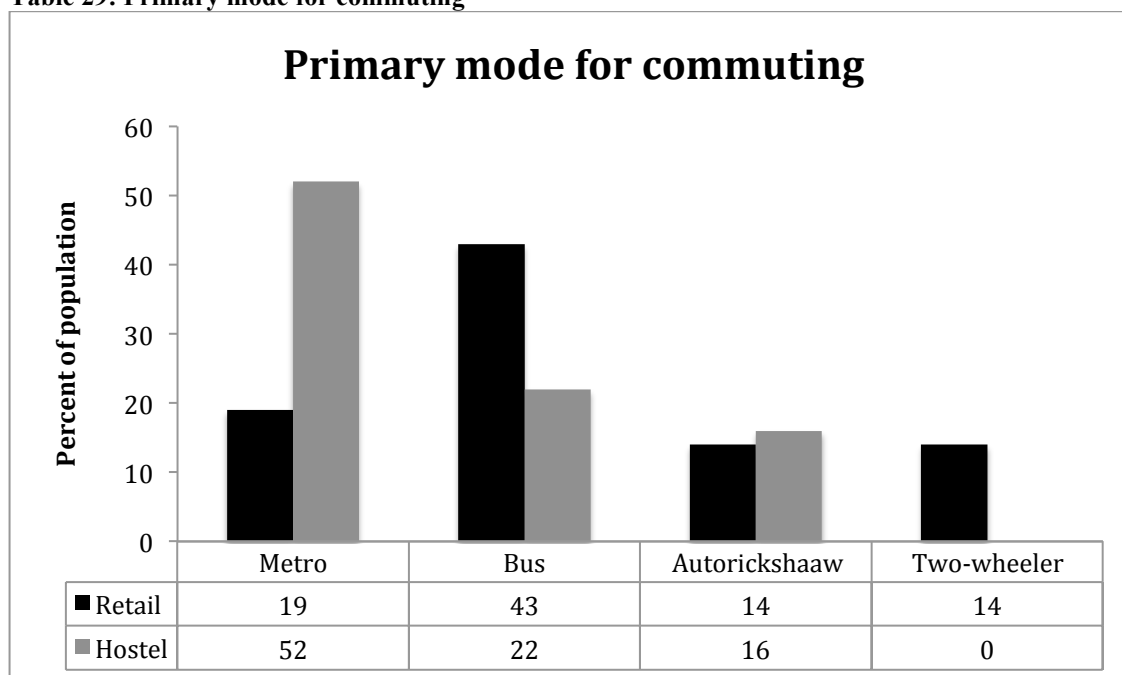
Mode

The question of what modes do you have at home was asked. Women who were not from Delhi and staying with extended family were asked to write down the mode available at their relatives place. Unlike the women from the hostel, none of the women in the retail sector, with the exception of the ophthalmologist and woman business owner had a car at home. The majority of these women (61 percent) had no mode available at home. Twenty-eight percent said someone in their family had a two wheeler. If the car is indeed a marker of class position then it is possible to gauge how this population of working figures in respect to those staying in the hostel or working in Bangalore's IT sector.

3.4.5 Mode choice and reasons for choosing

A primary reason for choosing these research sites was that both are well serviced by the metro and bus. Data suggests that women working in retail had more varied modal use than the hostel population. Several used a different mode for commuting to work than they did for their return journey. Far fewer women in this group commuted by metro, only 19 percent of those surveyed. This was surprising because both Nehru Place and Select City Walk were within a half a kilometer walking distance from metro stations, suggesting issues of first mile connectivity or lack of metro station close to their place of residence. Of those who did commute by metro, several took an autorickshaw to get to the metro stations; this was usually a shared auto and cost approximately 10 rupees for four people in the auto.

Table 29: Primary mode for commuting



*Those who took an auto to get to the metro station were not included in this category.

Of those who commuted by two-wheeler, none drove the two-wheeler, but were picked up and dropped off. One woman who worked at Nehru Place had an elder sister who worked in a private bank just outside Nehru Place. The sister had a scooter and the two would come to the area together. Most of the women I spoke to at Select City Walk completed work after it was dark (around p.m.). Of the few married women surveyed, two of them said their husbands picked them up on two-wheeler and took them back home.

Two women were from the same residential area came to Nehru Place by chartered van, a minivan that holds up to 10 people (often more), and is contracted out by the group to service a particular route. These women said they mostly commute by chartered van, paying 10-15 rupees each way—a fare lower than either the public bus or

an auto. If the van was not available for some reason these women would share an auto with other women coming to the area.

Cost

It did not occur to me to ask a question about commuting cost per day or month but came up voluntarily by several women during conversation. One woman had a short (under 5 km) but expensive commute. There was no metro close to her home and no direct bus route to her place of work. She commuted by auto only, spending 40 rupees each way for a total of 80 rupees per day. She explained: “This is more than bus, which would be about 20 rupees, but it is more safe and convenient.” I learned that her monthly salary was 12,000 and that she, like most women in retail, worked six days a week. Assuming 31 days in a month this would mean her daily salary was under 400 rupees per day, meaning approximately 20 percent of her daily earnings are going toward her transportation.

Departure and Arrival times

Retail shops in urban areas tend to open at 10 or 11 in the morning and stay open quite late, at least 9 or 10pm. Select City Walk opens at 10:00am and closes between 11:00pm and 1am because of restaurants, bars, and cinemas located within the mall. While the retail stores close by 9:30pm, employers tend to send women employees home by 7:30pm. Rosie, the only security guard I was able to engage with had an official shift from 2:00pm until 11:30pm. She took the bus while going to work; it took about an hour because of traffic. Her husband picked her up on his two-wheeler around 11:45pm. If he was not available she would take an auto but that ate into her daily wage. Although night

buses were available she would not consider this mode (nor would her husband allow her take it). Given she was obviously working at night, she felt she was a target for harassment, theft or other dangerous situations. When asked about her shift she said she preferred this timing because she had the morning to help her children prepare for school, cook the meals for the day. As a contract security guard however, she could be relocated to any business in the city at any time. It was then her decision if she would want to take that particular position, though I learned that women were given some preference in respect to location and timing, That is, if her company relocated her to somewhere in the city that was not convenient she could request a different location. She had been at Select City for over six months and, as a contract security guard, moved around to different posts within the mall throughout the day. The particular station she was in during the interview was La Serene Bra store, a high end lingerie store. Her job was to keep an eye out for theft and to check any oversized bags of incoming customers.

The average time women left for work was 10:05am in the morning with several leaving as early as 8:00am because of long commutes and the unreliability of the bus. The average time women finished their shift and left for home was 7:42pm. No one interviewed finished before p.m. but I was told that most (except Joyce) leave before p.m. as companies are mindful of perceived safety.

Average commute times

The average commute time was 56 minutes from one's residence to the place of employment with the longest commute being 90 minutes (a commute time that was shared by more than one respondent) and the shortest commute being less than 10

minutes. Those with long commutes tended to come by metro and took a shared auto to the metro station. Others took the bus and said that their, say 60 minute commute, did not include the 15-30 minutes spent waiting for the bus. Retail shops at the mall were far more rigid in punctuality than the more informal, family-businesses at Nehru place. Women working at the mall could easily be terminated for being late and so these women had to take precautions while traveling and that meant factoring in long wait times for the bus. The one woman who had the 10-minute commute walked to Select City Walk. Her family stayed in small basti (informal settlement) near by. She said the only reason why she took this job is because she could walk to work, and her family, knowing that it was a high-end mall, thought it was appropriate for her to work there, even though they had never been inside.

Time spent commuting

Seventy-one percent of women said that time spent commuting had an impact on their quality of life. This percentage is lower than the percent reported by women from the hostels, which is interesting because the amount of time spent commuting for these working women, was significantly longer, by over 20 minutes. These women tended to live much further away from their jobs and secondly, as women who worked in retail, standing on their feet throughout the day was a requirement. Many of the women I spoke to made note of this. Those who commute by bus and metro said they almost never got a seat on either mode. One woman said she often got a seat going to work as she traveled after the morning rush but coming home, the time when she really needed to sit down, a

seat was impossible to find. Were these women more accepting of their exhausting commute because they saw their employment as an economic necessity?

Declining a job

Sixty-four percent of the women surveyed said yes, they had declined or not looked for certain jobs because of difficulty commuting, a significant contrast to the women who stayed at hostels for whom the link between place of residence and place of work was carefully considered. If we know from the previous section that many of these women have extremely complicated or long commutes, that what is considered “difficult” is imagined to be quite high. Several women brought up their previous employment to contextualize their responses. One woman at Select City Walk said she used to work at a retail store in Ambience Mall, Gurgaon. She worked there for two and half years and liked that store much better than the one she was currently in, but the commute was harder. But that store shut down. She found her current job through a friend she knew at the other mall. She had worked only nine days at this new job and admitted she felt quite nervous trying to learn everything. She traveled by bus, a direct route that made things a lot easier but the wait time was often 20 minutes or more. When asked if she could have gotten a different job at the same mall her response was, “I’ll take what I can get.” Another woman, also at Select City Walk, had worked at the store for a year and half. “I’d like to change [jobs] but where to go? My connections are here only.”

Joyce the security guard had previously worked as a woman’s security guard at PVR cinema, a cinema chain located in several malls and shopping complexes. The PVR she worked at was in a different area. “I wish I didn’t feel so tired,” she said, “that this

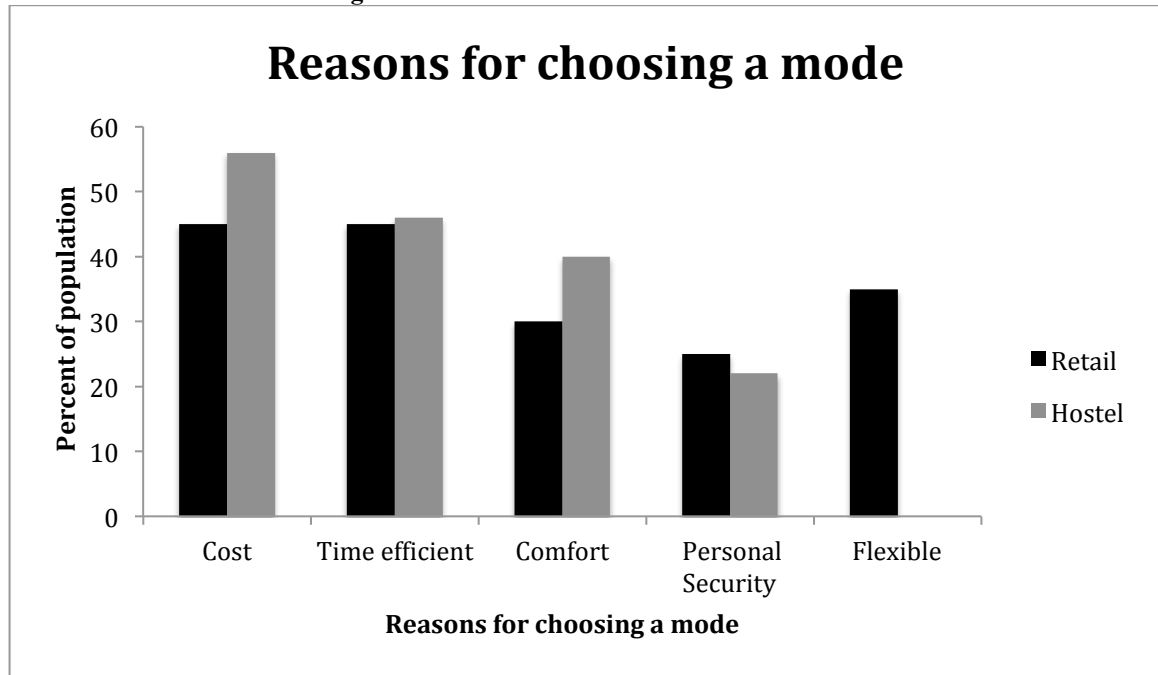
was less.” When asked if the job at PVR was less strenuous she replied that “It’s all the same.” Another woman said previously she worked at a call center, she didn’t like working the night shift but it was a responsibility that went with the territory. Although she said yes, she has in the past declined taking a certain job because of the difficult commute, she explained, “I have to work and so I have to travel, there is no option. Previously when I was at the call center they provided me with a cab while working the night shift but it was bad. At the mall I like the A/C and I get to work during the day.” Her hours were 11am till 9pm and she spent on average 60 minutes commuting by bus. One woman had been working for three years at that particular retail shop. In her early 20s she said she had never had a different job and didn’t want to look for something closer because she didn’t think she would have much luck.

At Nehru Place the responses were similar and as most of the women working in Nehru Place were from Delhi or had their immediate family in the city, the decision of whether or not to take a job was decided by the family. One married woman said: “I chose my job because the location is convenient. Safety is most important.” Another woman in Nehru Place at a large wholesale fabric store, said she had been doing the job for eight years, even though she was less than 25 years old. Her commute took her over 75 minutes but she was not willing to look for another job that might have an easier commute; it was family who had put her in this place of employment and “that is that.” Another woman, working as an assistant in a mobile phone store in Nehru Place used to work in Malvia Nagar but three years ago switched to Nehru Place as the salary was better and although the commute was longer, it was direct by metro, which was very convenient. Lastly, another woman in her early 20s said she lived with her extended

family as both her parents were dead. She said she was willing to travel anywhere for any job because she had to work to earn her keep.

Reasons for using

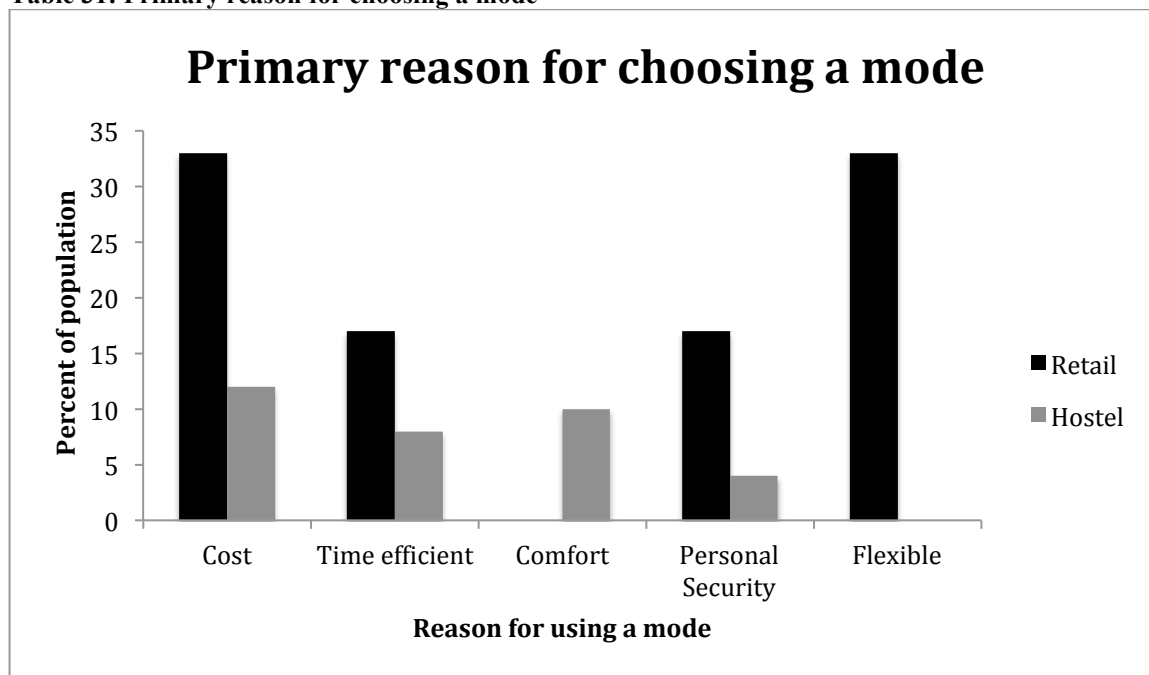
Considering that for many of these women, employment was a necessity and salaries were low, only 45 percent of women said the reason for using a particular mode was that it was cost effective; and most women who cited this reason commuted by bus. Personal security was slightly more widely cited than those from the hostel. But women in retail cited comfort as a reason for using a mode far less than women in the hostels. Perhaps most telling is that for women working in retail, flexibility was a significant reason for choosing a mode. I would argue this speaks directly to the care giving responsibilities these women are expected to perform. A mode that offers flexibility in terms of departures and route networks will better accommodate her varied schedule and expectation to have a leading role in the family.

Table 30: Reasons for choosing a mode

*Respondents could chose more than one reason

Looking at the mode used by those who cited comfort, we see that most were traveling by metro. One woman who commuted by bus also listed comfort as a reason for using it, following up by saying that she had a direct bus. The woman who rode to Nehru Place on the back of her sister's two wheeler also cited comfort as a reason; it is assumed that comfort in this instance refers to point to point service. As done in the previous section, the reason for using a particular mode was isolated into singular responses for more detail.

Table 31: Primary reason for choosing a mode*



*N<15

In the case of the women hostel workers, comfort was the most cited singular reason for commuting by a particular mode, but this was not the case for women in retail who ranked cost effectiveness and flexibility highest. Many women shared more detailed reasons for choosing the mode that they did. “Pocket friendly fare” was heard frequently as was the fact that the bus was a direct route so no changes were required. Interestingly, the one woman who walked, said that having a work place within walking distance was the only reason for taking the job: “it is expensive to take an auto and so that is not okay”. While the walk was short, it was hot, along a major road where people might give her uncomfortable stares, a point I will revisit in the next section. Another woman who commuted by bus cited cost effectiveness and personal security as the two reasons for using that mode; when commuting there were always a lot of people, including women, on the bus. As a result, she felt quite secure.

A woman who traveled by metro explained that in a city like Delhi, A/C makes a big difference. One said she had no choice really, the bus was the only option available to her based on her residence, another made a similar remark saying she would need to take an auto to get to the nearest metro station and then the journey would become too expensive. Counter to that point, another woman was willing to spend 20 rupees on an auto so that she could travel by metro. Her door-to-door commute was 75 minutes and cost 80 rupees a day. She had done the calculations, she explained and it worked out to about 10 rupees more than the bus, she thought it was worth the cost. She would prefer to take an auto the entire way but that would be far too expensive.

Another similar issue was waiting for a bus that may or may not come. However, in one case, if the bus did not come the women did not hail an auto all the way to work but rather took an auto to the closest major bus stop. She explained: “The bus is very difficult to get, sometimes it never comes. So after waiting for 30 minutes I wind up getting an auto and taking it to bus stop 427. This auto will cost me 30 rupees and it will be a shared auto.” Only once she reached bus stop 427 did the chance of catching a bus to work increase. I noticed, after we had finished speaking to her that she left the question regarding commute time with a big check mark. Most probably because she could not put down any one particular number.

Table 32: Aspirational mode according to existing mode

	Metro	Chartered bus	Walking	Auto	Car
Primarily bus	22	22	X	56	X
Primarily metro	45	18	X	18	14

Unlike the women surveyed at the hostel, the metro was not the predominant aspirational mode of bus users. Though during informal conversation it seemed that many women were talking about the metro, that they would prefer to use this mode if there was a station near by. This led me to believe that metro is indeed a preferred mode but when asked about any mode, they will prefer auto because it is door to door. Indeed in the comments section several women highlighted that an auto would provide door-to-door service and the ability to sit down, understandable given that work required them to be on their feet. One woman explained “This mall is very secure once we reach but it would be nice to be very safe and go directly.”

A woman working in a high-end jewelry store and sporting a stylish “puff” hairstyle told me: “In a perfect world I would have my own cycle. There would be less population and less traffic. With the cycle I could weave in and out of traffic, I could go and come when I wanted.” I asked her to clarify, whether she meant a two-wheeler cycle or a bicycle. She was referring to a bicycle. Originally from Delhi she had ridden when she was younger and liked the freedom she felt. Listening to her recalls Hanson’s article, “Gender and Mobility” (2010), in which Hanson opens with a description of Frances Willard 1895 account of learning how to ride a bicycle and the experience of self-

powered mobility freedom. Although this was her aspirational mode, it would never be achievable, citing the reasons of traffic and distance.

Similar to the women surveyed at the hostel, those who are already using metro seem to be using their aspirational mode. When asked what are the reasons for using this mode one woman, in addition to meaning that it was secure and time effective wrote “Has A/C” and accompanied this statement with several exclamation points and even a few hearts. Those who chose chartered bus said the reason she is not using this mode is because it is not available; auto was described as too expensive to be used as a daily mode.

3.4.6 Distinguishing between the bus and the metro

The rankings for the metro and the bus were exactly the same among the working women as they were for the women at the hostel. The metro had an average ranking of a 4 (3.7 to be exact) and the bus was given a ranking of 2 (2.04). In other words, the metro was ranked as being very good while the bus was ranked as satisfactory. Similar to the previous section, the ranking for the metro was framed such that the crowding in the metro had become quite bad in recent years and it was for this reason that the metro did not rank higher. Several comments emphasized the reliability of the metro in regard to timings and frequency, several commented on A/C and even more commented on the presence of the women’s compartment. As one woman said, “Population is there, it is unavoidable. A/C is good. Security is good and they are cleaning it constantly. When it first opened it was not as crowded, but now it's as crowded as the bus.” Another was more specific in her use of the metro: “Metro is much safer, I sometimes use it. The

ladies compartment is the main reason. I take the metro to Lajput Nagar and nearby shopping. It's not as crowded as the bus.”

Once again we find that although the safety and personal security doesn't factor strongly within the categorical choices available for why one takes a mode, it is acknowledged in this section as a distinct advantage over the bus. A second issue that surfaces is this acknowledgment that the metro used to be better network coverage when there was less crowding. Bus comments were more varied with fewer positive responses. Those who had positive things to say framed these qualities in the context of accessibility. One woman explained that she appreciated that she could see outside while traveling. Another acknowledged that bus services had improved in recent years; it was now safer and bus timings were more frequent. In contrast to the previous quote, another explained: “It's cheap! But I have to wait at the stop for 30 minutes for the bus to come.” One young woman said she used it but it was crowded and men often sat in the spaces reserved for women. Another said it boarding and alighting was dangerous because the bus seldom came to a complete stop. Another was quite sympathetic to DTC. “I have no choice but to use the bus. It's not the fault of the bus part of the problem is that the autos are always standing in front of the bus stop outside the mall so I'm always running to catch it. This needs to be better regulated and also the frequency is needed. I don't need an app to tell me where the bus is, I just need the bus to come and for them to be more of them!”

