The Voice of the Youth

Thinking with young people: Transport experiences and aspirations in Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia

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Personal safety is a major concern for young women using public transport

Ideas of transport can be linked to perceptions of corruption

Fuel shortages can limit the transport choices people can make

Regulation of road use should be tighter

The future can sometimes be something difficult to imagine beyond the scope of immediate experience

Transport costs and tickets should be well regulated

Planning regulations should be enforced and upheld to allow for traffic to circulate in the city

Public transport can be a social space for meeting friends

Social progress is measured in provision of public transport for the poor

Poor infrastructure limits use of public transport

Rural/urban development is related to both transport and mobility

Measures should be taken to discourage people from using private cars

Transport and aspiration are intimately entwined in young people's experiences
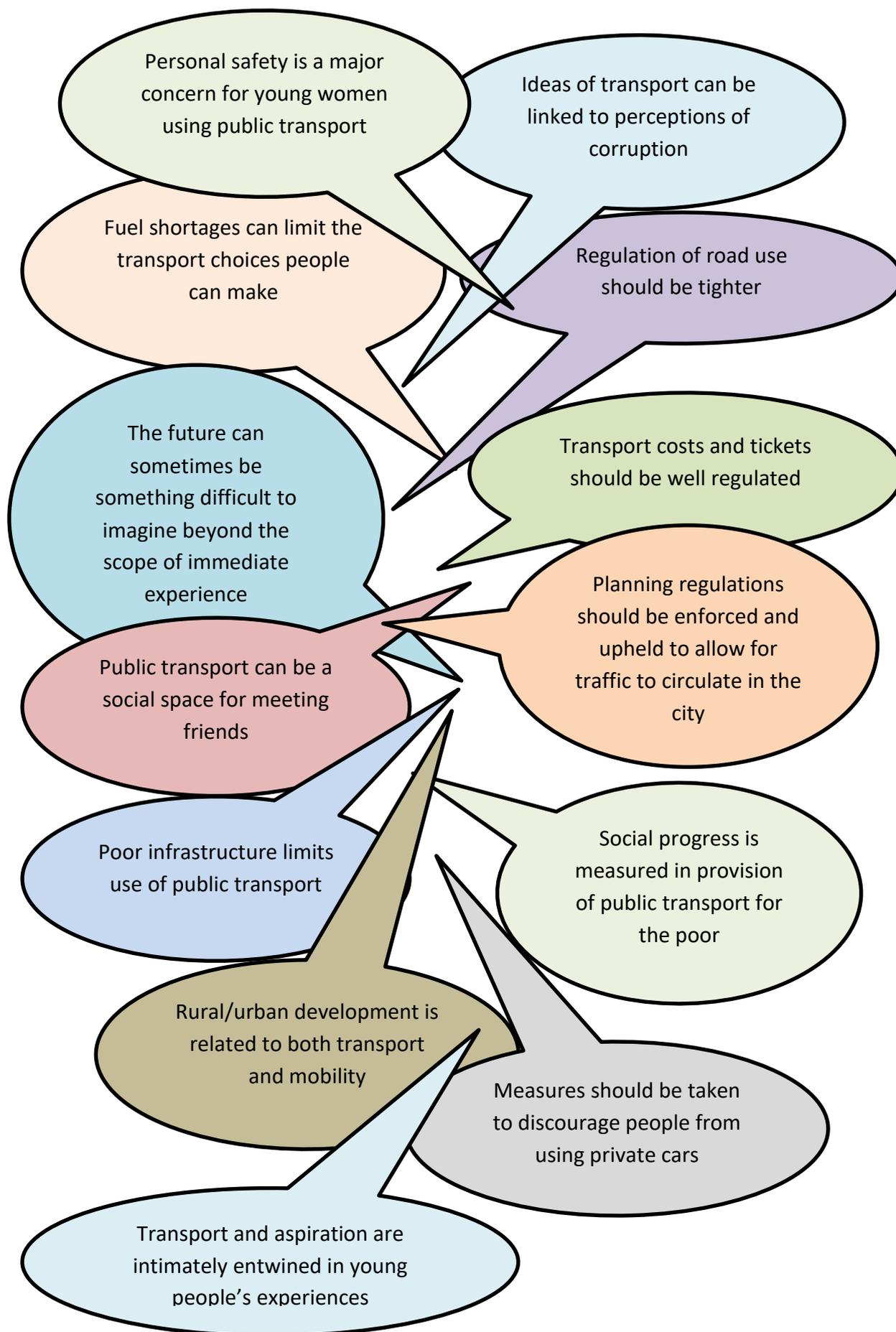
Summary

This document is a 'think piece' about transport and young people in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia. People who take decisions about transport planning and investment tend not to be young. By virtue of their positions in society, transport planners can neither really understand nor act on the aspirations and compulsions of young people without careful research that engages sensitively with young people.

