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ADDRESSING THE INTERLINKAGES BETWEEN GENDER AND TRANSPORT IN DEVELOPING ECONOMIES

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Author presents here a brief outline of the proposed paper, which will be available in its final form in mid-January 2019.

PART I – Development, gender and transport

The aim of the final paper will be to assist in both development and implementation of systems which will lead to enhanced accessibility for women, through which they can generate wealth and empower themselves. Some of the questions that the paper will focus on to highlight future policy directions are outlined below:

- i. What kind of (daily) mobility needs do women have?
- ii. What are the limitations they face wrt time constraints, financial constraints, safety constraints etc.
- iii. Can we minimize these constraints? For ex. (i) through spending less time and money on their daily travelling, (ii) can they use their time differently?
- iv. What ratio of women are in the different services and sectors of goods production – manufacturing services (sewing etc.), care services (maids, cooks etc.) etc.?

Though the relationship between transportation and economics growth has been diligently studied, similar connections from a gender perspective are largely lacking. Typically, the economics of trade has been a male dominated perspective.

Throughout the developing world, we find that there exists a very clear division of labour, which is even more severely pronounced among the poor population as seen through the mapping of physical labour vs. care services. In these circumstances, we need to understand that the importance of daily mobilities is markedly for women. It is not related to manufacturing of goods, transportation of goods, labour accessibility etc. For women, daily mobilities hinges on accessibility to local services. And thus questions like - *What is the difference between the average trip length of women? What function does transportation play for women? Within an economic domain, what function do women play? If a woman saves 10 minutes, what does it mean? What are the systematic benefits?* etc. – demands further consideration.

The issue of safety and sexual harassment also remains a highly gendered topic, and does not affect the daily mobilities of men to the same extent as women.

Strong linkages exist between daily mobilities/accessibility and women equality/emancipation, which shares a strong relationship with economic growth potentials of a nation. Growth theory states that it is the savings which create economic growth. If the accessibility of women is enabled – the physical range they are able to travel in the given travel time budget – it will lead to exploration of employment opportunities, cheaper markets, efficiency in managing the family which will all culminate into savings, and thereby adding to the economy at large.

For example, if we are able to improve the efficiency of daily mobilities/ accessibility through lowering the travel time, it will create justification for engaging in gainful employment, making better business deals etc. subsequently improving the efficiency of spending and savings¹. It can be safely assumed

¹ What developing countries need is money in circulation, and it seems that there is a direct link between accessibility available to women, frequency of exchange in the society and money velocity.

that increased productivity will get more local investments, and further enable the community to grow.

A further layering to the discussion on mobilities/accessibility is provided by the ‘smart’ city agendas and smart mobilities which currently pervades discussions undertaken in the purview of urban or transport planning in both the developed and developing parts of the world. The paper will structure its arguments with due regards to the digitalization and smart agendas being currently discussed in the policy domain. Figure 1 highlights the overlap of ICT/digitalisation and smart cities agenda with the standard framework for understanding gender and mobility. Plotting these overlaps will aid in fine-tuning policies needed in a future which is both enabled and enabling.