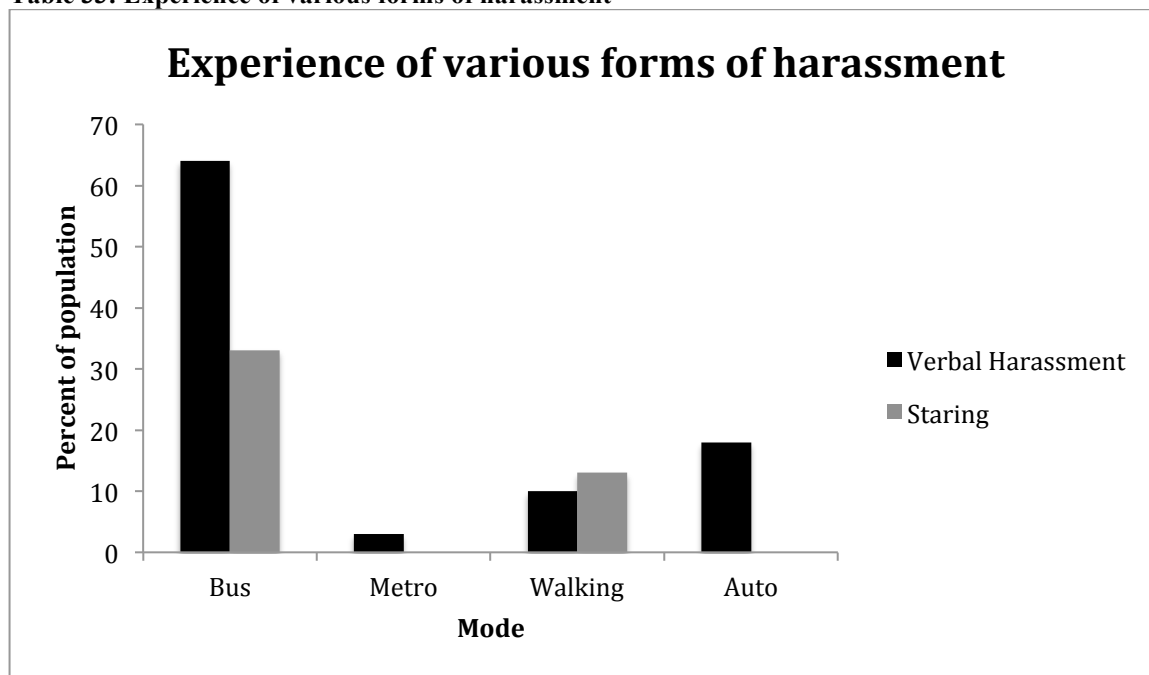
Overall, this population of working women seemed more forgiving of the bus than the women at the hostel. The second comment about the openness of the bus and ability to see one's surroundings is reminiscent of a comment made in the focus group discussion with women BPO employees of the Bangalore firm. In a conversation about

mode choice outside of work several cited auto as the preferred mode to travel by. When asked about taking a taxi over an auto, one woman remarked that, unlike an auto, a car is enclosed and goes at higher speeds. She implied that it was more difficult to keep track of the outside environment, which she found particularly reassuring (23.08.213). This last comment with an asterisk was made by one of the two women who commute by car and was included in order to highlight the contrast between her statement and the rest of the women. The comment that if she “had to” travel by bus than she’d rather not travel at all suggests a certain class privilege that most other women would not have.

3.4.7 Understanding safety and security

Verbal harassment

Similar to the findings from the working women’s hostel, respondents chose to focus on general impressions as opposed to specific events when discussing the experience of harassment, where it took place, and how often. Once again verbal harassment was most commonly experienced was in the bus, followed by using an auto. Walking and Metro were reported as well. Some women wrote “all modes.”

Table 33: Experience of various forms of harassment

In the context of bus and auto, the conversation around what constituted harassment was not necessarily gender-based and could refer to, for example, an auto driver arguing for a certain fare or a bus conductor rudely saying no change is available. The follow up question that could have been asked (but was not) is whether or not women felt targeted toward this type of brusque treatment because of their gender. Similar to those at the hostel, women in the retail sector said instances of physical harassment occurring on the bus increases when it becomes too crowded. It was thought that men use this as an opportunity to brush up against women in an unwanted manner

Starring

Most women said that starring was always there, regardless of mode. It came with the territory of being out in public. However, women in retail experienced staring far less

than women at the hostels. This could be for several reasons, including their class background, that is that to say these women, many of whom were from Delhi and of lower middle class backgrounds, were expected to work outside the house. They were also older. It could also be that their long term experience of being in the city both desensitized to them from incidents of staring but also led to body language that signaled confidence in a way that detracted unwanted gazes. Unlike the hostel population, no one specifically wrote metro as a mode in which staring was experienced. One woman at Select City Walk made the observation that “girls” from the Northeast get more (unwanted) attention because they look different. The stereotype was that they were “shy”, didn’t speak Hindi well, and therefore wouldn’t say or do anything to counter harassment and eve teasing. During another conversation with women at Select City Walk, including some from the Northeast, one explained that as she had never faced problems while traveling by auto she always travelled by this mode, even if it was more expensive. Another woman from the Northeast was interviewed in the presence of male coworkers (thus making her possibly uncomfortable) and said she never faced harassment. When the woman next to her probed further by saying “Never?” the first woman fell silent than gave a quiet laugh: “People are fine. You have to ward off unwanted attention. You cannot travel at night. As long as you travel before that it is so so.” Many women said they did not travel to work in the clothes that they wore at work, a point I will come to later. Several respondents included personal comments in their questionnaire: “I never faced any harassment in the metro, not even staring. It is a good crowd”, “If you go by other modes it will be there but if you travel by metro you have the ladies compartment and then you never face difficulty”, and “If I take the metro in the

evening time it is working people, professional people so it is okay. But at night I see drunk men. I never travel at night.” In fact several women said they don’t experience harassment or staring because they make sure to not travel by bus or walk at a time of evening in which this type of behavior was common. One simply said “Starring is constant and everywhere”, another “In the peak hours you see harassment, especially verbal harassment to women. Even if it isn’t happening to you notice it.” Lastly, one woman explained that she no longer has to face it because her husband can pick her up on his two-wheeler.

Time of day

Eighty-one percent of the women surveyed said that yes, time of day does impact their feeling of personal security, a far higher percentage of women than those at the hostel. It is hypothesized that we see a higher percent simply because these women are traveling at times that are considered less safe for women. Whereas most women at both hostels reach their residence by p.m., most of the women at Select City Walk are still working at that time. Many women said they do not have much control over their shift times; maybe their shift ends at p.m. but they have to restock, there is a sudden flood of customers and they must stay on, such is the reality of retail. Furthermore, many of them travel long distances. Given an average commute time of 56 minutes, if a woman leaves the mall at 7:45pm she would not reach home until approximately p.m., a time of night most women said they do not like to be out. One woman from Select City Walk said time of day doesn’t matter if the mode itself is very safe. For example, one woman clarified by saying

that time of day didn't affect her so long as she was traveling by metro, which is how she commuted to and from work. "If I had to travel by another mode then it would."

Women from Nehru Place seemed particularly sensitive to the time of day, with a marked transition occurring after p.m., when all of the banks and offices began closing for the day and the informal vendors started to take over the landscape. One woman summed it up perfectly: "Time of day doesn't affect my feeling of personal security but then, I wouldn't stay in Nehru Place after p.m." During the period of ethnographic observation, this shift in crowd dynamic was observed. Although it wasn't an overtly menacing atmosphere, there was a visible shift in the gender ratio wherein during the day it was close to 30 percent women but by p.m. seemed close to 95 percent male. As Nehru Place is marked by an open air plaza with many men just "hanging out", the space becomes overtly masculine given that it would be "inappropriate" for women to do the same thing. In the case of Nehru Place, as the time changes, an environment changes and it is the environment that women don't want to be in. One woman said in a straightforward manner. "First, I don't travel after a certain time of day, one should not be traveling after a certain time of day." This comment revisits this central question of who is allowed to travel? Who does the allowing and who is able to travel? Her comment suggests she is able to travel, but should not. Not only should she not travel, but also women more generally should not. Is this her choice or is this her reality? What invisible and visible structures shape this perception of when she should travel?

Shops women at Nehru Place work in are either fabric or a mobile phone stores. Fabric stores had been there longer and were typically family run businesses. The mobile phone stores were either formally or informally linked to a particular brand or service

provider. Women from Nehru Place left their jobs earlier than those working at the mall, most departing around p.m. This was for several different reasons. First, far more women in this location were married and with families than those at Select City Walk. They had to go home so they could take care of their evening responsibilities. Second, as it was common knowledge that the crowd at Nehru Place changed by the time it got dark it was in everyone's interest to have women leave at a reasonable time. Lastly, while the mobile phone stores stayed open late, most of the fabric stores closed by p.m.

A woman who worked at Select City Walk and had previously worked at a different mall made the observation that the area outside Select City Walk is predominately middle and lower middle class neighborhoods. This was safer than Vasant Kunj, the area outside the mall she previously worked at where there was nothing around as the area was being developed. There were no bus stops nearby or streetlights. While she liked the store at the old mall better, she liked the surrounding environment at Select City Walk better. However, she concluded by saying "it is a crowded place, but at night (night being after p.m.) there can be harassment, even in South Delhi." Several women said simply "I won't travel after dark." One woman said she wouldn't travel after dark by herself. Maybe if she was traveling with others.

Do you know who to contact?

Fifty-two percent of the women said they did know who to contact, about 12 percent less than what was reported among women surveyed in the hostel. Similar to the hostel population, knowing who to contact meant either the police or friends. One woman made a point of saying: "The Delhi police, I have that number memorized" yet another woman

explained that she “Remembers certain numbers.” In a follow up question I learned that these were the numbers of her family who lived in Uttar Pradesh. Another said, no she hadn’t memorized any numbers but: “I don’t travel after p.m.”, as though only bad things would happen after p.m. Several simply said, that no, they don’t know who to contact.

Would you report an incident?

Fifty-three percent of women said they would report an incident, roughly the same percent as those from the hostel. However, unlike the women at the hostel, who framed reporting an incident in the context of a larger sense of gender justice, no one in the retail sector, with the exception of one woman, an employee of Willis Lifestyle (“I would definitely report something if it happened, it is my duty”), seemed to connect the reporting of an incident to a larger effort of gender-based empowerment and inequality. Again we hear this word duty.

Table 34: Would you report an incident?

	Yes	No
Retail Population	53	47
Hostel Population	50	45*

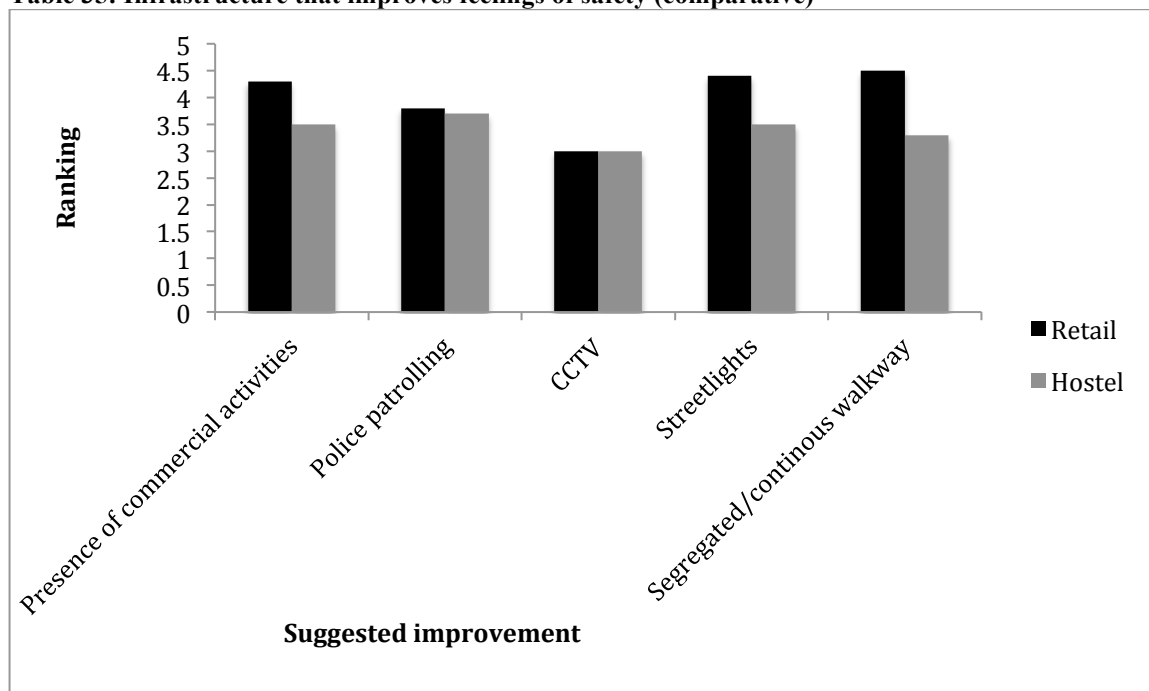
*5 percent were unsure if they would or not.

Another woman, the jewelry store assistant with the puff hairstyle explained that she reported an incident of theft—her wallet stolen while commuting by bus. When she went to the police she was surprised that they treated her with respect. Although the wallet was not retrieved, she gained confidence in and respect for the “system.” She followed up by saying: “I wish there was more police presence at the bus stop and on the bus, like how it is with the metro. I was really impressed with the online register request,

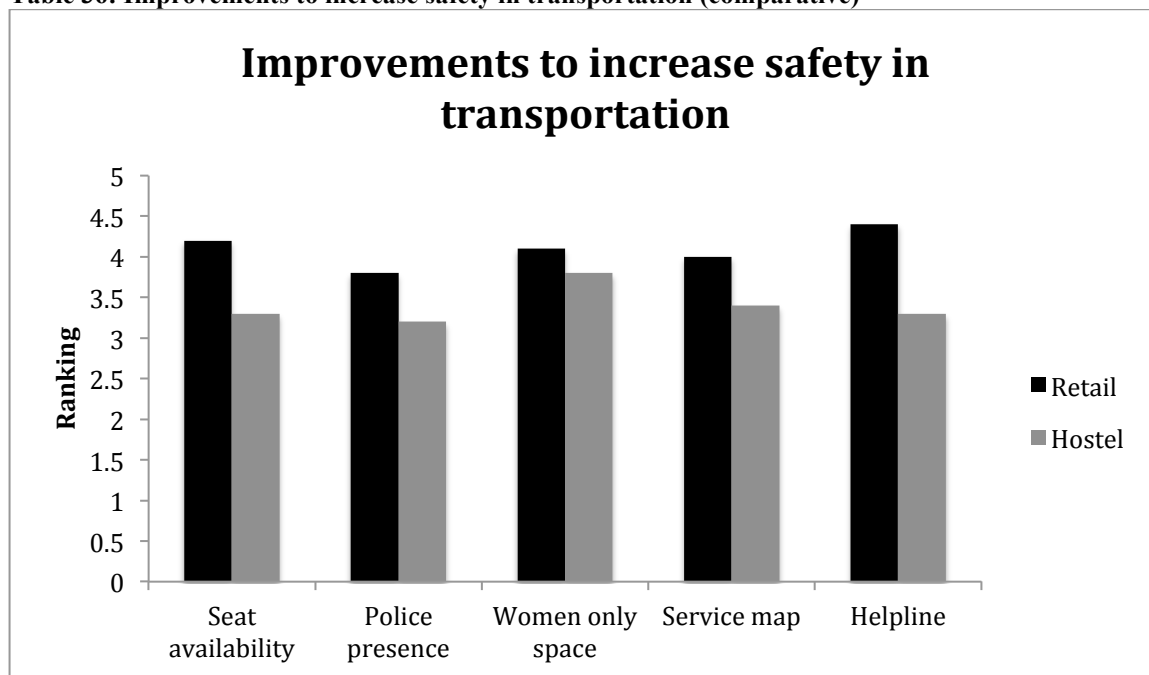
I did this when my wallet was stolen. Pickpockets are everywhere! But this online request is a good thing.” More women however seemed inclined to explain why they wouldn’t report an incident, with comments similar to those expressed at the hostel. For example: “I solve my issues on my own” or “I am not very well informed.” One woman said she’d like to report an incident but that the police wouldn’t do anything, if it was related to harassment they might even laugh. Another said she would report only if the incident was extremely serious, “otherwise, this type of behavior is normal and there is no need to report it.”

Infrastructure improvement

It is interesting to see that the only similarity in response between these two populations is how CCTV is ranked. Whereas Police patrolling elicited the most favorable response among women in the hostel, this does not rank comparatively high among women in the retail sector.. Having a segregated or continuous walkway and street lighting is favored by the retail women as is presence of commercial activities. It is possible that women in the hostel did not give a high ranking to streetlights because they are usually home before dark. Similarly, a segregated footpath is most beneficial to pedestrians who must travel between different spaces. For many women, this is in the context of caregiving and household responsibilities (e.g. food shopping, taking children places), duties that women in the hostel do not have to perform.

Table 35: Infrastructure that improves feelings of safety (comparative)

One very young woman working at a fabric store in Nehru Place said that although there are street lights in her residential neighborhood, she did her produce shopping in Sangam Vihar. She goes there after work and then walks home. Sangam Vihar had no lighting, making it unsafe. Safety in this instance referred to being a pedestrian. She said people are always speeding; rash drivers go up on the footpath when it's dark because they won't get caught. But safety also had a gender perspective, men would cat call out to her at this time of night. Because she had the job at the fabric store it was her duty to do the produce shopping on her way home from work. A second woman profiled at Nehru Place added that more people are what make her feel safest. And another spoke about the change in the physical environment after dusk. Nehru Place's public amenities were not well maintained. As a result, "When there is no proper lighting or if the place is not crowded then I will feel unsafe. At Nehru Place there is much less women in the evening and the feeling of the place changes."

Table 36: Improvements to increase safety in transportation (comparative)

Several women ranked seat availability highly in relation to the bus because “men will always sit in the women’s area. You must ask them to get up.” The other women employees who were listening to this response agreed. Asking a man to get up was not only uncomfortable to do, it could lead to an unwanted confrontation. If this was to happen, it was unlikely that others would intervene. This point was reiterated in a separate interview in which a woman working in a different location said that she simply cannot feel safe in the bus with just the driver and the conductor. Another woman from SCW working at an upscale men’s clothing shop explained: "Police is most important. I prefer women police, they make me more comfortable and they are more sympathetic." In the context of the bus however, she explains that: “See, I’m a fighter. So if I see someone sitting in the women’s seat on the bus I ask them to get up.”

Women in the hostel, especially the RK Puram hostel, were more aware of public debates and conversations around women’s safety in the city than the women who

worked in retail. Yet, they had far fewer everyday experiences of how using infrastructure influenced feelings of safety. This led to either indifference or uncertainty in ranking such interventions. In contrast, women working in retail knew quite well how street lighting and continuous footpaths impacted both mobility and personal safety. The publishing of helpline information ranked far higher among working women than it did the women at the hostel as did having a map of service information. One possible factor to consider is that the hostel population most certainly has a smart phone whereas some women in retail, particularly the younger ones, might not have a mobile phone (with the exception of those working at mobile phone stores!) or one with limited web-based applications. Furthermore, given non-employment responsibilities of women working in retail, such as domestic responsibilities, this population uses transportation more frequently than the women at the hostel. Additionally, many change jobs while not changing their place of residence. Their routes are likely more complicated and can vary from day to day. Having reliable service route information increases feelings of confidence and safety when needing to navigate on the fly.

Way of dressing

Sixty-nine percent of women reported that traveling by public transportation has an impact on how they dress. Those working at clothing store at the mall were typically wearing western wear while on the job; all of these women explained that they change into these clothes once they arrive at the mall. “I don’t come by bus in the outfit I wear at work; I change into casual wear,” was one explanation. Casual wear for employees at the mall was generally jeans and a polo shirt. No woman wore a skirt or a sleeveless top

while working. Of the 21 percent who checked “no,” several provided reasons such as “No it does not, but I would never dress inappropriately” or “I should always dress appropriately.” Other said they don’t travel home in “these” clothes or “I only dress in a traditional way.”

In these comments as to why public transportation does not impact how a respondent dresses we find that no, it’s not public transportation but *the public* more broadly. There is a clearly acknowledged understanding of what is appropriate and inappropriate dress, so much so that some women change out of their western style clothing when leaving work. Only two women who worked at Nehru Place wore western dress with both wearing black office pants and a white button down—one with the name of the store embroidered in the corner. One commuted by metro, when I asked if she changed out of her work clothing before heading home she looked at me with visible disbelief. No, as she left work at p.m. she was traveling among “the professional class.” A second woman who commuted by metro offered a similar reply saying she could wear her western wear on the metro. She liked the metro not only for the time savings it offered but that it was “an elite kind of people.” I pressed her to tell me a little bit more about what she meant by that. She offered adjectives. “Working people. Professional. Elite people.” The young women who worked at the urban footwear store in Select City Walk—a store selling Vans, Converse and other foreign brand sneakers—made the comment that public transportation does not have an impact on dress but that she would never dress inappropriately. She was one of the youngest women of the survey cohort and had only recently started working at SCW. Wearing a poorly stitched anarakli¹⁷⁰ dress she looked woefully out of place against the posters of skaters doing ollies on the Brooklyn Bridge. Her co-workers, three men, all wore the shoes they were trying to sell, with low-slung skinny jeans and tee-shirts advertising a skater or surfer life. They seemed almost embarrassed by this girl who seemed to have no idea what “urban shoe” might mean. She was appropriately dressed for the world outside, but inappropriately dressed for the interior of this mall. Those who said that yes, traveling by public transportation impacted how one dressed offered the following responses: “If taking public

¹⁷⁰ A type of traditional dress

transportation one should dress appropriately” and “-[I change] because of narrow-minded people in public. It doesn’t help.” One woman said she dressed according to the situation, another said she always dresses conservatively in public. Another changed out of her work clothes before getting on the metro and into casual traditional clothing when going home as it is always after p.m. One woman simply said: “I do not want unnecessary attention from [a] cheap crowd.”

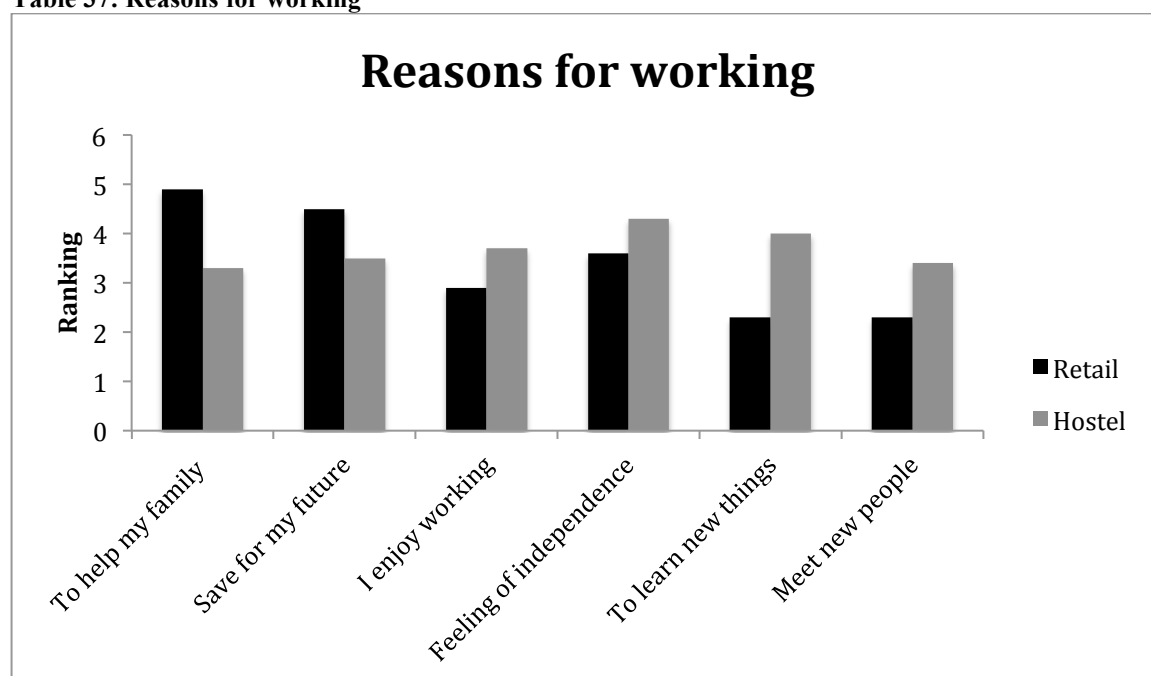
In this first comment, the response is almost exactly the same as those who said traveling by public transportation did not impact dress—both were of the opinion that one should dress appropriately. This last comment about the cheap crowd comes from a woman employed at Select City Walk and echoes Phadke’s claim that the lower middle class are particularly influenced by the consumption patterns and mindsets of the middle and upper class. The statement of the last woman implies that attention is not inherently bad, but it depends on who is giving it to you. While one respondent only expressed this statement, I believe it is an opinion held by many young urban women. Attention is not inherently bad and certainly one of the thrills of urban life is the opportunity to people watch. For men and women, a momentary gaze, a silent expression of admiration or appreciation for style, beauty can be a positive validation. But attention for most of these young women falls under the umbrella of unwanted. Normative values are such that those seeking attention will get it and it could be violent. As indicated by legal cases, by media, by politicians, if a woman in public is seeking attention then she alone is responsible for her fate (see cases mentioned in Menon 2012; Padhke et al 2011).