Young people are a significant demographic of future transport users. What they want for the future is what the future could become; or, if these ideas can be worked and reshaped then an alternative future could be brought into existence. Our approach to these questions is to understand the cultural frames in which young people think about themselves, each other and the future direction of travel of the world. We use an 'anthropological' frame to understand these issues, taking seriously young people's understandings of and engagement with their lives and the world.

We briefly review key milestones in recent social science literature on the conditions of young people in these regions. This material shows how the period of 'youth' has been extended by the spread of tertiary education and mass unemployment, taking it far beyond the traditional rituals marking the distinction between childhood and young adulthood. The rituals marking this fundamental transition emphasised separation from the family and early ties of belonging and these ideas continue to be deeply significant in the decision-making and planning activities of young people in relation to transport and the future.

The main body of the document is based on pilot conversations with 16 young people about their experience and use of transport, their own aspirations for the future and about the possible future of transport. These conversations show that ideas and practices of mobility are key in the daily routines of young people. Young people make decisions and calculations based on 'transport rationale' all the time. We do not know from the sample the whole range of factors that influence day-to-day decision making.

In the longer-term, we can see that for young people 'transport thinking' relates to what kind of society people want to live in and who they will become as individuals. Mobility emerges as one of the key signifiers of independence and separation from the family, tradition and the passage to adulthood.

We divide this material into a matrix of four tensions: progress and waiting; autonomy and dependency; mobility and immobility and security and conflict. The material shows that young people's decisions are not simply determined by 'rational choice' as understood in a 'cost-benefit' frame, although this is part of what they tell us. Instead, short-term decisions are influenced by factors such as safety and cost. In the longer term, however, factors such as aspiration and cultural ideas of what makes a good life and a whole person play much more strongly in determining how people behave both in the present and in anticipation of particular kinds of future.

Finally, the methodology of this document is experimental. The fragments of our conversations suggest that there is a great deal more to understand about the ways in which young people situate themselves in relation to transport futures. The values, rituals and speculative ideas glimpsed in this tiny sample of voices open up fundamental questions about the future of transport which cannot be separated from the worlds of education, employment, development, families and what it means in different parts of the world to live a good life.

Our approach

We deploy an 'anthropological' approach to the questions of youth, transport use and futures. Anthropology is best understood in relation to its methods: long-term 'fieldwork' which involves living and working with people, so-called 'participant observation'. The aims are (a) to understand the world from other people's points of view in terms of social systems, beliefs and culture and (b) in this instance to place these ideas within a broader context of national development, transport planning and technological uptake. This document takes a small sample of voices to show the rich potential of this (a) approach in the hope that future work can generate a sufficient research base to interface strongly and innovatively with (b).

How do the social sciences think about young people?

Anthropological concerns including the discipline's interest in **rites of passage**, the role that **liminality** and **rupture** play in shaping social experience, and questions of how **rebellion and conflict** are socially produced and controlled have all emerged through over a century of anthropological work with and writing about children and young people. Anthropology has developed theoretical and methodological tools for understanding adulthood as a social achievement, rather than something self-evident or given. Looking at the transition to social adulthood in this way, young people's lives are characterised by liminality, rupture and conflict, but also possibility, aspiration and hope.

Four sets of tensions emerge that give shape to contemporary experiences of youth:

Progress and waiting: young people's experience (or not) of being able to achieve their goals and aspirations, both in the present, and over longer periods of time.

Autonomy and dependency: young people's capacity to live independently. Ideas of autonomy and dependency are bound up with young people's access to the resources they need to support themselves, as well as the freedom that enables them to create the kinds of lives and broader social structures that they envisage for themselves and their communities.

Mobility and immobility: the transport infrastructures and opportunities which are available to young people, and which they need to access work, learning and social activities.

Security and conflict: the degree to which young people are exposed to, or indeed involved in, violence and harassment of various kinds. It also refers both to the memory and fear of conflict, and the ways in which security concerns shape young people's lived experience and expectations of the future.

Social science writing on youth looks at the particular economic, social and political discourses that have constituted 'youth' as a meaningful category in and of itself. The literature emphasises how **globalisation**, **trans-national capital flows** and **legal frameworks** (UN declaration of human rights and the rights of the child etc) and **mobility**, as well as young people's shifting horizons of expectation intersect with **local contexts** shape not only young people's experiences, but also the place they hold within broader constellations of social value and concern. There is an attention to how the social category 'child', and its corollary 'youth', emerged from capitalist configurations of labour and time (Kapur, 2013: 27), as well as an understanding that aspirations and future imaginings which centre upon upward mobility and consumption, whilst alluring, re-inscribe social limits and boundaries (Kapur, 2012: 45). Put simply, youth is not simply something which is pre-ordained, but rather a social category that has been created and is rooted in historical, social, political and economic processes.

