



FEMINIST URBAN MOBILITY

Uncovering Sexism in Urban Mobility & Planning a Feminist Urban Mobility

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Background

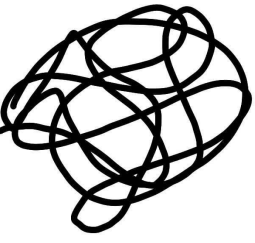

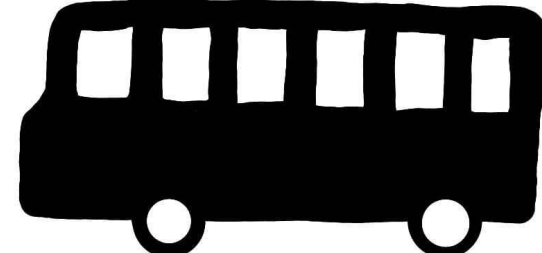
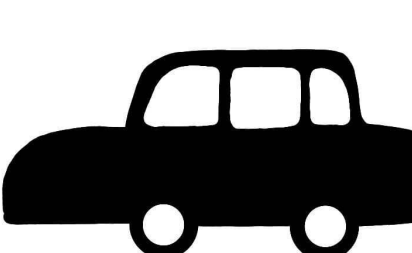
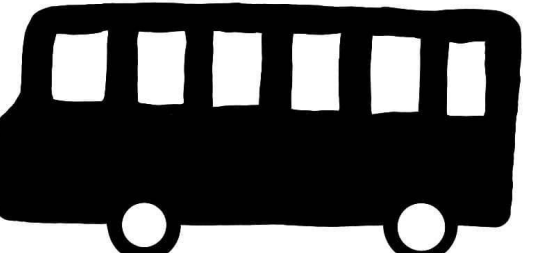
In 2019, Caroline Criado Perez published the bestseller 'Invisible Women' in which she exposed the many gender data biases in our world.¹ Her example of how snow-clearing was found to be sexist in Sweden, awoke my interest. Snow-clearing followed the same male logic as urban mobility (UM) in general. Major traffic arteries were cleared before pedestrian walkways, bicycle lanes and traffic stops. Since women represent the majority of pedestrians and public transport users, this is sexist. Not deliberately so, but true nonetheless.

Objective

The aim of this research was to uncover the hidden sexism in UM and discover the existing solutions and what actions had to be undertaken at the different levels of UM to create a feminist urban mobility. RQ: In which aspects is European UM sexist, what does a feminist UM look like and how can it be achieved?

Introduction

At the base of sexism in UM lie the different activities performed by individuals of different genders². The following is a oversimplified display of gendered activities, mobility patterns and modal choice. One should never forget, that humans are a heterogeneous group of people with diverse characteristics and life experiences. Therefore, an intersectional³ approach to feminism is crucial.

	Women	Men
Activities	care work	paid work
Mobility Patterns	trip chaining 	commutes A → B
Modal Choice	 	 

Method

A qualitative research approach was chosen to answer the RQ. Eight semi-structured interviews were conducted with urban planners, consultants and researchers with expertise in gender mobility. The interviews were transcribed and analysed, resulting in a coding tree with 104 codes categorized into five primary categories.

References

- 1 Criado Perez, C. 2019. Invisible Women: Exposing Data Bias in a World Designed for Men. Penguin Random House UK.
- 2 Gender is a social and cultural construct associated with certain (behavioural) expectations from persons of a certain sex (CIHR, 2020).
- 3 Intersectional feminism acknowledges the heterogeneity of women and the added discrimination women may face based on their race, ethnicity, sexuality, gender identity, religion, social class, family status, (dis)able bodiedness, age, etc (EC, 2020: 16).

Results

Sexisms (☒) & Feminist Actions (☑) at UM Levels

• General

- gender data bias
- lack of awareness
- mobility issues not necessarily perceived as such

• Policy-making

- ☒ male-centered rules & regulations
- ☑ gender perspective in policies
- ☑ gender mainstreaming policies

• Planning

- ☒ male discipline
- ☑ more women in planning (decision makers & teams)
- ☒ car- / commute-centered; planned around universal human being
- ☑ human-centered design; holistic service ecosystems; end-to-end planning
- ☒ unattractive & unsafe neighbourhood / street design
- ☑ elimination of fear spaces; high density & diversity neighbourhoods; prioritisation of active mobility; pop-up infrastructure

• Organizational

- ☒ company car
- ☑ inclusive employee mobility (bicycles, mobility budget)
- ☒ design for 50th percentile male body
- ☑ gender-sensitive product development
- ☒ (financial) hurdle to sharing mobility
- ☑ mobility-as-a-service; mobility budget

• Academic

- ☒ data bias
- ☑ observation
- ☒ gap towards applicability
- ☑ personal stories
- ☑ (outreach) participation

• Educational

- ☒ male connected disciplines
- ☑ include gender perspective
- ☒ male bias in public debate
- ☑ diversify public debate political activism

Conclusion

UM continues to be sexist on all levels. Therefore, actors at different levels of UM must be made aware of the sexism and implement actions to counteract them and create a feminist UM.