3.4.8 A larger sense of mobility

Comparing responses between women from the hostel and women working in retail in respect to reasons for working we find that these two groups are working for very

different reasons. This supports the original hypothesis that women working in retail are working out of economic necessity whereas women who stayed at the hostel tended to work for personal and professional advancement. Although women from the hostel tended to have higher salaries than those working in retail, it seems economic necessity was a low priority, particularly in the context of helping the family. Women working in the retail sector did not seem to enjoy working as much as the women who stayed at the hostel.

Table 37: Reasons for working



Do you see yourself working five years from now?

Ninety-five percent of respondents said yes, they saw themselves working in five years. This was only slightly higher than the responses from the hostel. Similar to the hostel population, the predominant reason for not working was anticipation of a future family. However, in this population the main reason for continuing to work was economic

necessity (which led to feelings of financial empowerment) as opposed to a continued desire for personal growth.

One woman said, “I want to [keep working] but then marriage will happen. I am 22 so when the marriage happens it will be up to the husband and the husband family.” Another woman left her response blank but had a similar reply. “It will depend on my husband. If he wants me to work then I will work.” Some women indicated that they were working to save for their future, eventually they might not work, but it would take longer than five years to reach that level. The same woman who earlier explained that she is “a fighter” in the context of the bus said she saw herself working in five years. “I want to support my family and be self-dependent. Eventually, I want a family; I want scope for the future. That is why I should work.” She was one of the few women to be straightforward in the presence of male colleagues. Most other women did not want to talk about this subject if male co-workers were around.

Several women said simply that they worked to help their families and this would continue, five years or more. One said she wanted to both support her family and be self-dependent. A young woman, originally from Rajasthan who was interviewed at a computer store in Nehru Place (the only female employee) said she saw herself working in five years because she loved working and learning new things. She explained that although she had a simple education, some English, there was a lot of opportunity in Delhi. She hoped to eventually work for an IT company and not just in sales.

Then at the other end of the spectrum was Rosie the security worker who didn’t know whether to put yes or no. “It’s not a permanent job. It is a contract job. I might not have it.” A woman from Willis Lifestyle, a popular family retail outlet, told me in a tired

voice, (it was after 7:30pm after all) “I’m a mature girl. I stand my foot. That’s why I work.” Over in Nehru Place, I heard a similar sort of straightforward, matter of fact reply from a girl who looked equally tired and equally resolute. “I need to help my [extended family]. I started a different job here in Nehru Place and decided I liked sales so I found this job. But if I don’t work this job [in the future] I will work some job because that is the way it is.”

While these statements are fairly simple, they give a glimpse into what I am referring to as conceptual mobility. That is the interface between different positional scales, the household, society, and the individual, all mutually embedded and embodied and requiring navigation. They are also statements of individual agency, agency within physical and social structures dictating where women should be and what they should be doing. While these women might have little *upward mobility*, each conversation reveals an awareness of her own agency, even if it is through acceptance of one’s position within the family and within society.

3.4.9 Interview profiles of working women

Although an average of about 10 minutes was spent talking to each woman it was easy to see, even in this short period of time, complex pluralities in respect to gender norms, bodily and embodied mobility, agency and independence, and situatedness within family and societal relations were navigated on a daily basis. Unlike the women from the hostel, the majority of these women commuted daily out of economic necessity as opposed to pursuit of personal and professional development. Despite the fatigue of commuting and employment in several of these women’s responses a sense of

determination and positive independence is conveyed. In the following paragraphs I profile three working women; two from Select City Walk and one from Nehru Place.

Conversation One:

By 7:30pm I was not certain I would find many female employees still at work at Select City Walk. I approached Wills Lifestyle, a company specializing in Western wear that “complements every facet of your personality” and found eight male employees and one female. I observed the woman putting sales tags on polo shirts; she had in her right hand a sticker gun that shot out red circles indicating an item was 30 percent off. Several times, gun in hand, she turned her head and coughed a deep dry cough into her left shoulder. As there were no other women customers I approached her and explained the project. She said she wasn’t able to take the time to fill out the survey as she had too much to do and asked if I could ask her the questions orally. I explained that some of the questions were personal to which she said she didn’t mind. I learned she lived in Netaji Subhas, an area in Dwarka, which is West Delhi. Her commute one-way was 90 minutes. She took an autorickshaw to the metro, took the Violet Line and then transferred to the Yellow Line at Rajiv Chowk for a total of 36 stations.

I expressed sympathy at such an arduous commute to which she explained: “I am recently divorced and live alone.” That she volunteered this information came as a surprise, given the stigma of divorce in India. She was the first woman I met outside an upper middle class of people to be divorced. As I was silent for a minute she again volunteered information. “I’m so happy to be out of this mess.” This happiness, and I don’t think I was imagining this, was visible on her face. For a moment she did not

appear as tired or as sick as when I first observed her. I learned that she had had this job for over a year and a half. The commute was better when she was married but once divorced, she had to find a place that she could afford on her salary and a place that was willing to rent to her (one can recall the earlier discussion on “bachelor girls”). She was 32 and originally from Delhi. I didn’t ask if she had other immediate family in the city and, if so, if she had considered living with them. Several of her responses (e.g. “I stand my foot”) suggested a strong sense of self. She was one of the few women who said she would most certainly report an incident if something occurred. Her follow up to that comment was that nothing will change if women don’t stand up for themselves. She said she always changes out of her work clothes, (a white shirt and black pants), when leaving work to take the metro back home, otherwise there might be staring or comments.

When she was married she commuted by bus. Once she had her wallet stolen. When she said she finishes work at p.m. I pointed out that it was almost p.m. and she didn’t seem close to finishing. She shrugged her shoulders but didn’t reply. I asked whether she had ever declined a job because of the difficult commute, acknowledging that her commute was already quite difficult. She replied that she would like to change jobs, “but where to go?”

She didn’t elaborate on her education, only that in India, marriage is never just the marriage itself. There is pressure before marriage, a stressful time in young adult life when the pressure from parents to get married builds up and is followed by the seeking of suitable marriage partners. In her case this was followed by actually being married to someone who, according to her “was incorrect.” She emphasized that she will eventually have the strength to figure out “where to go” but she had to first “get back on her feet”.

Holding on to this job was her one source of independence and having her own income was necessary.

Conversation two:

The second woman profiled also worked at Select City Walk, a young woman from Spunkz, the urban shoe store. When I asked permission to interview and survey her, the initial response was no, her manager would most probably not allow it. I was to first ask permission from him. She pointed to the cash counter where three young men in tee-shirts and baggy jeans stood, glued to a smart phone playing a music video loudly. When I inquired about the possibility of interviewing the young woman, the man in the middle appeared to think it over, while keeping his eyes on the phone. He called the woman over, spoke to her for a minute, and then waved her over to me. She returned, asking if I'd like to sit on the soft bean-bag cushion. I asked her to sit too to which she replied, "No, I'm not allowed to sit."

Shortly into the interview the woman volunteered that she was new, barely a week on the job. She took it because it was in walking distance from her home in South Delhi where she was born and raised; she wouldn't take a job unless it was in walking distance. "I don't like to travel, I don't go out unless I have to." She had to report to work at 10:30 am and was able to leave by 8:00pm. Her fiancé picked her up and walked her home as it was late and dangerous to be out unaccompanied. I learned that her father permitted this, both the job and the fiancé picking her up (and presumably the fiancé). What remained unclear is whether the woman had wanted a job and the father had allowed her to take the position or whether there was family pressure for her to work for economic reasons.

Although it was a short walk to work, she was frequently stared at and occasionally someone would say something verbally. But this did not happen if she was with her fiancé. When the topic of women's safety came up she avoided speaking about her experiences in detail. This was also true in respect to improvements for women's safety in which she simply said, "these things are just there, it is a part of it." While she didn't elaborate into specifics, the impression was that she meant life, daily life and not much could be done to change it. She had positive things to say about the metro, that it was less time consuming and had A/C but she hardly ever used it as she didn't like to travel, didn't need to, and it was often quite crowded. Her ideal mode was walking and she gave the impression that she genuinely liked walking; she just wished the crowd, by which she meant public, was better. Given the lack of detail she shared in respect to improvement to the urban environment it came as a surprise when she volunteered that she had done a short degree in home science and wanted to either become a teacher or a dietician but needed more schooling. She did not volunteer the information as to why she wasn't pursuing this schooling but it is imagined that it was because she was going to be married. This was her first job and added an important detail, "This salary, my salary, is for me only." In other words, the income she was earning at Spunk was not going to her family but to herself and her future.

Conversation Three:

Women security guards represented a population I was interested in surveying both in Bangalore and in Delhi. The interest was to explore the contradictions within this line of work, the reality that women whose job was based on providing safety and security to

women rarely benefited from these security provisions and arrangements. Joyce, the security guard at the bra shop, was the only woman security guard profiled and included in the commuter survey. Although she worked at the mall, her “position” by which I mean caste and class, seemed less similar to the other women working as retail assistants. This hypothesis was reinforced through observations on how the young women working as sales assistants at the same store (who were also interviewed and surveyed) treated her. She was originally from Bihar but had moved, seven years ago, with her husband to Delhi, for improved economic opportunities. She had worked as a security guard for only two months. Previously, she worked at a factory near her home. She transitioned into security work because there were different shift times available. She had two children at home and needed the morning for domestic duties. She was fine starting at p.m. and working into the night, usually getting off at 10pm. As an employee of 24 Hour Security she was employed not by the mall but by a private contract company that provides security guards to malls. She didn’t stay at one store but moved to various locations throughout the mall that required women security guards. Her husband picked her up at the end of her shift by two-wheeler. She came by bus, but to go home by bus at that hour would be a risk of harassment and possibly more. Joyce explained that she liked this position better than the factory work because of the climate controlled environment and easy nature of the work. However, the pay was slightly better as a factory worker and she didn’t have to worry about being shifted to another location unexpectedly. Her husband’s two-wheeler and ability to pick her up was what made this job and particular shift possible to do. There had been a handful of times when he wasn’t able to come and she

had to take an autorickshaw home. But traveling home by auto made her take home pay much less.

Conversation Four:

It was observed that the woman at Leveno Computer store in Nehru Place seemed at ease in the store. Unlike her male colleagues, absorbed in a cricket match playing on one of the store's several big screen TVs, the woman sat at her desk, entered information into a computer and went through inventory sitting in a large cardboard box. When I approached, she smiled with surprise and commented that not many women or foreigners came into the store. Like most other retail workers she wore black pants and a white shirt. When asked about participating in the research she said she was happy to help, that commuting is "a real pain," and "you have to be tough in this city." She shared several details about her commute orally as she went through and filled out the written survey. She arrived at the Leveno computer store between 10 and 11:00am and finished up at 8:30pm. She traveled by bus, taking the 427, a popular route and therefore always crowded. It is good that it is crowded, especially at night, she explained, but she never got a seat. It took her 45 minutes, not including the time waiting for the bus, which wasn't too long due to the popularity of the route. She said the bus is the cheapest and she doesn't need to change buses so it was okay, except she wished she didn't have to always stand. She had the option to take metro and used the word elite, "Metro is much better for safety it is a more elite kind of people because it is more costly. This means bad people can't easily use it. However, I've observed that the metro cameras don't actually work." This is probably why she ranked CCTV as a one (not at all useful) when asked about

improvements toward women's safety. When asked about reporting an incident she replied "why bother?" and, as the interview progressed, there was an impression that while she seemed to have faith or confidence in herself, that didn't seem to extend into her opinion toward society.

She was slightly older than the average respondent, in her late 20s. Originally from Jharkhand, she had lived in Delhi for "a very long time." She explained that both her parents died and that is when she came to Delhi because, "I have nothing at home." When she first left Jharkhand she moved to Ghaziabad with a friend but she couldn't find any employment around there, and so she started looking for work in Delhi. Her commute at that time required two metro lines and an auto. She was commuting five hours every day. It was too much. So she moved in with her aunt's family to New Friends Colony, but felt that they treat her very poorly. She worked in order to "get ahead" but now living with her aunt's family meant she had to financially contribute to their family. As her pay was not particularly high, the financial contribution she was expected to give to her extended family made it difficult to save for herself. But, she explained, she liked working in a tech store and hoped to eventually move to a more upscale tech shop, maybe in a mall.

3.5.1 Conclusion: Mobility as embodied positionalities

What does this small population of women tell us about gender and mobility in the city?

How does a comparative approach reveal complex differences?

Although this research relied on a series of comparative case studies that cannot be generalized or replicated to a larger population of women commuters, it offers several openings for thinking about the complex positionalities young women in the city embody

through daily negotiations and navigations of urban space. A comparative approach strengthens the understanding of how gender norms operate uniformly in respect to attitudes toward appropriate dress and hesitancy toward reporting issues for fear of negative judgment. At the same time these findings allude to the unique individualities of these young women, who demonstrate acceptance of existing conditions in some instances, independence and agency in others. Interviews with DMRC officials and the hostel overseer in RK Puram suggests that age is a strong factor in normative thinking around issues of women's appropriateness and respectability in the city. With the exception of a handful of respondents, there seems to be an overarching viewpoint that whether or not it is correct, responsibility for a woman's safety is up to the woman herself.

What are the mode choices of woman surveyed and why are they choosing these modes?

Unlike the findings from Chapter Two in which gender norms figured consciously and unconsciously into the mode choices made by women in the IT sector, concern for gender-based safety was not the primary factor that determined the decision to use one mode over the other. While this might be surprising given Delhi's reputation as an unsafe city, a closer inspection suggests that it is not necessarily the mode women use but rather what time of day they use it that matters most. Furthermore, it can be argued that unlike women in the IT sector, the women in retail have less modal choice. Beyond the obvious absence of company provided transportation, these women come from lower economic and educational backgrounds. This might not be true of women coming from the Saket hostel, and within this population we see preferences and attitudes that are closer to

women in the IT sector as well as higher rates of vehicle ownership within their family's home. Furthermore, if we recall that several of the “fresher's” in the Bangalore context chose to commute by public bus rather than company bus for financial reasons, then again we see similarities between these women and those from Saket, particularly in respect to age and career stage. Though in the case of Saket, many of these women preferred to commute by metro.

In a mega city like Delhi, men and women alike are looking for efficient forms of transportation that are ideally comfortable and affordable. Cost was the primary reason the majority of women surveyed were choosing the mode that they did. Furthermore, both populations of women considered comfort and time effectiveness of their mode very important. In the case of the hostel population, the origin was known to be in close proximity to both bus and metro and the same held true for the destinations of women working in the retail sector—that is Select City Walk and Nehru Place. However women working in retail commuted primarily by bus whereas women who lived in the hostels tended to commute by metro, with the latter having shorter average commute times. As women in retail had, on average, lower monthly incomes than women from the hostel, this is one possible explanation for why bus was used more by this population.

There was a clear preference for commuting by metro over the bus; even if the metro wasn't available for daily commuting it was expressed as having several advantages, including time savings and climate control. Both modes were inevitably crowded. The various forms of security offered in the metro generally, and to women specifically, did not capture the praise it was intended to, with the exception of general comments such as “Had it not been for the metro, I would have felt it.” While women

surveyed did rank the presence of women-only spaces as being a positive factor in contributing to feelings of safety while traveling, how and why was not elaborated upon in individual interviews. Many women lamented the growing crowdedness of the Delhi metro and in general seemed to view their daily commute as an unfortunate necessity as opposed to a particular avenue for individual independence in the form of physical mobility.

Does an inquiry into mode choice reflect dominant gender norms? If so, how?

Chapter Two's inquiry into mode choices revealed several ways in which dominant gender norms, roles, and positions manifest in the context of commuting. In this chapter it was found that concern for cost was the predominant factor in modal decision making. Gender norms, particularly the idea of where women should be certain times of days (e.g. not out in public at p.m.) affected the decision to commute at all. Attitudes and opinions about appropriate dress and time of day one should travel illustrate pervasive ways in which patriarchy pervades the public sphere. This claim is supported by the fact that these attitudes exist in the context of public transportation—namely bus and metro—but do not hold true for those who commute by car.

Levels of tolerance toward harassment and willingness to report incidents

Both populations of working women experienced varying degrees of gender-based harassment while commuting and both populations seemed desensitized to it in the context of stalling. While the survey population was too small to draw generalizable conclusions from, it is hypothesized that even though women from the hostels had lived

in Delhi for a shorter period of time than those working in retail, they had become immune to this behavior as teenagers commuting to college—the age at which women most frequently experience this form of harassment (see Mitra-Sarkar 2009).

Roughly half of women from both populations said they would report an incident of gender based harassment or crime. Those who said they would not report it justified their response with comments such as the police would either laugh or not help, that it is better to solve such issues on one's own. These answers reaffirm claims made by Phadke et al (2011) that women are expected to manufacture their own respectability or conversations with DMRC officials who gave the impression that a woman is responsible for her own safety. Revisiting the conversation with young women at the RK Puram hostel, it is thought by many of these young women that the inherent scrutiny that follows a woman if she reports an incident is seen as outweighing the benefit of reporting.

How does one's background, that is age/life stage, place of origin, education, etc. play into attitudes and perceptions toward safety and confidence while traveling in the city?

Certainly there is evidence that women from the hostel have a wider spectrum of socio-economic (upward) mobility. They are working for personal and professional advancement whereas the women working in retail do so out of economic necessity. Although women from the hostel expressed a greater degree of pleasure in working than those working in retail, a slightly higher percent said they would stop working in five years because at that time they saw themselves raising families. This is contrast to several women working in retail who were already married, with children and working. Women working in retail who were not already married also said they might not be working five

years from now but framed it as a decision that would be made by their future husband or in-laws. While it is possible that the decision whether or not to work in the case of the women staying in the hostel would be determined by one's husband or extended family, it was framed in such a way as to indicate that it was decision that the woman also took part in. This brings us back to the question of allowing: who is allowed to work and who does that allowing? Is it the individual woman or the family? Who must work and who has a choice? Who or what dictates that choice?

Women from the hostels were better able to articulate a sense of personal confidence, independence, and aspiration in a broad sense, but particularly in respect to their employment and educational aspirations. While women in retail were less articulate in a respect to qualities of confidence,, it was clear that these women also had confidence and independence, and certainly had more experience navigating the city in the context of making modal decisions and using transportation. Secondly, it should be emphasized that for married women with children, of which there were several in Nehru Place, a term such as independence could have a negative connotation, as it would suggest the family was not the first priority. It was observed that women in the retail sector had far more experience traveling in the city, perhaps because they were in the city not for one specific purpose. In any case, their experience in traveling seemed to contribute to their confidence and independence in public. Furthermore, women working in retail seemed to respond more sincerely to questions regarding infrastructure interventions that might increase levels of safety, suggesting more experience with the realities of traveling in the city.

As the working women's hostel is not a traditional domestic sphere, it is essential to reinforce normative values about women's centrality to the private sphere. Although these women are free from reproductive responsibilities¹⁷¹ that would require being home by a certain time in the evening, they are still required to obey an evening curfew. In some ways, the hostel operates in a way that is similar to the ladies compartment of the Delhi metro or even the night taxis for women IT employees. All offer space and scope for a certain level of freedom, but it is through an operative device of shelter and protection. The different positionalities of these two populations of women in respect to economic mobility verse immobility along the lines of gender norms is perhaps reiterated through the comment made by a young woman from Select City Walk who said although she came to the city on her own, she would not stay in a hostel as it was too restrictive and costly.

¹⁷¹ "Thus hostels may be conceptualized as exploiting the social permission women have to separate themselves from their families to accumulate income before returning them to the family upon their marriage,"(Pothukuchi (2003).

Chapter Four

Locating Agency in the Work of Women Bus Conductors

4.1.1 Traveling by bus in Bengaluru¹⁷²

This final research section considers the literal and conceptual mobility of women bus conductors in Bengaluru for whom transportation is not just a commute from one place to another but is the means and site of employment. This last discussion serves as a departure from earlier sections regarding modes and choices and focuses on lived experiences of multidimensional mobility in the context of gender, employment, and the passengering “public.” I begin with a descriptive overview of traveling by bus in Bengaluru as an entry point into the physical and mental challenges of being a bus conductor. This is followed by a review of central concepts informing this work, the research methodology, and findings. The main argument put forth is that as women traveling with the public for eight or more hours a day, women bus conductors have a confidence and command of both the public and public space that is not available to women of similar class and caste backgrounds. Relying primarily on personal narratives, I outline the development of this confidence by taking the reader through a series of “micropolitical” relational encounters.

The Bangalore Metropolitan Transport Corporation (BMTC) carries an estimated five million passengers a day across a 40 kilometer radius traveling at speeds of less than 10 kilometers an hour due to unbearable traffic, constant road construction, poor law

¹⁷² At the time executing this research the city had officially changed its name to Bengaluru though BMTC is still referred to as Bangalore Metropolitan Transportation Corporation. Both names are used in everyday language and will be used interchangeably.

enforcement, and 15,935 registered potholes.¹⁷³ Operating in a city that has grown, in an unanticipated, ad hoc manner has led to the operation of approximately 2,500 different routes, resulting in a less than adequate frequency of service and confusion among even the most seasoned passengers. Popular routes often see the bus filled beyond capacity. While passengers fend for a centimeter of extra space, a Bangalore bus conductor must endure these crowds for close to nine hours a day, six days a week, developing a Harry Houdini-like dexterity, extraterrestrial sense of gravity, and unfaltering ability to avoid succumbing to the jolts and spurts of an overworked bus subjected to relentless traffic and inadequate infrastructure.



Figure 18: A bus conductor at evening rush hour

¹⁷³ The Hindu: <http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/15935-potholes-on-city-roads/article19793663.ece> [accessed 7.10.2017].

Coupled with these immediate physical challenges, BMTC prices its tickets in increments of 5, 12, 23, and 27 rupees. Ticketing is done manually, so being a bus conductor requires a good deal of mental proficiency in order to provide passengers with a ticket that corresponds with the “stage” at which they embark and disembark¹⁷⁴. Following this is the need to provide correct change—a daunting feat and constant source of anxiety and frustration for conductors and passengers alike. But somehow the conductor, who in addition to distributing tickets, collecting fares, announcing upcoming stops, and maintaining a general order and flow within the inevitably overflowing interior of the bus, manages to give correct change to all passengers before they exit.