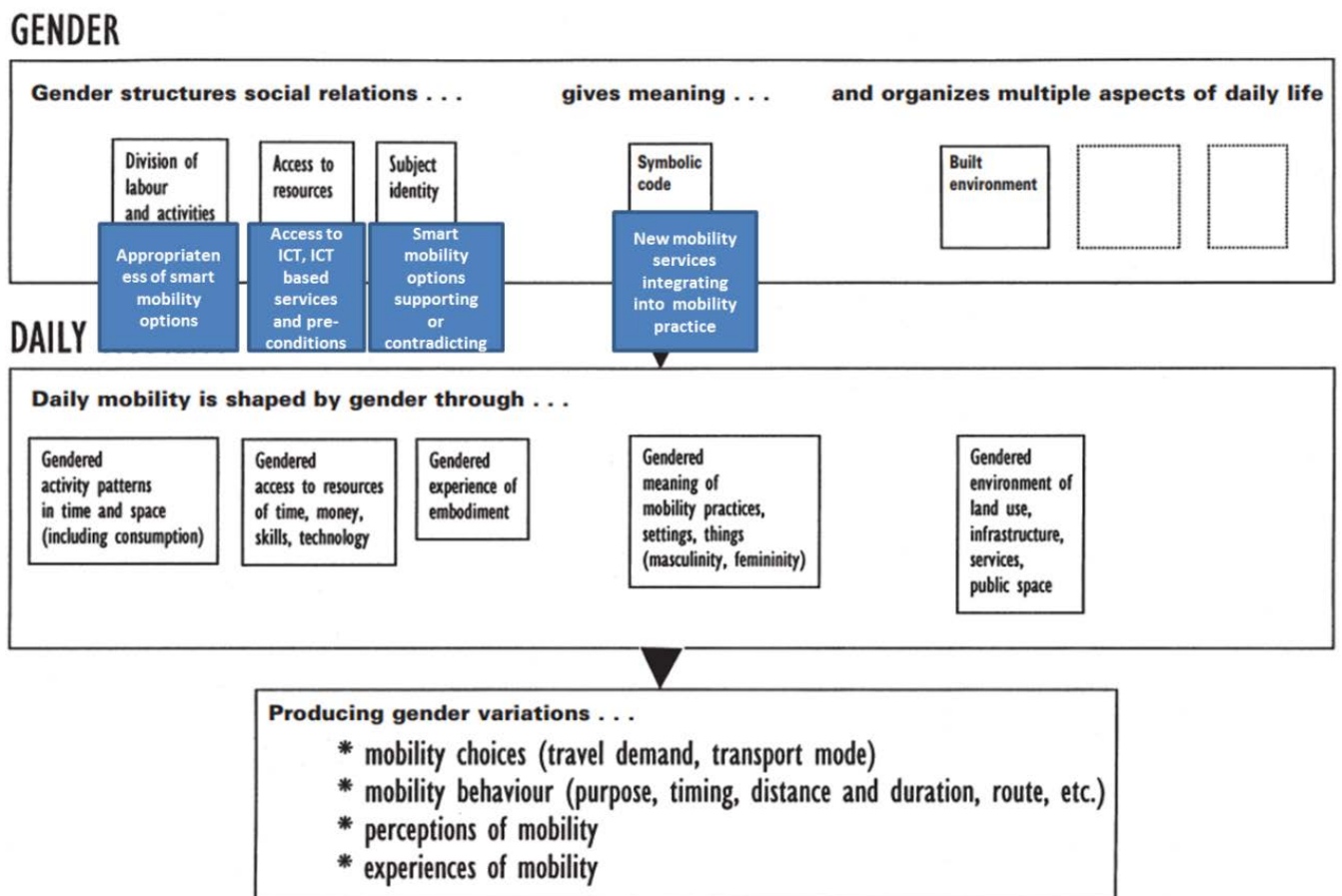


Figure 1: A framework for understanding the integration of “smart” into gendered mobility, based on Law’s “Framework for understanding gender and mobility” (1999: 576).

Source: Lenz 2019 (forthcoming)

PART II – Understanding the links between gender and transportation in the Global South

1. Revealed, preferred and digital mobilities -the urban and rural dimensions

Some consistent findings emerged in a compilation of studies focusing on gendered mobilities in the developing countries (Priya Uteng 2011) – walking and public transport are the most important transportation modes for women; women's travels are, in general, complex, multipurpose and resource-constrained; fear of sexual harassment and personal security were great concerns in negotiating daily mobilities; women on low-income suffered a disproportionately high loss of employment opportunities in face of slum eviction and relocation; public transport and intermediate

forms of transport inevitably gets lower focus than road/highways/bridge building projects thus putting women's needs to further disadvantage. Though these findings are consistent for the developing countries, they cannot be periodically corroborated as most developing countries do not conduct periodic travel surveys. This means that the gendered patterns of different and differentiated mobilities do not get highlighted and consequently not acknowledged in the planning and design processes. The increasing penetration of mobile phones, even in the remote and poverty stricken areas, in developing countries has also changed the landscape of how women negotiate their daily mobilities. Developing routines and systems for data collection on revealed, preferred and digital mobilities thus, holds the potential of assisting policy making.