> ## Waithood
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> Alcinda Honwana's notion of 'waithood' refers to how traditional paths to adulthood in Africa have been eroded through conjoined processes of **globalisation**, **urbanisation** and **modernisation** (2012: 23). Bound up with the increasing importance of formal education, the degradation of social and material infrastructures and the failure of post-colonial governments to provide sustainable vocational opportunities, increasing numbers of young people in Africa are finding that, with social adulthood unattainable, they are trapped in a state of prolonged waithood, their aspirations for the future unfulfilled.

Progress, growth and development were probably once the key ideas that motivated young people's action. For example, young, educated and lower middle-class men in India who, despite formal education find themselves left, quite literally, waiting for salaried employment. Craig Jeffrey (2010) takes the local term 'timepass', to show how the spread of education and the lack of employment opportunities ('jobless growth') mean that young people have nothing to do other than inhabit structured boredom. The 'experience of abjection' (Jeffrey, 2010: 80) and, significantly, the seemingly indefinite deferral of power between young people to their elders, shape these experiences of waiting (Snellinger, 201874-77).

> ## Timepass
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> The notion of 'timepass' examines the experience of waiting for young, unemployed men in India whose aspirations for a better, or at least different, kind of future remain unfulfilled (Jeffrey, 2010). Looking at the intersection between gender and class, Jeffrey engages with middle class anxieties about downward social mobility as a means of understanding the volatile political power that young 'waiting' men hold.

The changing relationship between urban and rural areas and the decline of the agricultural economy has led some commentators to describe the 'death' of the rural economy (Gupta 2005) as villages become 'waiting rooms' (Parry 2003) for migrants heading for the worlds of industrial labour. Key here is the notion that mobility is essential as a way out of the countryside, even if migrant's families remain there. Gina Porter's work has engaged with similar questions, looking at migration, technology and young people's urban/rural mobilities in sub-Saharan African contexts (Porter et al, 2018; Porter, 2015).

> ## Transitions to adulthood, reciprocity and material things
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> Material things play an important part in social transitions to adulthood. The experience of unemployment amongst young men in urban Ethiopia points not only to the importance of reciprocity in the social production of adulthood, but also to the ways in which this transition is bound up with the consumption and circulation of material things (Mains, 2012).

The experience of stalled progress and a seemingly unattainable adulthood is linked to the tension we have identified in our speculative conversations between **autonomy** and **dependence**.

Finding themselves dependent, the tension between the desire for **mobility** and their experiences of (often enforced) **immobility** underpins the possibilities open to young people, shaping aspirations and frustrations (Graw and Schielke, 2012; Gaibazzi, 2015; Parry 2005). There is thus a central tension and choice between 'migration' versus 'staying put' and the different forms of life these options represent.

Related is the tension between **security** and **conflict**. Socially characterised as a period of liminality, youth can present challenges to the social order, with young people often (and often wrongly) cast as volatile and potentially violent. However, tending to occupy positions of 'waithood', immobility and dependence, young people themselves can be acutely vulnerable to insecurity. Conceptualised as 'makers and breakers' (Honwana and De Boeck, 2005), the experience of violence, and the search for security structure young people's lives not only in conflict and post-conflict situations (Richards, 1996; De Silva, 2005; Pells, 2009) but also in the 'everyday' (Pells and Morrow, 2017). This tension shapes how young people understand their futures and engage with transport.

Understanding aspiration

Aspirations influence choices and how ideas, promises and plans for the future are received and acted upon. Aspiration is not, however, a homogenous cultural value or faculty; it is an unevenly distributed social capacity (Appadurai, 2004). These are not simply rational choices but are part of cultural value systems. Rather than individual decisions, aspirations are part of collective webs of endeavour that may find reflection in other shared ideas and values. While aspiration might have history in a particular place or culture, they also crucially influence the actions people take as they anticipate what the future might hold. Understanding what young people want helps to understand what they are working towards.

Thinking about aspirations as part of a broader system of cultural values allows us to view them as a resource that can be understood and influenced. Directed at a 'good life', aspirations tend to be formed from more specific and local ideas about marriage, work, status, health, and progress, which often unarticulated, only emerge as singular expressions of wants: for this house, that marriage, for a two-wheeler or a car, to be mobile, or to be somewhere else. On another level, the experimental conversations on which this document is based suggest that young people can see transport as a form of collective aspiration, with the choices that governments make about transport being indicative of societal aspirations.