4.1.2 Research questions and supporting literature

Given the chaos of the city, the overcrowding of the bus, and close proximity to strangers, particularly the requirement for physical interaction through the exchange of money and tickets, it is surprising to find a number of women bus conductors in Bengaluru, particularly if we consider that both literature on women and transportation (e.g. Riverson and Kunieda 2005; Smith 2008; Mitra-Sarkar 2009) and findings from the previous chapter point to bus travel as a mode in which gender based harassment is commonly reported. This research considers questions of how, where, and why a woman conductor embodies her gender as she goes about her daily work. The original interest was to locate these questions within the physical bus, that is to try and identify the

¹⁷⁴ Under current management, BMTC comptroller routinely ride as passengers to ensure conductors are adhering to the pay structure; if a passenger is caught traveling on a ticket that doesn’t correspond with their “stage” then it is the bus conductor who is fined. BMTC conductors have gone on strike in the past over this policy, using the argument that given the crowd within the bus it is often difficult to keep track of who embarks and disembarks where.

fluidity in which a conductor embodies her gender, the moments at which gender comes to the foreground and places when it recedes into the background as a conductor moves from the women dominated front of the bus to the male dominated back of the bus; how this movement of gender, like the shakes and jolts of the physical bus, occur unexpectedly. How gender responds to time of day, overcrowding, the attitudes and exchanges with the passengering “public.”

Like previous sections, this inquiry is rooted in the ongoing theme of how gender is navigated while using transportation. Though in the case of the woman bus conductor, there is no modal choice nor is transportation a means to go from an origin to a destination. Nor is transportation the physical connection to one’s workplace or employment; it is the workplace, the livelihood. Unlike the previous empirical research sections of the dissertation, this project developed organically, emerging from empirical observations that were part of daily bus commutes. As a result, further research questions developed over time and will be introduced as the chapter progresses. However, for the sake of executing a systematic methodology, the central aim was to locate gender in the context of the micropolitics of mobility.

Literature

In this section I bring in three interrelated discourses on micropolitics of mobility, passengering, and the public into my understanding of mobility as an act of travel that is connected to and reproduced by a complex network of literal and conceptual socialized movements that become embedded within the individual and reflected through various scalar relationships.

Micropolitics of mobility

Research on the micropolitics of mobility emerges primarily from Cresswell's understanding of mobilities as "an entanglement of movement, representation, and practice," (Cresswell 2010: 17) that illustrates how politics and power relations are inherent to mobilities itself. For Bissell (2016), to focus on micropolitics is to find threads that connect us to the macropolitics within the urban, such as institutions and infrastructures and how macropolitics produce and are produced by these micropolitics so that micropolitics of mobility is understood as an "ongoing process of transformation that take place through events and encounters on the move," concluding that "mobility systems are actively changing people, rather than just passively transporting them," (Bissell 2016: 395). This is illustrated in Bissell's research of being a passenger on the local train from Sydney to Wollongong, Australia where he focuses on "events" that take place during the commute; specifically an evening commute in which a group of teenage boys pass provocative comments onto other passengers. This encounter produces the thread that leads to an examination of power, class, and gender relations that are negotiated and navigated while using the train.

Both Cresswell and Bissell's ability to locate the politics inherent to mobility is predicated on giving importance to the everyday, the quotidian. The idea of studying everyday encounters is nothing new, with strong roots in sociology, anthropology, and cultural studies. Lefebvre's *Critique of Everyday Life*, Roland Barthes *Mythologies*, and Raymond Williams *Culture and Society* meticulous observation on daily habits have all contributed to what we today take as cultural studies. More recently, Kerkvliet (2009)

identifies this conflict in the context of everyday politics. Looking at Philippine rice farmers engaged in substance farming after Marco's regime, Kerkykiet argues that one cannot look for politics in organized and articulate forms, but in the micropolitics of everyday, unorganized exchange, wherein politics intertwines with daily responsibilities and decisions at the household and community level.

While feminist literature seems to use neither the term micropolitics nor mobility it is clear that the everyday is essential to feminist epistemologies. Smith (1979) argues that if feminists are to move beyond dominant ideologies about women and their place and roles in society, then research must start with the everyday in order to uncover the informal and unspoken structures and institutions that form such ideologies. Phadke encourages feminists to move away from the Indian media's obsession with major attacks on women in public as the basis for understanding the lived experience of gender and rather focus on the everyday and "how spatial negotiations transpire and the way in which this interaction is an ongoing process as opposed to a singular event," (Phadke 2012: 60). The work of Eidse et al. (2016) takes a similar understanding of gendered experience to look at women street vendors in Hanoi and the way in which mobility becomes the starting point for politics and power dynamics that arise from who is or is not able to move, sell, and consume.

Taken together, the literature equally situates micropolitics in the seeming mundanity of daily life as well as the movements (mobility) of daily life. These of course, are not opposing viewpoints. We simultaneously move through the day just as these encounters and events move through us. On a crowded bus, we move through and with other passengers, even if we believe we have tuned them out with headphones or averted

gazes. In the context of public transportation, it is clear that there cannot be public transportation without a public.

What is the public?

Michael Warner's *Publics and Counterpublics* (2002) distinguish between *the* public, a kind of social totality, and *a* public, that is a public bound by a specific geographic space and/or time. For this research I'm referring both to *the* public—as a way of speaking to research and realities of women's experiences of public space, which is as much an idea (what is public space and who should occupy it) as it is a reality. However, I'm also referring to *a* public that in this instance is a literal mass of bodies who are organized around the common action of using the bus, of traveling by bus. In this sense, my public does not include those who drive or are driven and so my public excludes a certain urban class who, in any case, operates through modes of exclusion.

In his article assessing urban transportation's centrality to the right to the city debates, Attoh uses the example of the instillation of the wheelchair lift in the bus as a concrete illustration of the "difference between being part of the public or being excluded from it," (Attoh 2017: 11). In this instance the public is assumed to be those who travel by bus, which also invites several speculations on micropolitical relations. For example, that the bus passengering public is or could already be excluded from the political public—which in the Indian case, is a car driving public—but that additionally, this public, which in Bangalore, frequently uses the term "the common man" to refer to the passengering public, is, in fact, also exclusionary by way of physical capability to board and alight a bus. The fact that public, as defined as a collection of passengers, is self organized, in this

case organized around the utility of using the bus, lends itself nicely to Kerkvikiel's understanding of micro politics as being unorganized and interspersed within the quotidian.

Passenger

Related to both the public and mobility, Rink (2016) employs the technique of autoethnography to explore intersections of race, class, and identity through passenger interactions while traveling by public bus in Cape Town, South Africa. Adding to existing discourse on both mobility research and methods, Rink argues that contemporary research on public transportation is preoccupied with questions of quality and efficiency as opposed to “bus passengering as an embodied experience of the city and its citizens,” (2016: 64). Through an examination of passengering, attention to the performative nature of everyday movement through the actions of boarding, alighting, and interacting with other passengers. Rink defines the passenger as a “mobile subject” (2016: 65), who by nature of sharing close physical proximity to others, enters into acknowledges and unacknowledged relationships to other mobile subjects. Together, this “fluid assemblage” of passengers gives way to what Symes (2007) defines as a microcommunity, or what I would call a travel or mobile public. That is a public bound by the physicality of a particular transportation, but a public that is in motion and constantly changing (i.e. embarking and disembarking).

While the woman bus conductor does not command much power in the context of the larger transportation agenda and decision making of the BMTC, her presence as the literal conductor, much like a conductor of an orchestra, puts her in charge of a mini

public, a moving, fluid public. However, by default of her socio-economic status, a woman bus conductor relies on the bus for her mobility needs. Thus, when not performing her duties as a conductor, she is also part of the passengering public.



Figure 19: A woman conductor sitting during mid-day

Public Space

Dunckel-Graglia's work (2013) on pink transportation in Mexico City makes the point that public transportation¹⁷⁵ is "the gateway to urban public life" (89) and in so far as urban public space is historically perceived of as masculine, masculine behavior is normalized into public transportation. While we can debate if public transportation

¹⁷⁵ While I agree with Dunckel-Graglia, one counterpoint to this is evidence of a feminization of the bus, that women make up the majority of bus passengers in several contexts.

remains the gateway to urban public life, especially in Bangalore, which sees one million more cars added to the city roads year after year,¹⁷⁶ cities where public transportation is overcrowded necessitates assertive behavior if one is to have any kind of comfort while on board.

Assertion or aggression are not, or should not be qualities of a “respectable woman” and again, for Phadke, respectability in India is “fundamentally defined by the division between public and private spaces,” (2011: 24). Given that public spaces are not inherently respectable for women, a woman must “manufacture respectability.” This means dressing appropriately and treating public space as a passage between origins and destinations rather than a destination itself. As learned in previous chapters, not doing anything in public, while normal for men, is inappropriate for women. A woman who is in public for too long, or, even worse, doing nothing, is a woman who invites trouble. She is referred to as a fallen woman, a streetwalker, or a *public woman*. In her interviews with women passengers, Dunkel-Graglia finds that for women in Mexico City, fear is as much about being in empty or dangerous spaces as it is about being labeled “a woman in public” for being outside of what cultural norms deemed an appropriate place for women (i.e. the home).

A woman bus conductor is not only in public she is with the public. While she is clearly doing *something*, that job is thought to be masculine and therefore has the potential to be taken as inappropriate by the passengering public. Given the nature of her

¹⁷⁶ Two further comments related to Dunkel-Gradlia’s claim: first, in the context of Bangalore it is the car owning class that lays claim to urban citizenship—and if we conceive of “public” in the context of urban public life as those who shape and participate in policies and politics, then the argument should be that private transportation is the gateway to urban public life. Secondly of course is evidence that bus users tend to be women (Hamilton and Jenkins 2000) a point again relevant to Bangalore where the cost of two-wheelers has decreased substantially (and works out to be cheaper than BMTC on a per kilometer basis) and become the preferred mode.

profession, a woman bus conductor does not have the time or physical space to manufacture respectability in a way that other women of her background would. Understanding norms around public space in the Indian context introduces us to several questions related to how women bus conductors navigate these norms while doing their job. Stated differently, how do women simultaneously navigate both occupational and social expectations regarding how they should “perform” these various identities and roles? Public space even if it is a physical entity, is still socially constructed. What is considered public space in one part of the world or one community cannot be taken as universal.

4.1.3 Research methodology

Micropolitics of mobility as a methodology

As the primary interest of this project was to locate the micropolitics that emerge from the quotidian responsibilities and duties of being a conductor, a variety of methods were utilized, all of which were ethnographic in nature, evolving through four different techniques: participant observation of bus conductors inside and outside the bus, unstructured interviews with conductors and other BMTC personnel, three focus group discussions, role playing theater, and secondary media sources.

Bissell and Rink’s (both 2016) readings on micropolitics of mobility serve as illustrations through which micropolitics form the basis for inquiry as well as research methodology and it is from these that I developed my own strategy for empirical research. Similar to Bissell, everyday ethnographic observation within the interior of public transit was an opportunity to locate power plays and exchanges between passengers, and, in my case, passengers and conductors. Similar to Rink, understanding

my position as visibly different and as a non-Kannada speaker meant the general public would view me as an unlikely candidate for “ordinary” bus passenger. This required an awareness of how this might impact my research; how people, including conductors would respond to me. Unlike Rink however, autoethnography was not the final goal. The most obvious challenge was establishing the trust of the woman conductor, and throughout the process of riding the bus, to draw attention neither to myself, nor her work.

The previous research conducted with women retail workers in Delhi sensitized me to the fact that conductors might avoid sharing information with me for fear that I might share this information with their employer which could lead to their dismissal. To help avoid this the first stage of research was to contact the labour officer and head of BMTC for the purpose of permissions. Although this project was deliberately not focusing on the experience of being a woman conductor through the lens of the transport agency itself, receiving permission from BMTC would help conductors feel more secure sharing information with me. The BMTC labour office generously agreed to reach out to a handful of conductors and organize the first focus group.

From this focus group of five participants, a snowball sample technique was employed by asking the women who participated in the focus group to share my contact information with other women conductors who would like to participate in the project.¹⁷⁷ A secondary mode of sampling, conveyance sampling was employed by going to the various bus depots (of which there are 43 in the city) either at the start of the first shift (typically 6:30am) or the end of the first shift (typically 2:30pm) and intercepting women

¹⁷⁷ In communicating with women conductors this project was framed as a “life history” project in which the goal was to understand what it was like to be a woman bus conductor.

bus conductors directly. In both cases, I introduced myself and the project to women conductors at these locations and asked permission to ride their bus route for several hours and observe daily interactions between passengers and passengers and conductors. Some women were not comfortable with this proposition and others were.

From this, participant observation began by riding the bus for the duration of a conductor's shift, spending time at the bus depots before and after a conductor's shift had ended. Coinciding with participation observation was a series of approximately 10 individual unstructured interviews with conductors. As many conductors do not have a good command of English these interviews were done in the presence of conductors or other employees who did understand English and as a result, usually occurred before or after a shift had ended.

Some conductors were more interested in the project than others and these conductors warmed up to my presence on the bus, sitting with me when the bus was less crowded to point out tasks they were required to do at certain stages of the shift, an exchange that did not require in depth language understanding. Some would introduce me to passengers who traveled the route regularly, especially older passengers and those who spoke English well.

As the research progressed and I became better acquainted with a handful of conductors, time was spent accompanying them in their daily activities, for example traveling from the bus depot once a shift had ended to their child's school to pick them up and then back home where homework was done and meals were cooked. As my presence became more familiar with the conductors, especially while at the end of the shift. I was also introduced to male conductors, depot managers and bus drivers.

A total of three focus group discussions took place over the course of two months. The first was held in the BMTC head office, the second in Bangalore's largest public park and third in the home of one conductor. Two of these focus groups entailed the use of role-playing and acting out scenes on the bus. Five women participated in the first discussion, four in the second, and eight men and women participated in the third.

Oral history

The main goal was to move beyond the institutional challenges and focus on the momentary and at times fleeting moments of feeling one's gender. Bhopal observation that "If we want to know how women feel about their lives, then we have to allow them to talk about their feelings as well as their activities," 2001: 282) pointed me toward focusing on activities outside of general shift work—looking at one conductor's doll collection, sari shopping, meeting the children of conductors, listening to old Hindi songs. Smith's work on social justice within communities in New Orleans illustrates how the use of oral history, that is an emphasis on speaking and fluid conversation directed at a particular point in time of a participants life, is often more effective than material documentation for uncovering complex intersections between race, class, and gender in the formation of social power (Smith 2000). This helped structure my informal group discussions toward points in time in a conductor's life, primarily the point at which she became a conductor and how her experience of the job has changed since that time. In my case, beyond the challenge of acknowledging my position as a possible barrier to open and honest communication there was the secondary challenge of literal language, the language barrier of Kannada and English which meant that outside of the structured focus

group conversation and interviews, communicating feelings was done through activities and nonverbal communication, requiring a heightened awareness of the total environment.

Role Playing theater as focus group discussion

Inspired by Theatre of the Oppressed techniques of Brazilian activist Augusto Boal and Paulo Freire, I developed several role playing exercises focused on daily situations a conductor might face in which a difficult situation (potential for oppression) must be overcome. Two sessions were held in which role-playing (with conductors participating as both actors and spectators) was utilized as an opportunity to enact and then discuss the micro politics of being a woman conductor. The first session was held in a public park with women conductors only. The second session was held in the home of one woman conductor and in this second session male bus drivers participated as well. As Bhopal writes, “Interviews with women should explore emotional and subjective experiences as well as facts and experiences women have been through. The language women use to explore their emotions and experience will be richer when they are given the opportunity to explain and clarify what they mean,” (Bhopal 2001: 282). By bringing male drivers into the second session of enacting scenarios, both men and women were allowed to talk through what they were acting, why they were enacting it in this way, and the possible interpretations. The work of Neera Adarkar (2007), an architect who utilized participatory movement with women slum dwellers in Mumbai to think through the redesigning of tenements in non-hierarchical ways also helped shape some of the early role playing exercises, particularly in respect to the enactment of the conductor’s body

inside the crowded bus. Taking queue from Bhopal, Adarkar, and Boals, additional participants were recruited to assist in these enactments. In two instances it was young women who spoke Kannada and traveled exclusively by bus. In the second instance in which male bus drivers were participating, young men, also Kannada speakers and bus users were invited so as to ensure a certain level of comfort among the genders.

Formally, this project lasted two months, from July to August of 2016 and received generous funding from the Goethe Institut, Bangalore. There are an estimated 700 conductors in the service of BMTC and so my sample is by no means a representation of the general population of women BMTC conductors. However, as many of the women who were part of this research are some of the oldest serving women conductors, their historical insight into several aspects of micro politics of being a woman conductor, particularly the view of the general public of the presence of women conductors is a valuable contribution to understanding when, where and how women conductors embody their gender (and when they break out of gender norms).

Section Two: Women bus conductors

4.2.1 BMTC hiring's

Representing Women in Government and Government Sectors

In 1992 Parliament passed the 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments, which gave local bodies the power to establish elections and subsequent governing bodies; and municipal bodies within urban areas. One aspect of this mandate was a 33 percent reservation of women at each of these levels. While not directly part of the Amendment, several state and central government agencies began instituting their own reservation

system.¹⁷⁸ The state of Karnataka adopted this mandate in several of their organizations, including the KSRTC, Karnataka's State Road Transportation (known as STUs or State Transport Undertakings).

Still a relatively small city, Bangalore at this time did not have its own city bus organization, but rather an elaborate network of KSRTC services operating within the city under the title BTC (Bangalore Transportation Corporation). In 1992, KSRTC put out the first active call for women bus conductors, four applied and all four received positions within BTC. These women were not the first women to work as conductors. About 20 women had, over the course of 50 years, worked for KSRTC [interview July 2016] but the 1992 call signaled a change in the organization with the creation of several organizational policies—particularly maternity leave—as a clear response to the affirmative action policies.

With the significant population growth and spatial expansion of the city in the 1990s, KSRTC bifurcated and in 1997 the Bangalore Metropolitan Transportation Corporation (BMTC) came into existence. Again an active call for women conductors was put out. After this split, BMTC rapidly grew and is currently one of the largest fleets in the country,¹⁷⁹ with a significant expansion occurring between 2004 and 2008 when the fleet and number of users increased by roughly 40 percent (Rahul and Verma 2014). This almost two-fold expansion coincides with the growth and influence of the IT sector (as discussed in Chapter Two). Although BMTC and KSRTC are separate entities, they

¹⁷⁸ The presence of women working in the state banks has been common even prior to the Amendments; Radhakrishnan (2011) argues that women in state banking has been common since the 1970s as it was considered secure and respectable, with hours that allowed a woman to manage both family and employment.

¹⁷⁹ BMTC's fleet is larger than Mumbai despite Mumbai having almost twice the population and physical size of Bengaluru. Worth keeping in mind however is Mumbai also has an extensive suburban rail network. We can also make the comparison between Bengaluru and Chennai, with Chennai also having a smaller fleet.

work in tandem for coordinated transportation within Bangalore. Large stations and depots (i.e. where the buses are parked and serviced) are strategically located in order to service the KSRTC network so that state buses enter and depart from the intercity bus stations. For example, produce and flower sellers from surrounding rural areas will hail a KSRTC bus in the early hours of the morning and reach one of the city's major bus stations by 5 or 6am.¹⁸⁰ Vendors then take a BMTC bus to the major produce markets in the city. As it is early in the morning it is not an inconvenience to other passengers to be carrying large baskets and sacks.

From an employee perspective, employee benefits are similar, though pay scales are different and generally reflect the different costs of living. Both drivers and conductors are allowed requested transfers between KSRTC and BMTC, that is a BMTC conductor can request a transfer to KSRTC, a point further discussed in the section on BMTC hiring's. Staff living quarters for both KSRTC and BMTC employees are provided for in South Bengaluru, near to the Shantinagar bus depot and station that services both state and city transport.

While both KSRTC and BMTC are government corporations, BMTC is partially privatized in the sense that the fleet is hired out to private companies. Revenue comes almost entirely from fares, advertisements (displayed on and in buses), and the leasing of property for commercial enterprise inside and adjacent to the bus terminals. BMTC is one of the few bus corporations in India that has annually maintained a profit (CSTEP 2015; Korattyswaropam 2010). This fact has earned BMTC considerable respect among

¹⁸⁰ The city railway station operates in this locality, bringing people into the city from the outskirts or out of state.

government and politicians throughout India, though not necessarily from the public; Bangalore's bus fares are the highest in the country.

BMTC employees 34250 people (with a staff to bus ratio of 5.6), operates 6,312 buses and carries an estimated five million passengers a day around a 40 kilometer radius. Similar to most city bus corporations in India, BMTC has neither planning nor modeling divisions (Verma and Dixit 2015a), which is perhaps a factor attributing to the Corporation's inability to keep pace with and anticipate demand¹⁸¹, a factor that has a direct impact on the daily work of conductors.

As a quasi public agency, BMTC is designed to be self-sufficient (e.g. profit coming from fares) and the state (Karnataka) does not necessarily or is not under obligation to allocate state budget funds to BMTC (for example for procurement or maintenance of buses, depots etc.)—this has been a source of great debate among citizens and BMTC in recent years that argue that the state needs to invest more in the public transportation of the country's fastest growing city. Furthermore, BMTC pays the highest taxes, and is taxed at a rate that is higher than that of personal vehicles. Examples of taxes paid by BMTC include Motor Vehicle Tax for every new bus, or VAT (CSTEP 2015).¹⁸²

¹⁸¹ I would argue that this has a direct impact on several factors beyond the obvious. For example, in a conversation with a depot manager he explained that the increase in number of cars has created traffic to such an extent that BMTC buses are unable to complete their number of trips (i.e. origin and designation) scheduled in one shift. But the bus has to leave and arrive at specific depots. This means if a shift is nearing completion then the bus must stop mid route and head to the depot it is supposed to finish at. This affects passengers who, especially around 1:30 and 9pm might wait for a scheduled bus only to see it go by the bus stand without stopping. Going back to not having a planning or modeling division, the DM explained that the schedules were made about 20 years ago and have not been revised even though traffic has increased exponentially. There is some talk of installing GPS systems in the bus which would then coincide with the ticketing machine used by the conductor but this would mean buses couldn't be allocated to different routes on the fly.

¹⁸² Included in the CSTEP report is a comparison of taxes paid to the state by city bus corporations. Bangalore's BMTC paid 1.7 lakh in 2013 compared with Delhi's DTC payment of 13,765 INR and Mumbai's BEST payment of 41,000 INR.

In an attempt to supplement fare losses on routes that do not generate a profit, BMTC has, in recent years, introduced different buses to serve different population segments, with a specific emphasis on luxury buses that can be contracted out to the IT sector or used on routes for which passengers can and will pay higher fares to travel in air conditioning. Beyond the IT sector, private schools, and government are two examples of large scale hiring of BMTC buses. On the opposite end of the spectrum BMTC runs an Atal Sarige service, which provides services to slum areas at 50 percent less than the normal fares. However, as these routes do not generate a profit, many users complain the bus is not reliable. The point though for this discussion however is that all of these buses fall under the umbrella of public buses, even if a Volvo bus costs twice the fare¹⁸³ for the same route as an “ordinary bus”. It is not clear how conductors are allocated to different buses, only that older conductors are often given less crowded routes so that they can sit down as much as possible.

Requirements

To become a bus conductor in 1992 required a “high pass” of one’s 10th standard exams; a bus driver required a high pass at the 7th standard level [interview July 2016]. As of 2017, the requirement to be a conductor has changed and one needs to have a high pass at the 12th standard exam level though the qualifications to be a driver remain the same. A conductor needs to have a conducting license, first aid training, and medical certificate of good health. A license is obtained from RTO (Regional Transport Office) office and is merely a registration form (e.g. Passport size photographs, residential address, proof of

¹⁸³ Monthly passes are available to the public with different monthly fares to correspond to the different types of buses. A person who carries a volvo pass can travel on any bus but a person carrying an ordinary pass would not be able to travel on a volvo bus.