The analyses emerging from these surveys can help the research and policy-making field to comment on:

- i. Given the current system, roles, jobs, gendered divisions – what are the current mobility needs of women (both urban and rural)?
- ii. Assuming a world, where women have an increasing degree of freedom, what kind of arenas will be available to them? For example, more female related growth of economy. We can look at the case of advanced (and equitable) economies like Norway for division of labour in different sectors. What are the hypothetical mobility needs of future?
- iii. What kind of transportation policies and investment will ensure that the accessibility of women increase?
- iv. Are there systemic and systematic flaws responsible for gender-blind transport policies?
- v. How do land use regulations or the lack of it affect the mobilities in urban and peri-urban areas?
- vi. Which kinds of mobilities (both urban and rural) are being supplemented / complimented or substituted by mobile phones?

2. Urban (Spatial) Planning / Area Development

This section will further build on the area development rationales and explicitly establish the link between transport and housing policies (in the urban areas) and the need for both to work together to enable women's mobility.

Lima et. al. (2015) underline that land use in Recife's Metropolitan Area does not obey the center-periphery occupation pattern (European) or the periphery-center occupation pattern (US). This observation, however, is applicable to a host of developing countries. A common denominator to urban development in the developing countries is the fact that slums and poor communities are scattered throughout the municipalities, in conurbation with the richest neighborhoods. For Recife, "this phenomenon can be partially explained by an urban policy instrument adopted in the mid-1980s called Special Zones of Social Interests (known as ZEIS). That policy recognized the legal right to the urban land of previously informal low-income settlements. It defined rules for improving urbanization standards, providing basic infrastructure (e.g. sewage, drainage, pavement, water supply) and legal tenure of these settlements (Maia, 1995)" (Lima et. al. 2019). Contrary to this case, there are myriad cases of slum relocation and allotment of low-income housing in the peripheries of urban areas with little or no public transport available to these areas. Women remain the hardest hit group in these reallocation schemes with loss of employment and further isolation from income-generating avenues.

For rural areas, the location of market, health centers, access to vocational training, higher education etc. gains paramount importance in ascertaining how much of the benefits finally percolate down to

women. Specific and targeted interventions like providing cycles to girls in high school² (Cycle program in the state of Bihar, India) greatly reduce the 'distance cost' of attending schools and related opportunities.

3. Governance issues across and beyond transport

The issue of daily mobilities cuts across multiple sectors like employment in the informal sector; access to employment, education, health services; policy focus given to personal cars vis-à-vis public transport and facilities for walking/cycling. Given that a large share of low-income women are employed in the informal market, governance issues built on employment and related schemes need to strengthen their focus on accessibility as well. New social protection schemes such as cash transfers where problems related to daily mobility have been documented (i.e. women having to travel to government offices or distribution centers to collect their benefits and this being very difficult especially in light of lack of adequate transport) needs to be revisited.

The fact that a large share of daily travel needs in the developing economies are met by informal public transport modes like tuk-tuk and jitneys, such bottom-up initiatives need to be both recognized and bolstered in the government action plans for transport, urban/rural planning and development at large. Even most basic (soft) infrastructure like mapping of these informal intra-city, inter-city and express routes are largely amiss.

Women are typically less likely to find employment in the transport sector at large, but this is especially pronounced for the developing economies. This inadvertently results in the particular needs to women being absent from even the informal transport sector. The case of Dantewada, India³ establishes how women can be themselves tackle the deep-rooted inadequacies of the transport system, culminating from the inaction of both 'state' and 'private' actors. In lack of any form of public transport connectivity, the tribal women of this remote rural area organized themselves through self-help groups, and through government-sponsored subsidy schemes have been successfully running E-rickshaws connecting rural markets, schools etc.