10th standard pass); first aid training is done through a government hospital and the cost of this training is born by the individual. In other words, to apply to be a bus conductor one needs proof of educational attainment and first aid training, with these documents one can apply for a license through the RTO. Once the license is obtained the documents are submitted to the BMTC.

Available information on presence of women conductors

Practically speaking, the 33 percent reservation system works such that if there are 10 positions available for conductors, three of these positions are reserved for women. If no women apply then all 10 positions go to men. With the exception of a 2012 thesis on BMTC, there is little public information on number of women conductors in the Corporation over the years. Data from 2010 found that of the B class conductors, 16 percent were women while C class conductors had about four percent women. No information was found regarding what the difference between B and C class entails. Worth noting, the report also lists the number of conductors who were recently hired and undergoing training at the time of study, this came to 20 percent women. Almost 45 percent of mechanics were women, suggesting that BMTC at this time was aggressively hiring women mechanics—a finding that was later confirmed through interviews with HR [July 2016].¹⁸⁴ The report concludes the discussion on gender with the following remark: “Even 33% women reservation in recruitment has been implemented by the transport industry but it does not attract women in these sectors because they are still

¹⁸⁴ When asked why there are so many women mechanics it was explained that this is a more desirable position because it is still a government position, thus providing the security associated with a government position, pays according to the fact that it is a semi-skilled position, and, most importantly, does not require a direct interface with the public, making it more attractive (i.e. respectable).

considered men's working world," (Veena 2012: 113)—a point I will revisit in the discussion section.

During my interviews with two senior employees in the labour office I was told that today there are approximately 1,700 women conductors among a total of 7,000, though this figure was debated amongst the conductors I spoke to. Labour office and conductors alike confirmed that even with the reservation system in place, the representation of women in the organization is still not close to 33 percent. It is also worth noting that BMTC, like all other government sectors, follows a reservation (i.e. affirmative action) system for employing members of disadvantaged communities, usually referred to as Scheduled Caste, Scheduled Tribe, and Other Backward Classes. I was told that many of the women who apply for conducting jobs are also coming from these communities and if they pass their exams are almost assured the position, as it is a way for the organization to fulfill two reservation categories.

Anecdotal evidence from conversations with BMTC's HR department and archival media all point to BMTC being the largest employer of women in respect to other city bus corporations in India.¹⁸⁵ Delhi has 250 women conductors (Doval 2014), a low number that speaks to the predominance of gender based concerns in public. In late 2016 the media reported that 89 of the 90 women bus conductors employed in Kerala through a state run poverty eradication scheme had quit after women learned their salaries were significantly lower than male bus conductors. This was coupled with a lack of proper toilet facilities within the bus stations and a failure to be given shift preference (Ananya 2017). Outside of India, a World Bank study on transportation in Kathmandu

¹⁸⁵ Chandigarh (Punjab), Chennai (Tamil Nadu), Mumbai (Maharashtra), and Hyderabad (Telangana) all report having a substantial number of women conductors within the city bus corporations.

(2013) found that the Sajha Corporation, which operates buses in the city, introduced an affirmative policy for women conductors in the 90s under a Danish sponsored program. Women in Kathmandu took up the work because it pays higher than most other jobs available to women with a similar educational attainment. While no other city bus corporations were contacted for this research, the existing information suggests that BMTC is one of the more progressive Corporations in respect to affirmative hiring and retaining of women.

4.2.2 Micropolitics 1: Taking the job

The decision to become a conductor is not made by the individual woman; but is made by the conductor's family. While previous interviews with women working in the retail sector suggest that this is common among young women and even men coming from lower income households, taking up work as a conductor is not just about bringing an income into the family but presents a dilemma between offering the family a respectability associated with having a member of the family in a government job coupled with the danger of having a daughter who might be perceived of as a "public woman." In this section I give an overview of the qualities that make a government job desirable and then illustrate the tension of taking up this work through examples that emerged out of the focus group discussions.

Why a government job?

Although salaries in most all government sectors tend to be lower than comparable work in the private sector, the benefits (e.g. pension, medical care, housing in many cases,

stable hours) and particularly the security¹⁸⁶ of a government sector position make this an attractive option for many people, particularly for populations who do not have access to other forms of material security (e.g. family money, investments etc.) and/or social standing/security. That most government offices close by p.m. is thought to be particularly accommodating to women who must also consider domestic responsibilities (Radhakrishnan 2011).¹⁸⁷ Furthermore, promotion, be it pay, or in the case of bus conductors, route preference, better housing etc., is in proportion to years of service or seniority¹⁸⁸. As long as a woman stays with her position she can expect an increase in benefits.

In the case of BMTC, in addition to housing allowances or housing itself, medical reimbursement, education credits for children, and other benefits, conductors and drivers have the option of transferring from BMTC to KSRTC, with preference given to those who have worked longer. A large majority of conductors and drivers come from other parts of the state, particularly North Karnataka and choose to locate in the city for the higher pay due to the higher physical and mental demands of being a conductor in the city. However, after serving as a driver or conductor in the city for a sufficient amount of time, many request transfers to KSRTC in order to be closer to extended family. The demand for transfer is often much greater than the availability of positions outside the city; especially as employees request to be transferred to a depot that is close to their native place. The retirement age is 60 for bus conductors.

¹⁸⁶ As Korattyswaropam (2010) notes, the inability for public bus systems to improve can be partially explained by the lack of firings or lay offs in the public sector. It is very difficult to fire an employee, even one who under performs.

¹⁸⁷ Consider this in contrast to the IT sector in which hours, particularly those who are working with off-shore clients, are varied and unpredictable.

¹⁸⁸ This is according to Korattyswaropam (2010) who argues again, that there is little incentive for employees to work harder; my conversations with bus conductors suggested that rewards are given for good performance, though this might not lead to a promotion as such.

Deciding to become a bus conductor

Most conductors, especially women, join BMTC out of economic necessity. This was confirmed during an interview with HR [July 2016], newspaper articles (Doval 2014; Desphande 2017) and by the women conductors themselves. Commonalities that emerged throughout the different narratives of conductors during the first focus group was a conflict between economic necessity and concern for the reputation of the family. First, it is decidedly a male profession; second, it involves intimate interaction with the public. Reflecting on Radhakrishnan's use of the terms "appropriateness" and "respectability" in the context of the working woman, conductor work seems neither appropriate nor respectable for women. For conductors who joined before being married, this was particularly concerning as it might impact the marriageability of the woman. For those who were already married when joining, there was a strong concern expressed by the in-laws of women, the possible effect it might have on their family's reputation. However, the obvious benefit of becoming a conductor was that it was a government job and therefore held a high degree of respectability and long-term security. How did these two aspects of respectability play out? In the following paragraphs I offer two different conversations from the first focus group to illustrate this tension in the context of the family.

Mod- Was there support at home or were they scared to let you work?

V- In my house they said no. Conductor no.

Mod- only for conductor's job it was no?

V- Yes. Because I have studied so they asked me not to go for a conductors' job.

Mod- Had you seen other lady conductors before you applied?

V- No. I'm from Gulbarga. There are no lady conductors there. So when I was appointed, there were no lady conductors. I was in the village. In the beginning, I came here on my own.

Mod- Did you stay here all on your own?

V- [I came] on my own. Single. I stayed in my relative's place. That was torture of another kind. Six months I would stay in their house. I would cry everyday. After duty, I would come home and have a round of crying. And then I would get up and eat food, if I felt like it. Otherwise, I would just go to bed. After six months, I got married.

V never said exactly how she found out about employment as a bus conductor and why she decided to pursue this over other possible forms of employment. Though as someone coming from a village, employment, particularly for women, would be challenging to find. Unlike the other conductors who were part of this research, V had completed a BA, in horticulture. Later in the course of this research it was learned that V was one of seven children and so there was a lot of pressure to find stable employment. The impression was that it was primarily the father who pushed her to try the job as a conductor, as having one family member working in government, and in the city at that was seen as a favorable opportunity that offered mobility not just to V but possibly other family members. A second aspect of V's narrative that was not probed further was the comment that staying with a relative was an other kind of torture. Reflecting on the literature provided in the section on working women's hostels in which Pothukuchi (2003) found that families increasingly avoid sending daughters to stay with relatives in the city in order to avoid implication into reciprocal relations and expectations to engage in household work, it seems possible that this was what V is referring to when she mentioned "torture of another kind." V did not elaborate on whether or not she had

difficulty finding a marriage partner, though in a separate account, a second participant did comment on this:

N- I wasn't married when I first started working. I got married only after a few years of working.

Mod- How did the prospective grooms feel about your job?

N- It was difficult to find someone who would support me in my work. I was very sure that I wanted to continue working so I faced a lot of rejections and I was also looking for someone who would let me work. But I did get married.

Another conductor, profiled while on route, had a similar narrative: "I am from a village. I did not know much about buses or about work. I came here because I have a sister. I saw a recruitment call and I applied." Similar to V, she initially disliked both the city and the line of work, feeling obligated to take it up for financial reasons that would help support the family. Similar to N, by the time she was ready for marriage she decided she wanted to keep working even after marriage, making it more difficult to find a partner who would respect this wish. A third participant, one who will be profiled throughout this research, elaborated in the greatest detail.

Mod- You were the first batch so you would have never seen lady conductors. How did your family react?

Mj- I am not from the first batch. Total when I was appointed, including me, there had been 22 women [employed by KSRTC in the span of 42 years]. When it was BTC¹⁸⁹, there were probably 1 or 2 women only. For the sake of feeding themselves and for the sake of the troubles they had in life they worked. I'm not the first one. But as per the law, the 33 percent reservation was introduced only during my appointment. For the batch of reservation, I was the first one. I have

¹⁸⁹ BTC was Bangalore Transport Corporation this was prior to bifurcation of KSRTC, it was a service under the umbrella of KSRTC which began in the 1950s.

met all of them. I have talked to them about their experiences. I have asked them questions. Because I have a lot of curiosity. They are inspiration, can you imagine what they faced?

Mod-Tell us about how you joined.

Mj- What do they say? Dharmakke dhatti kotre hitlage mola haakdange. [Kannada proverb meaning When a cloth is given for charity it is measured in the backyard]. For the education I had, it was a very big thing for me to get a government job. When I first started this work, my mother did not approve because at that time, on the bus, they would look you up and down (acts this out) and say ‘eh, what are you doing here?’ Because in our society we are told how to talk, how to act. At that time we [i.e. women] did not go out, we were not allowed out, only when our bellies [gestures] only when we needed to fill out bellies were we going out.¹⁹⁰ So they would look at us and think these things and say these things. [My mother would say] “Why can’t you find a different kind of work, with this work you will be thought of as a road side woman, a public woman.”

Outside the initial focus group, I met several women who joined after marriage; all except one were from outside the city. In S’s case, it was her husband who wanted her to take up this work. Living outside the city it was only after her husband was to be transferred to the city that he thought she should take up conducting, given the higher cost of living in the city. “I changed because of my husband...he wanted me to have a government job. He said just go and work at least one day.” S did not want to take up conducting work because she thought it was below her dignity, inappropriate. But she did it in accordance to her husband’s wish to have a family member working in the government.

¹⁹⁰ It was unclear to me if this gesture was in respect to being of age for getting married and having children or literally for food.

Lastly, I highlight a conversation between a husband and wife, both originally from Channarayapatna (West Karnataka) who moved to the city so that M, the husband, could start a job as a BMTC driver. After some time, his wife, D, became a conductor.

M- Our marriage was in 1987. When we first got married there was no job. I was in a private job and she was a housewife. After 6 years, she first applied, then I applied (for the job of bus driver). I got the order first. Then she got the order.

Mod- How did you feel?

M- I was happy and also sad. Happy because we would now get more money. But sad because if she is working, I will have to make adjustments.

Mod- Why did you want to apply to this job

D - When we were in the village, we didn't have any money. There was so much poverty. We would have done the work of coolies (i.e. manual labor). In my times, they wouldn't send girls at all [to school] but still they allowed me to study till 10th standard. That was when I understood I could get a job [i.e. bus conductor]. We applied and we got the job. We came here.

M- For a government job, in our place, there is a lot of respect.

M's observation that he is both happy and sad that his wife D working warrants consideration, that "I will have to make adjustments." Most likely it would be D who must needs to make the adjustments. Adjustments in this context mean that D is no longer able to perform all of her domestic duties as she did when she was a full time housewife. It is possible that he is sad that his wife is working because it is indicative of financial necessity, which could carry a social stigma; and equally likely that it means domestic responsibilities, including caring for children can no longer be exclusively D's, also likely to carry a social stigma.

Training

Women enter into this job without experience. This is coupled by the fact that many are coming from outside the city, they are unfamiliar with the different neighborhoods, bus routes, and diversity of people and languages. In earlier times, conductors received a week of training, mornings were dedicated to theory and afternoons were spent shadowing a senior conductor. Theory, I was told, entailed “The duties of a conductor. How a conductor is supposed to behave with passengers. Basically, what is the work of the conductor? How is he¹⁹¹ supposed to give out tickets? How he is supposed to talk and behave to passengers in a polite manner. If ticket clerical staff comes, what is he supposed to do? How is his uniform?” [Mj]. Today’s training reduces the theory training to one day only, with a shorter time span of shadowing a senior conductor. I learned that in the early years of women conductors (1990s) women receive one extra day of training to address women’s topics such how to protect one’s health, and the specific gender policies that were available to women through BMTC. I asked if women receive training on how to behave and handle passengers who might treat women inappropriately but was told that this is not part of the training.

In the case of D’s account, she recounted her first few days: “I had never traveled [in Bangalore]. They [BMTC] sent me with an old conductor for one day. After that they gave me a small, easy route alongside a conductor. It could be either man or woman. If I asked a question, they would help me. Then the driver would help me. He would tell me the route and tell me where to do entry.” When asked how this early experience was the reply was: “In the beginning, I cried.” It was clear that none of these women took up conducting out of enthusiasm for the type of work it required. In fact, this work was a

¹⁹¹ In this exchange, Mj consistently used the pronoun “he”. At a later time I followed up and asked why she used the pronoun he when she was, in fact, referring to her own training. I was told that he is used because that is “how it is.”

source of anxiety for some families—as seen in the reaction of Mj’s mother—and the a daily anxiety for the woman herself.. While no conductor presented her narrative as one of bravery, it was clear that embarking on this type of work, particularly for those who were coming to the city for the first time, required determination, a steady mind and will to even just get through the day.

4.2.3 Micropolitics 2: The daily routine

In this section I suggest that the second level of micropolitical mobilities arises from navigating a tension between economic and biological time, a tension reflective of the larger gendered issue of time-poverty in which women’s bodies are required to perform both productive and reproductive duties. Before I discuss how women physically adapt to the conducting job I first outline general aspects of the daily routine, aspects discovered through spending entire shifts with these women, allowing greater insight into and respect for the overall structure and functioning of the BMTC network.

Shifts and Routes

There are 43 depots and 53 bus stations in Bengaluru. A depot is where buses are parked at night, serviced and refueled while a station is where passengers are picked up and dropped off. There are essentially two shifts available to a BMTC conductor, the first shift begins at 6:00am and ends at p.m. and the second shift begins at p.m. and goes until 10pm. A conductor working the first shift starts her day at a bus depot, the place at which she clocks in for work and collects her necessary belongings (satchel, pouch, ticket fare machine log keeping book etc.) from the designated counter and then she and the driver

board their designated bus and depart, going to any one of the 53 major bus stations to begin ferrying passengers.

Most depots are in close proximity to the bus stations, which cover all major hubs of the city. For example, the Shantinagar depot is within 500 meters of the Shantinagar station. However, due to the BMTCs extremely complex, point-to-point network, coupled with the fact that BMTC contracts itself out to private companies, some drivers and conductors depart from a depot that might be several kilometers away from their origin bus station. This means both driver and conductor have already spent considerable time on the bus before their route officially begins.

Furthermore, routes are assigned to drivers and conductors in a variety of ways (with much of it based on seniority) but it is possible that a conductor might live in a completely different part of the city from the depot she starts at.¹⁹² While there is a conscious effort to avoid this scenario, particularly for women, some conductors profiled during this research started their day well before 6am, taking a bus to the depot from which she starts, then again driving this bus to the station in which her route begins.

One conductor who was interviewed at the end of her shift, explained, while sipping her kappi at a Nandi Milk Parlor,¹⁹³ that she lives about 20 km outside the city. She starts her morning shift at the Indiranagar depot (Indiranagar is about five km east of what is considered the Central Business District (CBD) and ends at Shivajinagar (the bus station serving the CBD), neither of which are close to her place of residence. In order to

¹⁹² As a government agency, either housing or a housing stipend is provided to conductors; BMTC and KSRTC have several housing colonies in the city and these coordinate with the major stations and depots. Most of the women who had more complicated schedules due to their residential location tended to be in a particular locality due to family ties or husband's employment.

¹⁹³ Nandini Milk Parlor is the Karnataka state cooperative of milk producers that has stalls selling milk based products (and coffee) throughout the city and every major bus station. It is a frequent congregating point for conductors and drivers.

reach the Indiranagar depot by 6:30 in the morning a bus picks her up at 5am. When asked to clarify if this was a KSRTC bus (given her location outside the city and the early timing) she explained that she takes a call bus that is especially for BMTC employees. This bus runs at 4:30, 5:00, and 5:30am and serves areas in which BMTC employees stay; as government jobs often provided housing in designated housing colonies or a housing stipend to live in a particular locality, many drivers and conductors are housed in the same quarters making it easier for a system like this to work. Her particular locality was mainly for KSRTC employees, given the location outside the city.

Other examples suggest that a conductor's route is not necessarily coordinated so that a conductor finishes close to home, particularly for women who work the first shift. This means many conductors spend a considerable amount of time on the bus not only as conductors but also as passengers. While this shift in role between conducting and passengering was not explored in detail, it is one avenue for further research. Senior conductors and those with children confirmed that if they are assigned a depot that is far from their home they can request a transfer to one which is closer and as women, this request is usually granted. Women who work second shift, of which there aren't many, are always given an end station that is close to home given the time of night at which they finish.

Most conductors have a fixed bus route they travel daily and the same holds true of the driver, meaning the two work closely together—a point I will return to further on. Some do the same route for years and as one becomes more senior in the company one gets a better route (e.g. less crowded and closer to home). Some conductors, especially newer conductors or those in training operate Alert Routes. This means that the conductor

arrives at her designated depot in the morning and, according to who has taken leave for that day, she will be assigned that route. Over time I learned the various challenges/differences between working a first or second shift. Change, that perpetual problem that can and has lead to literal violence between conductors and passengers,¹⁹⁴ was particularly acute during the morning rush, as conductors have not yet collected enough fares to have sufficient change. Conductors are not given change to start with; one conductor brings about 50 rupees in change of her own money, another close to 80. Conductors write this amount into the log sheet and then at the end of the day are given back the amount after the log sheet is balanced against the collected fares.

I was told that in the morning socializing is “very less” but on the mornings I arrived to the depots at the scheduled time of 6:15am I was surprised by the chatter and laughing; the atmosphere was cheerful and active. Conductors explained that most socializing occurs at the end of the first shift, as the conductors’ head to the cash counter to deposit their fare collections. Women conductors who are on second shift socialize less because their work ends in the night and when they start at p.m. the city is already chaotic. Those living within walking distance stop for a chai or kappi then walk home together; those living a greater distance away walk together to the bus platform and wait for a second shift bus to take them back home.

As mentioned, far fewer women choose the second shift for the main reason that it ends late—a problem both from the perspective of security and in the context of domestic responsibilities. Women who work the second shift adjust in several ways. One woman began working second shift after her children were old enough to come home

¹⁹⁴ The city’s “Citizen Matters” website in particular has many forums on this subject. <http://bengaluru.citizenmatters.in/bangalore-bmtc-conductors-and-passengers-no-change-6862> [Accessed 11.11.2017].

from school on their own and take care of themselves. She prepared the evening meal at lunchtime so that it would be ready for the family in the evening. In the case of D, who, along with her husband, worked second shift, they would leave their children with their parents—who had moved along with them when they left the village. One advantage of the second shift was that the morning rush and issue of change was avoided. Starting at p.m. also gave women time to do several chores in the morning and, if they did have young children, allowed them to see them off to school. When asked about the type of people who travel at night and the risk of “anti-social behavior”—the term frequently used to describe men who are drunk I was told that most women conductors will not face an issue either because of their route (which would then service a certain population) and because of the presence of the driver.

Starting the day

It can be said that women conductors working the first shift start their days earlier than their male counterparts due to the gender norms that dictate domestic responsibilities. A woman conductor with children will wake up the earliest, in order to prepare meals for children, the family and get school things ready, a routine illustrated by N who explained: “I have two children. In the mornings, their father makes them get ready for school in the morning. I wake up at 4:30 in the morning and make tiffin [food] for them. I go back home at around 3 p.m. and at that time, the children are back from school.”

Early into the first focus group discussion an open ended general question about challenges faced was raised with the example of toilet facilities given as a prompt. Women confirmed that this was a problem, though much improved since the initial years.

Nevertheless, going to the bathroom is one entry point into understanding how and why a focus on the micropolitics of mobility helps us navigate deeper threads of gendered embodiment. A lack of public toilets is the first instance in which a woman conductor undergoes self-disciplining biological training. While the question of accessing a bathroom is perhaps challenging for bus drivers and conductors in any context, a general lack of toilet facilities for women in public can be read as a marker of gender based exclusion in public more broadly, that is an unwillingness to provide toilet facilities to women reinforces assumptions that women are not (or should not be) in public. It is unclear if male conductors or drivers take advantage of the general acceptance of men urinating along the road, but it was observed that all bus stations had visible toilet facilities for men; women less so. Some women avoid drinking much water before or during their shift in order to minimize the need to go the bathroom.

Working during one's monthly cycle was particularly challenging. Women said they can suffer from several medical issues that men don't have to face on account of the cultural acceptance of men going to the bathroom in public, a luxury¹⁹⁵ women do not have. Given that buses are perpetually running behind schedule, women conductors do not have time to exit the bus and use the toilet facilities when the bus pulls into a major station. While not explicitly discussed, it was alluded to that the inability to use the toilet has a ripple effect, for example, increased incidents of Urinary Tract Infections, which might become so bad that the woman is forced to take a few days off. However, women supplemented this negative reality with the fact that they were given access to good

¹⁹⁵ In fact, one could argue that a lack of proper toilet facilities in public generally and transit stations in particular does not receive the attention it deserves because of the fact that most men have no problem using public spaces to relieve themselves and therefore do not find this much of an issue. Of course, installing and (more importantly) maintaining public toilet facilities would not just benefit women conductors but also hawkers, slum dwellers and the homeless who have their lives largely on the street.

doctors and were allowed more days off for issues like this. This conversation gave way to praise for BMTC's paid maternity leave, arguably one of the best (i.e. longest) of any public or private sector agency.

The current policy is 90 days before delivery and ninety days after delivery for a total of 180 days.¹⁹⁶ If a woman is suffering from anemia or any other issue she can get a certificate from the doctor and get an additional month, this is known as "special needs". One conductor, Mj, who was part of the first batch explained that it was previously 42 days before and after delivery. Women can also use saved up days off and use them at this time.

Mj- Nobody objects to that. If we write a letter saying that it is to look after my child, nobody will object. They will immediately oblige. Suppose I don't have leaves and my child is very young, then also it is alright. I can say it is alright if my salary is cut, but I have to take off, they will agree to that also. In my depot, there is one colleague who has totally taken four maternity leaves. She has only one child. Actually, totally she has given birth to four children, but only one survived. According to law, one [a conductor] is entitled to only two maternity leaves. But because after two leaves, only one baby survived and when she went for the third and the fourth leaves, because of the only reason that her children did not survive, they gave her four maternity leaves. They have also given her leave after delivery.

Two of the conductors present shared that they underwent tubal ligation in order to ensure that they couldn't have more children. Despite an overwhelming positive sentiment toward the Corporation's policies, most of the women framed their pregnancy and early motherhood experience as one of great difficulty.

[My daughter], she was born in 8 months. I hadn't gained weight or even felt pain. [But] I was an epilepsy patient. I got epilepsy during my first daughter's pregnancy [I only found out about this because of pregnancy]. At that time, my

¹⁹⁶ Later it was later explained that women conductors get 4 months maternity leave and other women staff in BMTC get only 3 months as per law. "This is because of the kind of stressful job that we do and because we cant stand all the time when we are pregnant." Women bus drivers would also get this amount of maternity leave, but at present there is only one woman driver.

organization helped me a lot. I was not even able to walk. After she was born, for my health issues- she was born in Feb and I was expected to come to duty in June. At that time, she had to be fed. I cannot get her to the bus and feed her. I cannot keep a feeding baby in the bus. It is painful.

Mj's visible emotion gave way to similar accounts from other participants, illustrating that, no matter how good BMTC's maternity policies may be, conductors face difficulty mediating the biological body with the structured timing of transportation mobility.

D- sending them in the morning is an issue [She means not being able to send them to school in the morning because a conductor starts her shift around 6:15/6:20am]. For me, my neighbor helped me a lot. I would wake her [my daughter] up at 5 and comb her hair and leave her and go. And my neighbor would send her.

(V)- My son, till he was grown up, my husband would be at home. Till he had to send him to school, he took care of him. By the time he gets home from school, I would be home. When I joined duty my son was in the third standard.

Mj- Since I have two girls, I would comb their hair the previous night; keep out the clothes they had to wear the previous night. At 4:30am I would keep their carrier ready in the morning and tell their father necessary instructions, tell him what they should be fed and what has to be done. Probably because I gave birth to them, they learnt very quickly to do their work without being told. But apart from all this, the biggest problem that happens is that in the morning, at 6:00 am, when you have to leave, that is the problem. Exactly at 6:00, you are ready and waiting to go out. They would start crying loudly—

D- they would cry. Or soil themselves.

Mj- So you think ok, let me feed. And whatever you do, they won't stop feeding. D—as soon as she sees the [conductor] uniform, she will start crying that her mother will leave.

Mj- just won't stop crying.

Mj- so many days—

D- when they start crying, you also cry and then leave them.

Mj- she would not even hold the milk bottle in her hand. She would just throw it and she couldn't stand the bottle. Even today my younger one does not take milk. She hates milk. The hatred [for milk] started then.

At this point in the discussion one conductor has tears. Although it does not make the situation uncomfortable, it is clear that the research questions did not capture or anticipate the complexity of gender in the context of being a conductor. The topic of pregnancy and children was one that came freely, even though I had not directly asked about this. Another conductor who did not participate in the focus group explained:

I worked even when I was pregnant. I was standing for hours and at that time, there was no seat for conductors.¹⁹⁷ So we had to stand all the time. Even now, even though there is a seat and sometimes it is free, there is no time to sit at all. We have to walk up and down the bus issuing tickets. Yes, I worked till I was six and half months pregnant. The standing got very hard. And I would go home too tired. This job is such that by the time you go home you can only sit in one place. You have body ache everyday. But you still want to work. But what was harder was that toilets were difficult to access. There are toilets only in the big bus stations. If I have to go to the toilet in between the route, I cannot do that. I have to wait till we reach the last bus stop. That became more difficult when I was pregnant. The toilets are not always clean.

Capitalism rhythm, body rhythm, city rhythm

In Henri Lefebvre's *Rhythmanalysis* (1994; 2013) rhythm is not just something to be analyzed, it is the tool for analysis, particularly for the intertwined relationship between capitalism and the city, in the context of everyday life: "The everyday established itself, creating hourly demands, systems of transport, in short, its repetitive organization,"(16).

¹⁹⁷ In recent years the first seat at the front of the bus is reserved for the conductors to sit, as N goes on to indicate, even with the seat being reserved the duties are such that one rarely has time to sit down.

This rhythm is regulated as time, by laws and governments (18) and certainly in the context of public transportation routes and timings. It is well documented that these routes and timings do not serve women as well as men because their, we might say, rhythm is in sync with a masculine understanding of economic production in the city and this can be in opposition to normative expectations of household reproduction. While this tension between economic and biological time is not unique to women conductors but true of women with young children, the extremely early timings of first shifts coupled with expectations to prepare meals prior to departure makes it particularly challenging for these women. In the case of the women bus conductor, the tension is located literally in the biological functioning of the female body, which is, in early motherhood, subject to its own rhythmic law, a rhythm that resists the rhythm of a logical transportation network.

4.2.4 Locating agency: When confidence builds

Narratives about becoming a conductor

While the initial research questions sought to identify the micropolitics of gender through exchanges between passengers and conductors while on the move, the two previous sections show that before this navigation of gender in the context of the public occurs, there are several negotiations of gender that occur on intimate levels, negotiations within the family and negotiations within the body itself. Several role-playing techniques were employed in order to stimulate conversations about the embodiment of gender through interactions with the public, wherein the public in this instance refers to passengers. In this section I address two main points. First, that conversations regarding “the public” were not inherently negative, there was an equally positive sentiment. Secondly, when challenges from the public were explored through enactment, it was less about

momentous confrontations or physical harassment and more about quotidian, minute challenges that were handled differently according to the beliefs and attitudes of individual conductors. Conductors who had worked for over 10 years observed a change in the public in respect to general attitude and treatment of women conductors.

The second meeting took place in a large public park that provided ample space to enact different scenarios. The role-playing assignment was a BMTC monthly pass holder and the conductor. In this instance the conductors enacted the scenario so that the pass holder was a male engineering student. The enactment went as follows:

S- To where [are you going]?

M- Pass

S- Take it out and show it to me

M- I have my pass in the bag.

S- Hello, show it. Or we will have to stop the bus. You need to show the pass

M- What are you a special conductor? The pass is in the bag.

Now what happens is the conductor playing the engineer ignores the conductor playing the conductor. She now pretends to issue other tickets and comes back to the student. She asks again for the pass. The conductor playing the engineering student rolls her/his eyes and goes into the bag.

M- such a pain

S- where is your identity card?

M- The pass is there isn't it? Why do you need the college id card?

S-to check that this is your pass

The conversation continues with such precision it is clear how quotidian an experience this is. We eventually call freeze and the two conductors sit down to discuss the enactment. The other conductors laugh, confirming that yes this is a common experience.

We discuss the comment made by the engineering student, “what, are you a special conductor?” All have been asked some version of this. Especially with male passengers there seems to be a genuine annoyance with a lady conductor who follows protocol. The women are of two minds; first that the male conductors do not get the same looks when asking questions that are part of their duty (i.e. to see the ID that accompanies the pass), second that many of the male conductors don’t care as much and often don’t check for the ID—an observation that gives way to a more general observation that women conductors follow certain protocols, (e.g. giving correct change immediately) more strictly than men. When asked why this might be the case women confirmed that it was in a woman’s nature—a point I will return to further on.

A second enactment was one in which the conductor observed a male passenger subtly harassing a female passenger by hanging close and brushing against her. Several conductors were invited to get up and demonstrate what they would do. During the discussion afterward conductors again confirmed that they had witnessed something like this during their duty. All acknowledged that according to BMTC regulations, a passenger cannot be kicked off the bus. When trouble occurs on the bus a conductor can either stop the bus and wait for the police to arrive or can direct the bus to the police station or nearest bus station. In both cases, passengers are not allowed to disembark, creating a very unfavorable situation for the conductor. One conductor said if she sees this behavior she would immediately stop the bus and call the police. Several others disagreed, first preferring to say something to the male passenger or physically act by putting herself in between the two passengers. The second point of agreement was that sometimes the woman who is being targeted feels very embarrassed or insecure and

therefore there is a risk that she might resent the bus conductor for drawing attention. In common practice, they seemed to think, if a woman is being harassed, it is most likely that she will get off at the next bus stop. All conductors agreed that, while each situation is different, one said that if the woman passenger comes and sits next to her only then will she [the conductor] raise the issue. Another, disagreed, summarizing with the following statement: “He may not have troubled me but as a woman, if I see another woman being troubled, I won’t just watch it.”

In both role playing scenarios a confrontation and intervention was required. Each scenario is full of small details, with every conductor acting the scenario with such ease and enjoyment that it is clear that in the process of being a conductor, these women know, understand, and anticipate the public in a way that only comes from experience. This understanding and awareness was particularly relevant to the context of collecting fares and issuing tickets in the male, dominated back of the bus during rush hour, an unavoidable and what can be assumed to be unpleasant situation. While conductors were aware of this potentially uncomfortable situation they seemed to understand it as an unavoidable situation that required taking necessary precautions. One conductor explained her technique after being directly asked if she had ever faced harassment. “I know some have but I haven’t faced any problem from the men in the bus. If the bus is too crowded, I don’t always go back. I go to the middle of the bus and ask people to buy tickets. They pass the money and the ticket from person to person.” A second and more seasoned conductor acknowledged that it used to be worse in the past but she knows how to “handle” passengers. Even if it is crowded, she will demand a certain level of personal space from the men in the back. “I say, man, I know you don’t have space behind you,

but I have to give tickets, no? See, I have to stand here.” This bodily assertion was also enacted. Through these various role playing exercises it became apparent that most conductors have more character studies behind them than a seasoned actor. Older conductors had “pretty much seen everything”, and took pleasure in recounting quirky stories from earlier days. It was also noted that the narratives that were recounted were those in which the conductor was positioned as a sort of hero figure. There was a challenge, followed by an assertion or action on behalf of the conductor, and finally an outcome that demonstrated either to another individual, the “public”, and/or the conductor a capacity for leadership, quick thinking, and positive results.

For a woman conductor to initiate these kind of responses and interventions requires a certain level of confidence, how and when do these women develop it? For most conductors (and it is probably that the same could be said for male conductors), becoming comfortable and even confident with the public was a process, with many emphasizing how they felt when they first began this work and how this compared to how they feel now. In this section I will try to recreate that journey by first focusing on the challenges following examples at which a confidence began to take over.

S, originally from Hassan, a district south of Bengaluru, explained how she felt when she first started as a conductor.

I used to be scared of the job when I started out. People here talked so many different languages and I knew only Kannada. But after some time, I learned to manage too. I have worked for so long now and I have done over 30 different routes. After I came here, I didn't feel like going back [to my village]. In that way, I continued. I have also got many opportunities. As a conductor, they will give us space to work in the office also.¹⁹⁸ If there is some other case, they will ask us to attend. For us, all that.

¹⁹⁸ If a conductor or driver is no longer physically able to do his or her job, arrangements are made for a less physically taxing assignment.

In this short passage it is possible to trace the transition in S's attitude, starting with feeling intimidated by the job to, over the course of being a conductor, to taking advantage of opportunities and feeling appreciated by the corporation (e.g. "For us, all that"). A connection between learning the profession, learning the city, and gaining confidence in herself is implied. Mj, who was part of the first batch of conductors under the 33 percent reservation policy, had a particularly unique story as to how she learned to be confident in public.

What I feel is that when I first joined, all this kind of bad experiences was rampant. At that time I have gone to my father many times, keep my head on his lap, and told him "appa I wont go to work. Nobody sees me as human. When they see me, I think am I standing here naked? They see me like that. They treat me like that. My dad "you should stay there. You should learn to survive there. And with those people only, you should feel that you have overcome them. My dad, everyday, he would come to my bus everyday. Every trip he buy [sic]a ticket from me and sit in the bus only. My father has given me that much moral support."¹⁹⁹

Mj's attributing of her confidence to the support of her father is undeniably unique, especially if we recall from the earlier section that it was her mother who did not want her to take up conducting work.

Several women framed their narrative in respect to when they first started to how they feel now, as seen in Mj's statement "[When I began] I neither had the understanding that I could make demands nor was the atmosphere such that I could make demands. Now I will ask. Now I will request, I will say what I want, to passengers, to superiors

¹⁹⁹ Worth noting, this particular conductor in an earlier instance told me that her mother initially did not want her to join for fear of the reputation she would develop as a "public woman". Coming from a historically lower caste, receiving a government job was a significant step for this conductor and her family. It is interesting to see in this instance that it was the father who supported her and helped her to overcome these challenges and does, in many ways, point to the finding that I have emphasized throughout, the finding developed throughout conversations with women who say that it all starts in the home, with the education in the home. While this conductor's father had little to no formal education it was his confidence in and support for his daughter that has helped her become who she is today.

also.” It was also observed that many conductors situated this development of confidence not within the self but as a symbiotic relationship between the self and the conductor.

I’ve had a lot of support from the public when I first started. The general public helped me a lot. I used to worry that this is such a difficult job and how will I manage. But the public would be the one to tell me the routes. At that time, we used to stop the bus to write down the ticketing status. Now we have machines so we don’t need to stop the bus at all. Even if I took time over it, they would say ‘it is alright, it is a woman working’. Without the support of the public, I would not have been able to work.

Another conductor responded by saying that the public was more educated now than in the past, another said as it was much more common to see women out in public for any number of reasons, public perception of being in/on a bus with a woman conductor had improved. This is an interesting detail to consider in relation to the earlier research done in the IT sector, in which several men and women lamented that traveling by bus was no longer safe due to the influx of migrants—a term often used with a negative connotation to indicate lower caste men from North India. For women bus conductors we can imagine that the changes that have occurred within Bengaluru—namely the haphazard sprawl of the city coupled with piecemeal infrastructure, felt particularly in the context of poor roads and lack of traffic enforcement has made their work far more difficult than in the earlier years of being a conductor. But interestingly enough, the women who participated in the focus group and enactment on that particular day chose to only highlight positive changes that had occurred in respect to the public and how they were treated.

Confidence within the household

Had the public indeed changed or was it a case that their confidence as women working with the public had grown so that arduous shifts and difficult passengers were no longer

such a challenge? How did this confidence serve them outside their line of work? Mj was a conductor I became very close to during and after the research and I was able to see just how far her confidence stretched, in and outside the bus. We might recall from the previous discussion that Mj was one of the few conductors born and raised in the city, with a mother who did not want her to take up the job of conductor for fear of being thought of as a “public woman”, and a father, a tailor of low caste origins, provided her with the moral support by riding the bus with her until she became confident in her abilities. On several occasions I accompanied Mj to her mother’s apartment for lunch; something Mj did everyday after finishing her shift. I’d watch Mj in her mother’s apartment, the apartment Mj would have grown up in, as she changed out of her khaki uniform and into a bright pink sari. She always spent several minutes in the toilet, a general freshening up. Her mother would pick up Mj’s conductor uniform and fold it with great care. One day I asked if her mother’s attitude toward Mj’s work as a conductor had changed. She explained that her mother had never traveled much, hardly had used the bus and wasn’t able to see the extent to which more women are in public overall. But people would approach her mother and talk about Mj “We know your daughter. We see her good work.” As Mj’s confidence grew, her mother’s attitude changed. However, perhaps the most important change was when Mj began bringing in an income. Not only an income but structure, and benefits. Her mother sees that Mj’s daughters are winning awards in school, and Mj has received much recognition for her work with BMTC. Lastly, that Mj has saved enough money for a home outside the city for when she retires. While Mj doesn’t say this directly I would add that her mother’s attitude changed because Mj has earned the respect of the public and she remains a respected woman.

The link between receiving an income and gaining respect from the family is well documented in literature and policy reports on women's empowerment (for example: SEWA, ILO, UNWomen, OECD, IMF, WB, Grameen Bank) with evidence that earning an income gives a woman more decision making power within the family. However, one significant difference in the context of women bus conductors is that this respect is not just at the household level but, by nature of being in public, extends into and is reflected by passengers. Regardless of whether a passenger shows outward respect for the conductor, the conductor has both confidence and agency, which in this context I'm defining as the ability to handle and take charge of situations that could otherwise act in a destabilizing or depowering manner for the individual. We have the structure of the bus, literally, we have the structure of the organization, and we have the structure of society. The conductor arrives at agency through all of these.

4.2.5 Ripple effects of confidence

What about confidence with their partner, the driver?

In the previous section I explored how women conductors become confident with the public in the process of gaining confidence in themselves and vice versa. In this section I focus on the visible and invisible ways in which the presence of women bus conductors within the BMTC organization creates a positive ripple effect within several personal and professional relationships that ultimately focus on repositioning gender norms and relationships in unanticipated ways. These changes originate from their everyday duties and interactions, they are predicated on the public bus system but not necessarily instigated by this.

How long did it take for you to become confident enough to confront your partner (driver) on issues such as rash driving? This was one of several questions explored during the one occasion in which I tried to bring together both conductors and drivers in order to better explore this working relationship. Most conductors and drivers use the exchanges *diddi* and *anna* or sister and elder brother, words that reflect the type of relationship between two people who work together in tough conditions for hours on end. However, if we imagine a the familiar sibling relationship as one that is casual, at times chiding, but ultimately loving and respectful, then it should be noted that such an intimate, heterosexual relationship in a unfamiliar context would go against norms of appropriateness and respectability in many families. During the third focus group women were asked to comment on their relationship with their driver and approximately how long it took before a level of both confidence and friendliness toward their male partner developed. One woman said two weeks, which came across as perhaps boastful but several others admitted that it took months, even over a year before she felt the confidence to demand equality. Once this was established, the relationship entered into one of familiarity and support.



Figure 20: A driver and conductor mid shift

One conductor preferred to give the example of how the attitude of the driver changed when she was pregnant. He became more attentive toward her health and well being, making sure she wasn't over taxing herself. Everyday for three months he arranged to have a *bisi bele* (A lentil and rice dish native to Karnataka) ready for her half way through the shift so that she maintained her strength. The conductor's daughter, now in secondary school, knows her mother's partner well; he is an uncle-like figure to her.

The perspective from the bus driver was only briefly explored during one role-playing exercise in which two male drivers were given the scenario where they were at

the depot and one had just learned he was assigned a woman conductor to work with him. As both drivers had worked for over 15 years they were asked to first enact it according to how this would have been viewed when they first joined. The conversation was enacted such that the first driver, Rg approached the second driver, M, and tried to swap routes with him. M's reply was "unless she is young and pretty, I don't want it [to switch]." This drew several giggles from the women and a slap of exasperation from M's wife who also happens to be a conductor. Rg and M continued, talking about how it is unfortunate to have these lady conductors, if the bus breaks down they cannot help repair a tire or control an unruly passenger. Furthermore, they get all kinds of concessions—such as shift preference and Sunday's off.²⁰⁰ One woman conductor present, R, got up, forgetting this was a role playing exercise and began yelling at the two drivers, saying how all of this is negative stereotype and not true. As the discussion unfolded naturally from this, the second reenactment of "now" was not pursued.

Mod- How is the experience [today] different? How is different if you are working with a woman conductor or a male conductor?

M- I don't see any difference.

Mod- Is there a little tension when there is a lady conductor?

M- No, no tension. They are faster than the gents.

Rg- As the days progress there is a lot more change.

M- We need change.

Mod- In BMTC, is there also a lot of change?

M- Yes, a lot.

Ripple Effects

²⁰⁰ In a meeting with the BMTC's (woman) Managing Director, it was confirmed that some men in the organization still hold this sentiment.

Future research should focus specifically on the perspective of male conductors and drivers, if and how working with women has changed their attitudes and opinions toward their wives, daughters, and women more generally. This was not explored but it was observed, while attending various functions sponsored by BMTC, one for Independence Day and the second an award ceremony for children of BMTC employees who had done well in school, that many of the male drivers and conductors brought wives and daughters along and displayed visible signs of affection and pride, characteristics that are not often readily displayed in public. The second future area for research is in respect to how these relationships of mutual dependence might affect perception of caste and religious difference. Although none of the bus conductors I interviewed were Muslim it is not to say that they aren't part of the organization—several of the women I worked with did work with male Muslim bus drivers. In an earlier discussion, we met S, who was from a village and took up the job of conductor at the request of her husband. She didn't want the job for several reasons, but primarily because she thought it was beneath her. During the first focus group as the question of passengers and how to behave with them was explored. S offered the following remark:

When I came here, till then I had never extended my hand this way (shows hand with palms facing upward). But when in a bus, I have to extend it this way. There [in the village] if you have to talk to someone, you do not talk more than what is necessary. Here it is not like that, with everyone, we talk ten things. Also, if someone touches me just a bit, I would want to go wash my hands [when I first started]. First I have to wash hands. If someone gave me something, I would wonder if I should eat [e.g. another conductor, driver or passenger]. But now it is not like that. I eat without washing my hands sometimes.

S is describing the difference in caste relations in the village as opposed to the city. In the village, where it was assumed she was of a higher caste position, she was not expected to

touch others, speak more than necessary, or take food from those who were positioned below her. As a conductor, this was not possible for every passenger is to be treated equally. Even within the organization, it was expected that she would treat colleagues equally; to not accept food from someone would be considered very offensive. She recognizes that her behavior and, we might say judgments have changed.

There are several in-organization programs that are designed to provide support and foster community within the organization. Over the course of speaking to women conductors, depot managers, drivers, and other BMTC employees of various “class” positions within the organization, I developed a sense that these are widely used. WAPPA or Work Place Alcohol Prevention Programme and Activity as well as counseling services are available to all employees. BMTC regularly hosts organized musical events and sports activities, encouraging employees to join. Several individuals in management positions cited increased stress and anxiety among drivers and conductors on account of the traffic in Bengaluru and said that the organization is introducing meditation and health centers for employees. Schemes are in place for the children of conductors and drivers: merit awards are available for the children of employees of all class levels; several conductors I spoke to were quick to mention that their children were recipients of such awards. Educational loans are also available for higher education.

Collectively, these programs and initiatives reflect the ideologies of an earlier, post-independence socialist era, which viewed the state as playing an active role in socio-economic development and improved caste and class relations. BMTC has one of the largest unions in the city. Very few of the women I spoke to were part of the union. During one focus group discussion I was told that the union is not very supportive of

women—though it was later confirmed that there is a women’s wing of the union. The lack of participation within the BMTC union was not explored as women did not seem to want to talk about, though one said that in her depot, the older women conductors always make a point to take new women under the wing, particularly to emphasize benefits and encourage them to ask for “what’s right.”

Most all conductors, male and female, join BMTC out of economic necessity. While the pay is not particular high,²⁰¹ the respectability and benefits of being in government makes this position an attractive option for those without much socio-economic and educational mobility with many of these women [and men] receiving the job because of government quota systems for historically discriminated against groups. During my two months of close observation interaction among all BMTC employees seemed fluid, especially among the women conductors who seem to share several bounds that are based on gender and transcend other differences, such as subtle caste differences (for example between S and Mj who would represent two different castes). Furthermore, there is an obvious camaraderie between drivers and conductors This bond is necessary for a functioning bus, given the stress and chaos of Bangalore’s roads. However, after spending several months observing these interactions I would conclude that this working relationship is also what fosters a unique, heterogenic space within the interior of the bus. It creates, and for the most part, maintains a public that is otherwise disappearing from Bengaluru and cities more generally, a point I will address in the conclusion.

²⁰¹ Over the course of writing this dissertation (2016-2017) BMTC and KSRTC conductors and drivers have gone on strike over salaries (among other issues) with the demand that salaries no longer correspond to the cost of living in the city.