² "Comparisons with conditional cash transfer programs in other South Asian contexts suggest that the Cycle program was much more cost effective at increasing girls' secondary school enrollment than an equivalent-valued cash transfer. Given the importance of increasing women's education attainment in developing countries like India (especially in its most under-developed regions) and the fiscally-constrained policy environment, these results are important and suggest that the Cycle program was not just politically popular but also much more cost-effective than the most frequently considered and implemented policy alternative to increase girls' secondary school enrollment in developing countries in the past couple of decades (CCT's)." (Muralidharan and Prakash 2013: 26) <https://www.theigc.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/Muralidharan-Prakash-2013-Working-Paper1.pdf>

³ <http://www.newindianexpress.com/thesundaystandard/2018/feb/03/chhattisgarh-e-rickshaws-drive-a-change-in-the-lives-of-dantewadas-tribal-women-1767909.html>

<https://www.firstpost.com/india/women-in-dantewada-take-up-on-themselves-to-solve-transport-woes-drive-e-rickshaws-to-tackle-bad-infrastructure-4425347.html>



Photo 1: Taking the daily mobility needs head-on. E-rickshaws and tribal women of Dantewada, India.

PART III – Methodologies and data needs

This section will build on the fact that lack of regular data collection is an issue in developing countries. But rather than advocating simple data collection, it is imperative that data collected in travel surveys is segregated at the level of gender, activities and time-use, which can essentially inform the transport planning authorities to take a more need-oriented approach. Mobility-gap analyses should form an inevitable part of routinized data collection (travel behaviour surveys) and analyses. An explanation of the gap figures, for example in terms of average daily trips and time used by different types of households, will shed light on the distribution of mobility opportunities among the respective genders. There also exists a need to link the 'soft' or qualitative information to the 'hard' data information. This can aid in developing a model that corresponds much more to 'everyday transport functioning' than the much-used classical, techno-economical approach to transport model designing.

Integrating data collection across sectors also holds potential for addressing the needs of women in a more robust and target-oriented fashion. For example, maternal mortality indicators have received much attention and is a good indicator for demonstrating the efficiency of an entire health system, and availability of transport, availability of medical supplies, presence of trained health staff and access to health is a major factor affecting maternal mortality rates. Thus programs aiming at decreasing maternal mortality should have a detail analysis of mobility component as well. In areas where this access is problematic, complementary programs to address this issue specifically should be introduced, either through training the nurses to ride bicycles/motorbikes, providing support for owning a community cart etc. The broad aim of building capacity of the public health authorities to promote equitable access to primary health care services needs to be broken down into workable components, based strictly on the contextual realities. Given such benchmarking, it will become easy to assess the specific kinds of alterations needed in the mobility systems to adapt towards gendered needs (for example, usage of mobile phones to substitute the missed trips and access information). This applies at both rural and urban levels.

Projects can employ both traditional methods like focus groups / questionnaire surveys / measuring actual behavioural response to different measures (for example, concessionary bus cards, channelizing feeder services, a change in the bus frequency, assistance in getting mobile phones as

part of the development schemes like self-help groups etc.), and new methods like mobile app-based data collection, to understand the existing travel behaviour and adaptive preferences of different groups. Studies conducted on these lines (e.g. Gärling et al., 2000, Loukopoulos et al., 2004 and Loukopoulos et al., 2005) have found that discretionary trips have a greater number of adaptation alternatives available from which to choose than non-discretionary work trips. This is exactly the case with women in developing countries where majority of their trips cater to discretionary purposes of combining various household/social/shopping related trips. Therefore, it is advisable that future research studies measure the costs and effectiveness of specific change alternatives for various trip purposes. Such results can give insights into the specifics needed for designing transport interventions for women to lessen their time and resource poverty.

PART IV – Indicating Policy Directions

This section will focus on context specific policies, distinguishing in particular between rural, urban and peri-urban areas, focusing on ways to ‘mainstream’ gender into transport, rural development and urban planning policies. The paper will specifically comment on what needs to be done differently in terms of infrastructure and service delivery definitions and inclusion in mainstream transport planning policies. For example:

- i. What kind of policies are needed to respond to the ‘special needs’ of women in terms of trip duration, length, trip-chaining and escort travels (traveling with children) etc.?
- ii. How can spatial development and reallocation policies be sensitized to women travel patterns and needs?
- iii. How can development policies intersect with transport policies to ensure mobility for women in scarcely populated or remote rural areas (to ensure their access to markets, education, health centers etc.)?
- iv. What kind of policies, programs and tools are needed to enhance safety?
- v. What kind of economic support systems need to be inserted in the transport domain to address affordability issues for the low income women of the developing economies?

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