4.2.6 Moving | Removing norms

To interact daily with a public, who, with the conductor at the helm, traverse a chaotic urban terrain requires a fair amount of personal confidence on behalf of the conductor. Sustained engagement with bus conductors illustrated how this confidence extended beyond the workplace and into exchanges taking places in the private and public domain. In this section I consider two distinct but related findings from this research. First, the way in which women conductors both remove and reinforce gender norms in respect to assumption of gender characteristics and responsibilities. These observations develop primarily through informal conversations with the women conductors on what it means to be a woman conductor. The second finding is in relation to how the work of conducting places these women in positions that are distinct from other women of a similar background. In the case of women bus conductors, their productive (i.e. employment) work in public allows them greater access to public space. The confidence required for this work is also present outside of work, allowing these women a level of mobility or freedom in public that women of similar class positions may not have. In the previous sections I illustrated how this confidence has a ripple effect among different personal and professional relationships and in this section I consider it in respect to the idea of not only the public but public space. That is, a redefinition of the “public women.”

One struggle throughout this research was communicating gender, that is reconciling my academic understanding of gender as a socially constructed, fluid yet problematic set of embodied relations with a conductor’s understanding of gender that largely revolved around daily responsibilities, expectations, bodily functions, and behaviors.

Mod- Do you feel like a women conductor or a bus conductor?

Mj- BMTC employee. First I am a BMTC staff, then I am a woman. When I'm on duty.

Mod- Do you think I'm asking too many questions about being a woman? Am I giving too much importance to being a woman as I talk to you about your work?

D- No. We feel we are different because we give a good job. We are doing a good job.

Mj- Whatever money I've earned, it's because I've worked hard.

Mod- Wouldn't you feel that even if you were a man?

Mj- I don't know. I think about that a lot but I feel that sometimes, I feel that if I had been a man I would have been spoiled. I would not have worked so hard. I would have involved myself in bad habits. I wouldn't feel like I deserved it as much.

During this conversation a sense of inequality was being acknowledged but a feeling of resentment was not conveyed. Mj and D had to work harder than their male counterparts but instead of being negative about it they treated it as a source of personal pride, pride from working hard and whether or not this extra work was recognized amongst others, it was recognized amongst the women. Furthermore, it was clear that these women were not envious of men, most probably Mj or D did not want to indulge in bad habits (in this instance referring primarily to drinking), but this would have been accepted (though not necessarily acceptable). In a separate but related conversation that took place in Mj's home, Mj showed me a big mirror she bought after she and her family moved into one of the recently constructed flats among the BMTC employee quarters. Having worked for the organization for so long she was entitled to move to the newly constructed wing, something few conductors were able to do. Visibly proud of both her flat and this mirror she made a point to tell me about her morning routine in front of the mirror. First she would comb her hair, braid it and then she would put her badge and lapel onto her

uniform. In so many words, she explained that in the act of putting on the uniform she becomes a different person. She has a duty (a word used often) and she does it well. She reaffirms that she is first and foremost a bus conductor.

Terms and ideas such as embodiment nor social construction of gender did not translate well while doing the project. However, I learned that in several ways women wore their gender much like they wore their uniform. Wearing their gender in this case was a positive quality. In the last round of focus groups this question of feeling like a woman or bus conductor was dismissed, it became clear that I was thinking of this in a dualistic sense that made gender recognition a negative attribute when in fact for many women it was a positive attribute.

S- They look at the conductor and behave. If there is a lady conductor... The lady [fare] collection, stopping [at the actual bus stop] everything will be done. The bus will go on time. Fares will be honest.

R- Passengers come to us. Women are approachable; we are more friendly than the gents. They ask us where is this bus going. They know we will help them.”

While women being more approachable and kind might be a stereotype, it was a positive stereotype and one that these conductors wanted to be identified with. As there were male drivers present during this interaction, they too supported this stereotype and thought it was positive. We then focused on whether or not male conductors might resent women conductors for a perceived favoritism—that is the women getting route, shift, and days off preferences. They acknowledged that men in the organization do feel this way, it is unavoidable. But they felt that as women it was their duty to spend this time caring for their family and this favoritism was justified. It was not clear how they would feel about men taking on these care giving duties.

From 2014 till the time of writing this dissertation, Dr. Ekroop Caur was the Managing Director of BMTC, the first woman to have such a position. It is undeniable that her presence as the head of the organization had a positive impact on the gender relations within the organization even if no specific policies were created during her time. Several interactions with Dr. Caur suggested that she had a strong sense of gender mobility, by which I mean points at which gender differences needed to be recognized and points at which they needed to dissolve. Similar to Mj, in a media interview, Dr. Caur acknowledges: “Gender matters. You have to constantly do better than others for people to take you seriously, which is the case for all levels of administration,” (Vishnubhatla 2017).

In separate meetings—including one on women’s safety—²⁰²Dr. Caur spoke of how men within the organization frequently complain of the concessions given to women. While she did not personally voice her opinion on the matter she acknowledged that for *these* women—that is the bus conductors and others, having Sundays off and working first shift were necessary priorities and in so far as the goal was to attract more women to the organization, such concessions would be made. Dr. Caur was not overtly challenging gender norms, particularly around expected reproductive duties, she is working within an existing structure and locating points for agency and change. While few would call this radical feminism I’d like to argue that in the context of women conductors, it has had possibly radical results.

²⁰² This meeting was initiated by several NGOs and held at the BMTC headquarters with Dr. Caur and one woman labor officer. It was a small, informal meeting of about 13 women who expressed varying concerns and ideas for how to address women’s safety in the context of transportation and public space. I was present

Confidence and Agency outside the bus

Which brings me to a second point about potential openings for agency, this time in respect to public space and the material and immaterial force that structures expectations and norms around what women can and should be doing in it. Revisiting a quote from the introduction, we recall: “Women in public spaces not conforming to masculine rules of ‘modesty’ are frequently the source of a great deal of masculine (and patriarchal) anxiety regarding the ‘decline of society’”(Srivastava 2012: 27). By default of their occupation, woman bus conductors are women in public spaces, be it inside the interior of the bus (which is in many way a public space), outside the bus in busy stations, or outside the bus station taking a small snack or hot drink. Also by default of their occupation, a bus conductor cannot be modest. She must distinguish herself from the passenger crowd and ensure that all comply with the task before her. As seen in the role-playing exercise, several women do this by demanding space, even when it seems no space exists. This demand and necessity are in direct opposition to the bodily behavior that is expected and performed by most women. “The containment of a woman’s body is demonstrated by the very tightness with which she holds herself and moves...In BEST [Mumbai public] buses, the average woman will occupy the least possible space, rendering herself as inconspicuous as she can...a reflection of women’s conditional access to public space,” (Phadke et al. 2011: 32). Containment of the female body is the basis of Iris Marion Young’s essay “Throwing Like a Girl” (1980) in which Merleau-Ponty’s phenomenological understanding of the body as the basis for which the subject understands and moves through the world²⁰³ is discussed in respect to gender. She argues

²⁰³ Young is specific in her essay that she is speaking in the context of advanced industrial, urban and commercial societies.

that modalities of the female body in relation to physical space suggests a tension between subjectivity and “being a mere object,” (142), that women’s movements tend to lack a certain trust in the entire body to accomplish a task. Throwing like a girl describes the tendency for women to treat objects as coming at them, a motility that speaks to women’s conditioning at a very early age of needing to be careful and to protect the body from the environment.

As this research entailed spending time with women bus conductors throughout their day, attention was directed at how these women moved not only while on the bus but outside the bus as well. Even after they had changed out of their khaki uniforms and became part of the public. An ability to create and be comfortable in space was observed. This was communicated through posture, head positioning, and gait. All women conductors know the city well; they know where to go to get a good deal on a sari, household appliances and a good, home style, North Karnataka thali²⁰⁴. While they will not go into a space that would “invite trouble” they know how to be comfortable in public space.

What kind of other women assert themselves in public space in India? Street vendors (who tend to be male), street sweepers (who must occupy space by nature of their task), and sex workers. None of these professions are considered particularly respectable, and less so for women, while the later is certainly indicative of a who inviting trouble. It is quite possible that the bus conductor is coming from a caste or class²⁰⁵ that participates in these professions and, similar to these livelihoods, a bus conductor is, in many ways a public woman. However, she has developed a confidence

²⁰⁴ A South Indian meal.

²⁰⁵ Evidence of which is found in the early dialogue between D and M in which they say that had they stated in the village they would have been coolies.

and sense of personal agency that allows her to transgress standard rules of modesty while still maintaining her respectability.

4.3.1 Concluding points

In this section of the dissertation I focused on how gender norms are communicated, embodied, and transformed through the micropolitics of quotidian experiences and exchanges that take place on and off the city's public buses. Concentrating on three different relationships, the bus conductor and her family, the conductor and the public, and the conductor and her male colleagues, I illustrate points and moments in which gender is moved and removed through daily interaction and exchange. While the systematic hiring of women for the job of bus conductors has its basis in institutional affirmative action, the repositioning of gender relations on several scales (e.g. the household, the passengering public, and with other BMTC coworkers), the confidence and agency a woman conductor develops has less to do with institutional policies and more to do with everyday, micropolitical navigations with the public. I'd like to suggest that the introduction and presence of women bus conductors does more for the establishing of positive gender relations in the contemporary city than most top down, technocratic approaches to women's transportation mobility. Similar to Kerkvliet's argument that power and politics operate on and through the micro, inherently unstructured²⁰⁶ level (2009), power dynamics and gender relations were negotiated through daily, informal interactions. Positive negotiations of gender were successful simply because of the repetitious, daily nature.

²⁰⁶ Unstructured referring to something outside formal politics, government, and institutions.

Several conductors said they knew many of the passengers on their routes and, after years of transporting them, had developed simple friendships in which passengers would bring ripe mangoes to the conductor, sweets during the festival season, and occasionally an invitation to a son or daughter's wedding. A similar finding was expressed in Atttoh's work on bus passengers in LA:

I must admit that I meet a lot of friends on the bus...I don't know if I think of the bus as being a thing I go to for sociality only—it's a way of getting places—but effectively it turns out that there is a lot of social interactions that occur. I notice that fellow riders tend to be good to each other. When you are on the bus, they know you are a fellow bus rider, they know you are in the same class...I think [transit] encourages people to cooperate and get along and share something" (Steven Geller, quoted in Atttoh 2017: 8).

Transportation systems are created by and for humans, yet the human dimension is often neglected in the constant effort to focus on increased efficiency, often discussed in the context of statistical information derived from large data sets. Focusing on women bus conductors also offers insight into those who are not in charge of but a part of the daily operations of transportation services, the individuals who not only interact with but also constitute the users of transportation. In *Rhythmanalysis* (1994; 2013), Lefebvre notes that "Objectively, for there to be change, a social group, a class or caste must intervene by imprinting a rhythm on an era, be it through force or in an insinuating manner...a group must designate itself as an innovator or producer of meaning. And its acts must inscribe themselves on reality," (Lefebvre, 2013: 24). However subtle it may be, the work of the conductor brings clear value to gender relations on several levels. However unradically radical the woman bus conductor may be, her work is subject to impending obsolescence.

KSRTC (in this instance referring to Kerala) announced in early 2017 that they would be phasing out separate roles for conductors and drivers, and one will be expected to do both. The corporation cited a struggle to pay salaries; though the issue that most women will quit if this is the case has come to light (Ananya 2017). As the car comes to the foreground of Bengaluru's landscape the street as a public space is under attack. However, something that has received no attention by activists and the media is the way in which the rise of the car is a direct threat to one of the few public spaces that truly brings together a diverse group of people—that is the interior spaces of public transportation. BMTC, in their effort to appeal to the tech savvy Bangalorians, has suggested that the Corporation move away from manual ticketing and fare collection and operate through smart cards and mobile applications. Eliminating the need for change could be a huge advantage for conductors. Unfortunately, it is most likely that elimination of manual ticketing might also entail the elimination of the conductor. In this way, two important disappearances are likely: that of public space and the woman conductor. Lastly, these observations are a unique starting point for thinking about this question in the long term. In so far as I have not stopped using the bus, this project trained me to look for certain things.

Chapter Five

Conclusion

5.1.1 Who is allowed to travel and for what reasons?

This dissertation began by asking *who is allowed to travel in cities of the 21st century? For what reasons and ?* (pg. 16), two questions that arose from empirical observations of seeing women in public, using public transportation, and engaged in different activities coupled with material documentation revealing normative perspectives about where women should be, what they should be doing, and what could or does happen to them when they step out of the house. These questions became an entry point into a gendered analysis of transportation in the context of Bengaluru and Delhi, India.

The term “allowed” was chosen as a frame for understanding who (e.g. parents) or what (e.g. economic circumstances) makes literal and conceptual mobility decisions for urban women. Consider findings from the 2011-2012 Indian Human Development Survey: five percent of Indian women have complete control over their spousal choice and eighty percent of women surveyed had to take permission from another family member if she wanted to visit a health clinic (Garg 2017). In a slightly different context, in 2017 the dating app, Tinder, launched a commercial in India with the intention of gaining approval from the parents of millions of current users. The ad features a doting mother watching her daughter as she gets ready to go out. A text appears on the daughter’s phone, it’s a Tinder notification. The daughter asks her mother what she’s thinks of her stylish kurta and palazzo pant outfit. The camera cues to the mother who smiles and says she likes it. In fact, it’s so good; it merits a “right swipe” (said in English) to which the daughter replies, “mom, how do you know?” Despite the feel good nature of

the ad, it did not go over well. As said by one commentator: “Reality-mom swipes right on daughter’s cheek”²⁰⁷).

I use this as an example for thinking through terms such as: allow, allowed, and able. Almost anyone with a smart phone is able to download Tinder (and according to the company 400 percent more people in India downloaded it in 2017 than 2016) and many are able to use it. As reflected in the ad, changing mindsets of an older generation means that some parents of young, urban, middle class women are increasingly comfortable allowing their daughters to date men of their choice. But, as suggested by the 2011-2012 Indian Human Development Survey, very few are allowed complete control over their future partners.

In the context of this project, it could be argued that my decision to focus on women who commute daily for employment reasons rendered the first question irrelevant. If “allowing” or being “allowed” starts with permission from the family then women commuting daily for employment or education are inherently allowed and able to travel. Focusing on this population of women however provides an entry point into the complexity of the problem, a problem well captured in the Tinder ad and subsequent responses. My hypothesis was that mobility for urban women was rarely an autonomous, individual decision. Even if employment and commuting was allowed by parents or entirely a woman’s choice, external structures and infrastructures, social norms and judgments made impressionable marks on the journey.

Jyoti, the young woman who died after being gang raped in Delhi, was both allowed and able to travel to the cinema with her friend. However, when she chose to

²⁰⁷ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oEnxT8Z5-1c> for the original video see: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_eYJqsPpjQo

take a chartered bus home at 9:00 pm, her mobility was violently intercepted. Four men decided she should neither be allowed nor able to travel home. These men justified their violence on the grounds that Jyoti had deviated from behavior appropriate for a woman of her age and socio-economic background. While this is an extreme example, it was the catalyst for an investigation into what allowing and ability to travel in the city means for different groups of working women. -

In this final chapter I identify the central theme of this dissertation and then revisit specific research questions from the introductory chapter. I put these into conversation with specific findings from the three case studies. From here I go into the variations on the theme, focusing on three aspects of mobility: surveillance and protection, time of day, and confidence, again considering them in relation to the three case studies. I conclude by reiterating key findings from this project and how they interface with policy, and what is recommended for future research.

5.1.2 The theme of navigating gender

The explosive growth of urban life in India is one of many dynamics that translates into more women being in and traversing public space. Where women are and what they are doing reflects and reinforces several additional positionalities—one's class, age, profession, religion, and so on. In the context of traveling, some have easy commutes, for others it is arduous. However, the theme central to this research is that *all women consciously or unconsciously navigate gender norms while using transportation to commute to, from, and in employment*. Said differently, using transportation shores up gendered notions of mobility, notions that manifest in different ways for different women. When I say consciously I am referring to obvious moments in which a woman is

made to *feel* her gender through stares or comments designed to make her feel uncomfortable while traveling. Or when she is traveling in the general compartment of the Delhi metro and a man tells her to go to the women only car because that is where women should be. This unconsciously speaks to the less obvious connections between transportation and gender, for example, deciding a transportation mode according to its cost wherein the affordability of a mode is indirectly tied to normative structures that keep women's wages lower than men's²⁰⁸, making all forms of transportation more expensive to use—particularly for young unmarried women or women-headed households in which there is only one income.

In Chapter Two, it was found that the majority of women surveyed in the IT firm choose the company bus based on the sense of security it offered. This was a form of pseudo public transportation, it was a bus, but a bus full of the “right kind” of people, people with similar backgrounds who understood and adhered to the firm's code of conduct. Women with children who commute by public bus preferred the company bus, but found that the fixed departure times did not fit with the flexibility required for caregiving—again illustrating that gender norms were dictating commuting decisions. Young hires took the public bus, choosing a monthly pass as a way of saving money and having a mode that allowed them to commute outside of work.

In Chapter Three I found that collectively, young unmarried working women in Delhi were cost conscious when it came to commuting, a finding similar to the young hires at the IT firm. Concern for personal security was not at the forefront of modal

²⁰⁸ A 2017 survey done by Monster India (a job aggregator) found that women, on average, make 25 percent less than men working in similar jobs. The results of this survey were discussed by Scroll.in staff: <https://scroll.in/latest/831064/women-in-india-inc-earn-25-less-than-their-male-counterparts-monster-india-survey> [Accessed 10.10.17]

decision-making for young women who stayed in hostels partially because most of these women didn't travel after p.m., and the hostel did not allow women to be out after 10pm. On the other hand, women who worked at Select City Walk mall valued personal security more than the working women who stayed at the hostel. Their employment sector, lower paid and less valued (and thus reflective of a different class position), required them to work past dark.

Based on surveys and interviews, I found that most women were conscious of how they *should* dress while in or traveling on public transportation. Dressing appropriately, traditionally, or modestly was one way of deterring unwanted attention and harassment. Women in the hostel might not be allowed out of the hostel wearing shorts or a western style dress as per hostel rules. But even if she was able to, it was thought that she would not be able to travel in the city without facing some kind of harassment. In a group discussion at the working women's hostel in RK Puram, women lamented that the social structure of the city was such that women in public are inherently scrutinized according to where they are, what they are doing and wearing. If a woman was to report harassment to the police or the media, these questions would be fielded first to establish if she "deserved" to be harassed. Focusing on the micropolitical relationships between women bus conductors and their families, co-workers, and the public, in Chapter Four I traced the gradual process through which these women gain confidence in their line of work and subsequent social relations. For these conductors, the act of putting on the khaki BMTC uniform was a daily ritual that initiated a sense of duty and responsibility that transcended gender. Being able to wear this uniform made it possible (allowed her) to do the job with

confidence. Navigating the biological aspects of being a woman was most challenging when a conductor was pregnant or had small children.

Collectively, each of these case studies uses transportation as a lens through which we see how gender norms are negotiated, renegotiated, and/or reinforced. Bringing the first research question *who is allowed to travel* into conversation with this theme of navigating gender, we find that these women are allowed to travel due to social (e.g. the family) and institutional structures. In the case of the latter, I am referring to transportation policies and infrastructures. While being allowed to travel is a start in the context of women's improved physical and social mobility, it does not address other embedded social positionalities, particularly that of class.

The young woman working at the mobile phone store in Nehru Place lives with her Aunt and Uncle. Her own parents died and she's expected to bring income into her extended family's home. She would prefer to get a degree in engineering but for now she must work. Her aunt and uncle permit her to travel for economic but not educational purposes. To get to work she travels by metro, a mode that makes her commute significantly better than her previous job, which required two bus transfers. The metro is time efficient and she is grateful for the women's only car, although she rarely gets a seat it is one less stress to worry about.

The young Malayalam woman from the IT firm travels by company bus for her work commute and loves using her two wheeler on the weekends. For holiday, she goes and visits her parents who live in Dubai and enjoys shopping over there. She finds the firm's policy on women needing to sign out if they leave the campus after p.m. restrictive to her mobility and feels that the policy singles her out when she is working late with her

mostly male team. Both these women are allowed to travel, at a household level and at an institutional level. Both navigate or negotiate gender norms in subtle and overt ways. Although their class positions are very different from one another they share a commonality found throughout all of the narratives of the women profiled in this dissertation. The theme that all of these women navigate some aspect of gender while using transportation is also a theme of agency, that is to say all of these women have found a way to navigate. Despite the challenge of gendered aspects of transportation, these women are able to navigate them.

5.1.3 Revisiting the research questions

What modes are women choosing and for what reasons?

Mode choice is a central term and concept to transportation research. The question of choosing a mode was developed prior to executing the empirical component of this dissertation and as the research progressed, it became apparent that choice was not the correct term for understanding mobility decisions of the women making up this research. While these women have more choice than those constituting the urban poor, transportation was framed as a decision as opposed to a choice. The embedded positionalities that constitute a woman's mobility did not manifest as a right or freedom to choose from a variety of equally valued modal options. Commuting was about trade offs and careful considerations. This is reflected in the comment made by the head of Facilities Management—women (unlike men) must do their homework before traveling.

Women who commute by bus do not find it as comfortable as the Delhi metro but appreciate the low cost and the connectivity, particularly if a transfer isn't needed. For the case of women working in retail, modal decisions are also determined by employment

location. More than 50 percent of these women said they didn't try for certain jobs due to the difficulty in commuting. This is one of several examples in which modal decisions are connecting to and reinforced by non-modal aspects of mobility, that is economic and social mobility.

Does one's specific employment sector factor into transportation decisions?

One's employment sector factored into transportation decisions of all women profiled in this dissertation. The most discussed example was women working in the IT sector. The majority of women surveyed commuted by a mode offered by the firm. The higher salaries associated with being a knowledge worker (and therefore that sector) allowed these women to commute by car outside of work. Women working in retail in Delhi were mindful of their mode at night as they usually left work after dark. One middle aged female security guard who worked at the mall had her husband pick her up on his two-wheeler in order to avoid riding public transportation at night. She felt she would be singled out and harassed both because of her position as a woman and for her line of work.

Many of the working women in Delhi preferred to commute home by metro where the passengers were more likely to be of "a professional class". Women who worked at the mall said they changed out of their work clothes and into more traditional wear before leaving. Changing dress accomplished two purposes. First, it acted as a deterrent to unwanted attention from men while on public transportation. Second, (but related), it meant women could travel home without being identified with their employment sector. A young woman working retail in a high end mall could be negatively perceived by the public, linked to ideas of promiscuity or non-traditional values. Changing out of work

clothes deterred this aspect of public scrutiny. While this finding is similar to the example of the woman security guard who rode home with her husband there are several differences; first, the security guard was older and with a family, harassment would not take the form of cat calling or eve teasing as it might for younger women, but could manifest in physical violence or theft. Furthermore, working in security is a lower class position than working as a sales associate, inviting further possibilities for violence and disrespect.

Mode choice wasn't discussed in the case study of women bus conductors, because commuting is the basis of their employment. Time spent with conductors outside of work was an opportunity to see these women as bus passengers. Conductors and their families receive free bus passes; a job benefit that in turn influenced their modal decisions (and opportunities) of children and husbands. The group that was less relevant to this research question were the women who stayed in the hostel. For this population, the connection between shelter, employment, and transportation was strong. Decisions for this population usually started with knowing one's place of employment and then finding a suitable (safe) accommodation that in turn ensured a safe and secure work commute. Unlike other populations surveyed, care giving duties and responsibilities did not factor into modal decisions.

Does an inquiry into transportation policies from the supply side reveal dominate gender norms in relation to women's urban mobility?

The purpose of this question was to understand how transportation planners, engineers, and industry elites understood gendered notions of transportation, what they felt were the key issues faced by women and possible solutions. One commonality that emerged from

these interviews was an emphasis on security mechanisms like police, bag checks, and CCTV cameras as deterrents to crimes against women (and crime in general). The second commonality was a normative position emphasizing that a woman was responsible for her own safety. Attitudes such as men will be men or a woman's natural role is that of caregiver suggests that those making policy decisions subscribe to normative assumptions of where women should be at certain times of day and what they should be doing. Notable exceptions to this were Mrs. Kaur from the NCW and Dr. Caur from BMTC.

5.2.1 Variations

Three variations to this theme of navigating gender norms while using transportation emerged through the research process. These are: Surveillance and protection, time of Day, and confidence and agency. As many of these have already been discussed, I will briefly revisit them here.

Surveillance and protection

Urban surveillance is a topic in its own right with strong links to a much broader project of disciplining the public, technocracy, and the movement toward “smart”, data-driven societies. This aspect of surveillance is found in the example of the Delhi metro, where ubiquitous signage and announcements of passenger do's and don'ts is tied to the making of Delhi and its residents into a world class city. The company bus of the IT firm is a form of employee surveillance of both men and women. It guarantees the firm a supply of labor at set times daily, GPS tracking ensures that any deviation to normal arrivals can be accounted for. The interior of the bus is treated as an extension of the workplace with all passengers adhering to company codes of conduct. In the IT sector, night taxis required a

male security guard to be present in the car. GPS tracking via phone app coupled with form signing from the moment she leaves the campus to when she arrives at her doorstep ensures strict monitoring of the journey home and that no “foul play” has occurred.

Surveillance is also a variation or extension of the question of being allowed to travel. Commuting, traveling, and mobility (both physical and social) starts with allowance or permission to do so, this is followed by scrutiny or surveillance of such mobility. While the working women’s hostels in Delhi cannot monitor every movement of their young women, strict curfews, signing in and out forms for guests, and the presence of male security guards are a type of insurance for the families who send their daughters to the city for educational and employment opportunities. Conversations with the women who stayed at these hostels and existing literature on working women’s hostels illustrate how pervasive and oppressive this surveillance can be—from not being able to wear comfortable clothes (i.e. shorts) inside the hostel to being punished by shaming if seen with a man who was not her brother or father.

Women who commute by bus tend to dress more conservatively than those who commute by metro. But that isn’t to say that women who commute by metro ride free of staring or public scrutiny. One only needs to go to YouTube to find just how pervasive surveillance of female mobility in Delhi is in the age of the internet. Channels like “Date Beautiful Girls” or tags like “hot girls in metro” provide internet users with a voyeuristic opportunity to watch candid videos of women wearing modern clothes with suggestions of how to approach and date them. On the opposite side of the spectrum, “drunk girls” is equally popular, again candid videos from smart phones document (and upload) evidence of declining female morality.

As women working in the public domain, women bus conductors were subject to public scrutiny, not just as women but also in respect to how well they performed their duties. A bus conductor had to walk into her job with a feeling of confidence if she was to gain the respect of the public.

Surveillance and restrictions more generally are legitimized as being for a woman's own good (Phadke 2012), for her protection. To question such measures would in turn suggest that a woman's morals and respectability should be questioned. While all women, irrespective of class, are surveyed in one form or another, middle class women tend to be the recipients of structural protective measures and policies. This claim revisits the literature review of Chapter One, with Phadke et al (2011) and Radhakrishnan (2011) positioning middle class women as the bearers or markers of progress, tradition, and respectability and was supported through empirical evidence for this research project. Middle class neighborhoods, metro stations in wealthy parts of the city, malls, and global workplaces are the first places to get CCTV, street lighting, and security personnel—three normative measures considered fundamental to the protection of women. Women's help line numbers are most often clearly displayed in “good” transportation. Malls with designated car parking for women and pink Eve cabs are modal interventions based on protecting women, but who can afford these services and who benefits from them?

Time of day

Gendered notions of transportation manifest differently in these groups of working women but one commonality throughout these narratives is how time of day affects physical mobility and modal decisions specifically. Time of day in the context of

commuting was central to all the case studies and helps to contextualize the difference between being allowed and being able to travel.

The IT sector in India is predicated on constant contact with people and companies outside of India, necessitating an almost 24 hour workforce. Although the 1948 Factories Act laid out specific times when women could and could not work, the IT sector overwrote these government regulations by creating sector-based transportation policies that made it possible (i.e. allowed) for women to work, and travel home at times that were previously not allowed. Night taxis, with their strict monitoring systems and security personnel, means that a woman employee is *able* to travel home securely. As women working in the Special Economic Zones (SEZs) of the IT campus, women security guards and office cleaners are also allowed to work after p.m. but they may not be able to travel home in a secure mode of transportation.

Young working women in Delhi, regardless of sector, do not like to commute after p.m., a time when there are far fewer women out in public. Safety of a particular transportation mode did not figure as strongly into modal decisions among this population as originally expected with the reasoning being that women don't travel at times that are considered unsafe to be out in public. A noted exception to this was the women who worked at Select City Walk, several of these women left work at 7:30pm and, given their long commutes, would be in public after p.m. For these women, safety and security was an important aspect of modal decision making.

Most women BMTC bus conductors work the first shift, from approximately 6:30am to 2:30pm. This was preferred so that women could be home in time to pick up children and take care of household duties. Women who took the second shift

(approximately 2:00-9:00pm) were given routes deemed “safe” by BMTC to avoid any unwanted incidents between women conductors and male passengers. Conversations with human resources and management at BMTC illustrated that women conductors were given shift (and route) preferences so as to encourage more women to take up conducting work. It was thought that some male conductors resented this preferential treatment.

Women’s attitudes toward being in public after dark is one of the clearest examples of how broader gender norms interface with transportation decisions and how this manifests in respect to being allowed and/or able to travel. The second dimension to this is of class—women with access to personal vehicles are able to travel after dark in a way that women who rely on public transportation are not. Take back the night walks, that is women-led group walks to assert a female presence in public after dark is one powerful way of challenging gender norms that dictate when women should be in public. But it is clear that for a woman traveling on her own, navigating the city at night is a decision she would rather not face.

Confidence and agency

Confidence in one’s self develops through many different avenues. All women who make up this doctoral research have confidence and agency of one form or another. This is implied by the very theme of navigating gender while using transportation wherein navigation is predicated on having some level of confidence to engage in action and movement. Supportive educational environments and family members are crucial to developing confident women. The clearest example of this was the young bus conductor whose father rode her bus route until she became confident in her ability to do the job.

Conversations about confidence were most explicit when talking to the young working women in Delhi, particularly in the context of personal aspirations and how to handle negative situations of harassment. Confidence in one's self was implicit to the daily mobility practices and responsibilities of women bus conductors. Referencing the discussion in Chapter Two on "tech privilege", it can be argued that compared to other women profiled, a knowledge worker's economic and social mobility is quite high. Yet confidence was never explicitly brought up in interviews or discussions with this population. Nevertheless, daily mobility practices were still framed by these women as both a struggle as well as an achievement, particularly for new hires. All women were aware of their multiple positionalities and expressed a determination to navigate and succeed in the contemporary city.

5.2.2 What does this mean for transportation planning?

The strength of this dissertation is in connecting relational threads that illustrate key issues women face while navigating the complexities of the rapidly transforming cities of Bengaluru and Delhi. The two key findings of this dissertation are that mobility decisions of women are rarely individual/autonomous decisions and that improvement to women's mobility broadly, and safety and security while in public specifically, will improve only with awareness and education of all members of society. These findings are social rather than technical in nature, making it difficult for transportation planners and policy makers to devise salient, implementable solutions.

Nevertheless, technical interventions warrant consideration. The most commonly cited example is increasing the number of public bathrooms for women, and in public transit stations and systems. Other interventions are not directly tied to gender, but have a

gendered dimension. Increasing the frequency of bus services minimizes crowding and when crowds are fewer, the frequency of unwanted physical contact between men and women is minimized. This decreases the need for gender-segregated spaces. Subsidizing bus and metro passes based on one's individual income is another way of keeping transportation affordable for not just women, but for all. If we know that women in India make 25 percent less than men in similar positions, then this is one way of ensuring that concern for cost isn't the primary factor in the modal decision making of women.

One starting point for policy is to focus on understanding the problem, more specifically, what women see as the problem. If women see the problem as a need for education while men see it as security problem, one solved by increasing the number of CCTV cameras and security personnel, then transportation mobility will remain a gendered experience. Transportation planners must understand the dual burden of women's labor and how this manifests in mobility. BMTC's treatment of women conductors took this approach. Women could approach management and request shift and day off preferences so that they could manage their caregiving roles. While we could argue that this reinforces normative ideas of who should do caregiving work, it is a practice that draws and keeps women in the profession. The more women in the profession, the more opportunities for people/the public to see women performing jobs and duties not traditionally associated with their gender.

This is a contextual as opposed to formal policy. BMTC could strengthen this practice by initiating paternity/family leave and compliment this policy with awareness training that encourages men to feel empowered to take paid leave for taking care of new or aging family members. Giving men a structured opportunity to take on caregiving

work is an opportunity for them to experience the energy and time required to perform these tasks.

In contrast to the informal requests for shift preferences in BMTC, the guaranteed ride home policy for a woman in the IT sector is a formal, top down policy. It also attracts and retains women employees but is one based on protecting women from real and perceived dangers of traveling after dark as opposed to understanding dual burdens of women's labor. Furthermore, it is based on protecting specific firms and their reputations in the event of an unwanted incident. It keeps business going. Providing women with night taxis might attract and retain women employees but unlike the example of BMTC, this policy does not increase women's presence in public, a crucial aspect to consider in the context of gendered dimensions of mobility.

Similarly, a second arena for policy making is to move away from public transportation hierarchies within public transit systems in urban India. As a quasi government Corporation, BMTC runs on a for profit model. If the largest profit comes from contracting out buses to the tech sector or plying routes serviced by the IT sector then the rest of the city loses out. IT firms should (and many do) recognize the potential polarizing effect this has on the city. One recommendation is for the private sector to direct Corporate Social Responsibility initiatives toward public transportation in the city, to come up with solutions that benefit all residents.

Future research directions

None of the women who were part of this research constituted the working poor; and almost none constituted members of the urban elite. Most of these women were within

some spectrum of middle classness, with the women working in retail and as bus conductors being of a lower economic, class, and caste position than women working in the IT sector or staying in the working women's hostel. Future research should focus on those who were left out.

Additional populations to consider would be differently abled women, the elderly, and women headed households. It should be noted that while religion was not explicitly addressed in either the survey or during interviews, based on participant names, jewelry, and other material markers, it was believed that the majority of these women were Hindu. This is an oversight of further positionalities and complexities required to understanding gendered notions of transportation in urban India. Continued qualitative research on the mobility decisions, choices, and preferences of women who were not part of this study will strengthen understanding of relational threads between embedded positionalities and how they manifest in transportation decisions.

Returning to this question of public transportation and the polarization of cities, a macro, comparative approach to understanding how specific aspects of transportation systems influence social relations, urban form, and cohesiveness of cities should be explored. Can we objectively understand, from a supply side, how BMTC's decision to make tiered fare structures with different quality buses servicing different routes speed up the social polarization of the city? How does BMTC's ridership compare to that of Mumbai's BEST? How do different agency approaches and state funding structures translate into daily mobility practices and decisions of residents? Moving away from planning and policy, future research should turn to social geography to look for direct linkages between the respatialization of the city and respatialization of bodies.

Lastly, we have the question of accountability. While accountability was not explicitly discussed in this dissertation, it is central to understanding how gendered notions of transportation manifest in different ways for different categories of working women. Who and what are accountable to whom? If we know that the majority of women surveyed believe that positive changes in respect to gender norms starts with education then who and what is accountable for that education

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Appendix A: Bangalore Employee Commute Survey

Bangalore Commuter Survey

I am a PhD student of urban planning writing my thesis on transportation mobility in Bangalore. The purpose of this survey is to understand how you get to and from work and the various factors that influence your transportation decisions. I am also interested in learning about factors that influence your transportation decisions outside of work and any barriers you face to accessing transportation. Your inputs are for academic purposes only. Although the results from my data collection will be shared with the Infosys Transport Committee and possibly city officials, there should be no expectation that taking this survey will result in a better transportation experience.

The survey will take approximately 10 minutes to complete. Those electing to participate in this survey can be assured confidentiality; it has been designed so that answers cannot be linked to employee IDs or names. If you have any questions or wish to learn about the results you may contact me at:

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Work Commute

When answering this series of questions, please think about your commute to and from work within the past two weeks.

1. Out of the three factors listed below. Please choose the one that is most important to you when choosing your mode of transportation:

- ☐ Cost
- ☐ Security
- ☐ Efficiency

2. How do you travel to work?

[IF RESPONSE IS 3-8, PLEASE SKIP QUESTIONS 4-8]

- ☐ A 1 Company bus
- ☐ B 2 Public/city bus
- ☐ C 3 Car-self driven
- ☐ E 4 Car-driven
- ☐ F 5 Carpool
- ☐ G 6 Taxi
- ☐ H 7 Two-wheeler
- ☐ I 8 Auto rickshaw
- ☐ J 9 Bicycle
- ☐ K 10 Walk
- ☐ L 11 Other _____

3. Please **select up to three reasons** for travelling to work this way.

☐ A Cost savings

☐ B I avoid traffic and congestion

☐ C It allows me flexibility (e.g. I can depart when I wish)

☐ D I can utilize my travel time (e.g. I can read while traveling)

☐ E It is the most comfortable way to travel

☐ F It is convenient for other members of my family (e.g. spouse drives, I take the

bus)

- ☐ _G Environmental/sustainability reasons
- ☐ _H I feel safe travelling this way
- ☐ _I It allows me to get physical exercise
- ☐ _J I am physically disabled, and have limited mobility
- ☐ _K Parking is difficult/too expensive
- ☐ _L Other_____

4. All factors aside, if you could travel to work any way you wanted, what would it be?

- ☐ Company bus
- ☐ Public/city bus
- ☐ Car-self driven
- ☐ Car-driven
- ☐ Carpool
- ☐ Taxi
- ☐ Two-wheeler
- ☐ Auto rickshaw
- ☐ Bicycle
- ☐ Bangalore Metro Rail
- ☐ Walk
- ☐ Other_____

5. How do you get from your place of residence to the bus stop?

- ☐ By car
- ☐ By two-wheeler
- ☐ By auto-rickshaw
- ☐ By public bus
- ☐ Walk
- ☐ Other_____

6. Approximately how many minutes does it take for you to get from your place of residence to the bus stop?

- ☐ <10
- ☐ 11-20
- ☐ 21-30
- ☐ >31

7. In general, how secure do you feel while travelling between your place of residence and the bus stop?

- ☐ I feel very secure
- ☐ I usually feel secure
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ I usually feel insecure
- ☐ I feel very insecure

8. In general, how secure do you feel while *on* the bus?

- ☐ I feel very secure
- ☐ I usually feel secure
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ I usually feel insecure
- ☐ I feel very insecure

9. If you DO NOT take the company bus, what might encourage you to take it?

(Please select up to three reasons)

- ☐ A N/A, I take the company bus
- ☐ B Having a bus stop closer to my place of residence
- ☐ C Feeling secure at the bus stop
- ☐ D Feeling secure on the bus
- ☐ E Increasing the number of buses so they are less crowded
- ☐ F Time flexibility: having more morning and evening travel times
- ☐ G Better disability services

- ☐ H Reducing the cost of the bus or making it free
- ☐ I Better information (e.g. smart phone applications) regarding bus routes and scheduling
- ☐ J I do not wish to commute by bus, period
- ☐ K Using the bus is not an option due to personal reasons (e.g. social, religious)
- ☐ L Other _____

10. Approximately how many minutes does it take you to travel from your place of residence to work?

- ☐ <15
- ☐ 16-30
- ☐ 31-45
- ☐ 46-60
- ☐ >61

11. Approximately how many kilometers do you travel from home to work?

- ☐ <5
- ☐ 6-10
- ☐ 11-20
- ☐ 21-30
- ☐ >31

12. Compared to people you know, do you consider your work commute to be:

- ☐ Easy
- ☐ Average
- ☐ Difficult

13. When do you typically?

Arrive at work? _____

Depart work? _____

14. Is Flextime an option for you?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

15. Have you ever quit a job because it was hard for you to get to work?

Yes _____ No _____

16. Do you pick up or drop off children/family members while travelling to or from work?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Security

One purpose of this survey is to understand if you perceive your commute to and from work to be any more or any less secure than other, non-work related commutes and if this security is different for men and women. Examples of personal security include: feeling safe from crime (e.g. pickpocketing), feeling safe from verbal harassment, physical harassment and or violence.

17. Overall, how does your feeling of personal security affect how you get to and from work?

- ☐ It is the most important factor to me
- ☐ It is very important to me
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ It is not very important to me
- ☐ It is not at all important to me

18. Do you think women need to be more concerned with their personal security than men *while using the company bus*? [Please respond even if you do not take the company bus]

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Can you please explain why or why not?

19. Do you think women need to be more concerned with their personal security than men *while using public transportation in Bangalore*? [Please respond even if you do not use public transportation]

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

20. Outside of work, which mode of transport do you usually use when travelling within Bangalore?

- ☐ Public/city bus
- ☐ Car-self driven
- ☐ Car-driven
- ☐ Carpool
- ☐ Taxi
- ☐ Two-wheeler
- ☐ Auto rickshaw
- ☐ Bicycle
- ☐ Walking
- ☐ Other_____

21. Which mode of transportation do you believe poses the biggest threat to one's personal security when travelling within Bangalore?

- ☐ Public/city bus
- ☐ Car
- ☐ Carpool
- ☐ Taxi
- ☐ Two-wheeler
- ☐ Auto rickshaw
- ☐ Bicycle
- ☐ Walking

- o Other _____

Can you please explain why?

22. What could Infosys do to improve work commutes? Please be as specific as possible.

1. 23. What could city officials do to improve commuting in Bangalore? Please be as specific as possible.

Demographics

24. What is your gender?

- o Male
- o Female

25. What is your age?

- o <19
- o 20-29
- o 30-39
- o 40+

26. What location do you live in? _____

27. Please select **up to three reasons** for choosing this place of residence.

- o Affordability
- o Proximity to family or friends
- o Proximity to my place of work
- o Proximity to a family member's place of work (e.g. spouse)
- o The neighborhood itself (e.g. good amenities, clean environment)
- o Ancestral home
- o I did not chose this location

- ☐ Other, please state _____.

28. What is your living situation?

- ☐ Paid Guest
- ☐ Shared group living
- ☐ Living with family
- ☐ Living with spouse/extended family
- ☐ Other _____.

29. Do you have any children or take care of any children under the age of 16?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

30. Do you or your spouse (if applicable) own a car?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

31. Do you or your spouse (if applicable) own a two-wheeler?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

32. How many years have you worked in Bangalore? _____

33. Are you native to Karnataka?

- Yes
- No

What is your place of origin? _____

34. What is your highest degree of education completed?

- ☐ < B.A.
- ☐ B.A.

- o P.G.
- o PhD

35. Which monthly income category would you describe yourself as being in?

- o <25,000 INR
- o 26,000-49,000/pm INR
- o 50,000-99,000 INR
- o 100,000-199,000 INR
- o >200,000 INR

Appendix B: Delhi Working Women's Survey

Survey of Working Women and Mode Choice, Case Study of Delhi

Travel Characteristics

1. 1. Q1_A Home location in Delhi:..... Q1_B
Nearest bus stop or metro:.....
2. 2. Q2_A Work location in Delhi: Q2_B
Nearest bus stop or metro:
3. 3. Usual start time home to work AM/PM Usual start time
work to home AM/PM
4. 4. Approximately how many minutes do you spend traveling to work?
.....
1. 5. Primary mode used for work trip:
Metro (1) Office Transportation (4) 2 wheeler (6) Cycle (8) Rickshaw
(10)
Bus (2) Chartered Bus (5) Auto (7) Personal car
(9) Walking (11)
Car Pool (3) Other: Please Specify
1. 6. Reasons for using this mode: (more than one)
Cost Effective (1) Safe from accidents (3) Personal security (5) Time
effective (7)
Comfortable (2) Environment Friendly (4) Flexible (6)
Others.....

Safety and Security

1. 7. Have you 'ever declined'/'not tried for' a job because of difficulty in
commuting?
Yes (1) No (2)

1. 8. Do you feel that the time and energy required to commute everyday affects the quality of your life?

Yes (1) No (2)

1. 9. Which of these problems have you faced during your daily commute?

Problems	Transportation Mode	How often	Time of Day
Verbal harassment (A)			
Physical harassment (B)			
Staring/Ogling (C)			
Theft (D)			
Others (E)			

1. 10. Does time of day affect your feeling of personal security while traveling?

Yes No

2. 11. If you were harassed while using public transportation do you know who to contact? Yes No

3. 12. Would you contact/report the incident? Yes No

a. a. Why or why not?

.....
.....

1. 13. On a scale of 1-5 which of these makes you feel safe? (1- Least Important 5- Most Important)

While waiting for transportation	In transportation		
Presence of commercial activities (A1)		Seat Availability (B1)	

Police patrolling/security check (A2)		Police presence (B2)	
CCTV (A3)		Women only space (B3)	
Street lights (A4)		Map of route (B4)	
Segregated/continuous walkway (A5)		Help line info (B5)	
Any Other (Specify) (A6)		Any other (specify) (B6)	

1. 14. Does travelling by public transportation have any impact on the way to dress? Yes No
If Yes: How?

Mode Usage

1. 15. Please rate your level of satisfaction with the metro (even if occasional user):
Poor (1) Satisfactory Good Very good Excellent
Why?

1. 16. Please rate your level of satisfaction with the buses (even if occasional user):
Poor Satisfactory Good Very good Excellent
Why?

1. 17. What is your ideal mode of transport?

Personal Car (1) Office Transportation (3) 2 wheeler (5) Cycle (7)
Rickshaw (9)
Bus (2) Chartered Bus (4) Auto (6) Metro (8) Walking (10)

Why? (more than one)

Cost Effective (1) Safe from accidents (3) Secure (4) Time effective (6)

Comfortable (2) — ~~Stylish (4)~~ Environment Friendly (5) Flexible (7)
Others.....

1. 18. If you are not using your ideal mode of transport, why not?

High cost (1) Safety (4) Security (6) Family pressure (8)

Not comfortable (2) Not Flexible (5) Slow (7) Long Commuting Distance (9)

No parking availability (3)

Others.....

Socio Economic Details

1. 19. Age? ≤ 18 (1) 19-25 (2) 26-32 (3) 33-39 (4) ≥ 40 (5)

1. 20. Profession:

1. 21. On a scale of 1-5 what are some reasons for working? (1- Least Important 5- Most Important)

To help my family (A)	
To save for my future (B)	
I enjoy working (C)	
Feeling of independence (D)	
I learn new things while working (E)	
Meet new people (F)	

1. 22. Do you see yourself working in five years from now? Yes No
Why or why not?

1. 23. State of origin..... How
long have you lived in Delhi?
1. 24. Do you have children? Yes..... No.....
1. 25. Your monthly income (in INR)?
 < 5,000 (1) 5,001-20,000 (2) 20,001-50,000 (3) 50,000-
 80,000 (4) >80,000 (5)
1. 26. How many of these do you have at home? Car..... 2
 Wheeler..... Bicylce.....