How does this relate to young people's understandings of transport and the future?

Aspirations can help us understand the value that young people place on transport in their imaginings of the future, but only if we link these understandings to a broader set of cultural impulses for **mobility**, **security**, **progress** and **autonomy**.

What does an anthropology of young people, transport and the future bring to the High Volume Transport programme?

- An intimate understanding of future transport demand, and the opportunity to plan in a way which accounts for young people's current experiences and builds them into the future of mass transport planning;
- The chance to plan HVT in ways which are non-normative. This initial study underlines the further work which would be needed to engage with children, and those who are otherwise excluded due to issues of gender, disability and lack of autonomy and access to resources;
- The capacity to engage with new trends, and view transport and ideas of the future from the perspective of young people who have never known a world without digital technology.

Methodology

Experimental and pathfinding conversations with sixteen young people from across sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia allowed us to begin to explore ideas that could lead to the development of 'young people-equitable' transport infrastructure and practices. Conducted by eight researchers who have an intimate understanding of their field sites and established relationships with their interlocutors, the conversations sought to understand how the ways in which young people use transport intersect with their ideas, aspirations and fears for the future.

Six interviews were carried out with young people in sub-Saharan Africa (two each in Ghana, Sierra Leone and Ethiopia) and eight were conducted in South Asia (four in Nepal, two in Bangladesh, two in Pakistan and two in India). These young people do not obviously represent a 'sample', but a selected cohort whose lives we can meaningfully contextualise and whose experiences and observations we can rely on to understand what transport-in-context. Cognizant of the intersection between gender, transport experiences, and aspiration each researcher was asked to collect male and female voices; whilst this was not possible in all cases, there is an even gendered split in the material.

Language

Conversation in Sierra Leone, Ghana, India and one set of discussions from Nepal were conducted in English. The other pair of Nepali conversations took place almost entirely in Nepali, with additional explanations around questions relating to the future provided by the researcher to one interlocutor in English. The Ethiopian conversations took place in Amharic, Tigrinya and English. Similarly, the Bangladesh conversations took place in both Bangla and English.

Autonomy and dependence

Dependence on faltering transport infrastructures and its knock-on effects

Dependence on faltering transport infrastructures has a negative impact on young people's engagement with work, education and social activities. Specific transport problems varied by person and across contexts. Nonetheless, severe congestion, limited access to affordable transport, poorly maintained infrastructures and a lack of joined up transport planning, particularly in urban contexts, were recurring issues that limited young people's opportunities and autonomy.

Overall, we were surprised at how important transport was in the lives of the people we spoke to and how carefully most of our interviewees had thought about transport and planning.

What is the relationship between faltering transport infrastructures and young people's access to education, work and social activities? How does this relationship vary across contexts?

Autonomy, personal transport and aspiration

None of the sixteen interviewed owned their own mode of transport and just one had access, through social connections, to a motorbike.

Half our interlocutors aspired to own their own car, motorbike or scooter.

These aspirations were framed in terms of autonomy, safety, efficiency and learning and social opportunities, with the desire for consumption being a secondary factor.

The status associated with personal transport was mentioned, but it was not the main driver behind these desires.

Aisha (22, Freetown) said that getting a lift with someone who owned a car (her brother, uncle or a neighbour) was a more comfortable and cheaper way to get around the city than travelling okada [riding pillion on a motorbike] or using poda poda [shared minibuses]. For Berhanu (Mekelle, Ethiopia) however, the desire to own his own car was strong. He said "After I graduate and work for around five years I am sure I will buy a nice car, if God will. Having my own car is the most important thing for me personally. If I had my own car, I would be the only decision maker of my plans."

If these aspirations materialise then the world looks set for a great rise in the number of vehicles on the road.

Can low carbon and mass transit fulfil with these aspirations?

If so, how?

Personal safety and young women's autonomy

Concerns about personal safety and shared transport have a significant impact on how young women organise their lives and negotiate public space. Transport choices are strongly influenced by the fear of sexual harassment and violence. Many organise their lives so that they do not travel after dark, or on public transport deemed 'dangerous'. Young women who can afford it are paying more than their male counterparts to travel in safety; those without financial means face harassment and the threat of violence.

Sarita (25, Kathmandu) describes the anxiety associated with using shared microbuses, saying "When you are a girl and there are people around, even if their intentions are not that bad we assume in the microbus that they are trying to touch you or take advantage. You start thinking about these bad stories." Anika (Dhaka) said that bad experiences on public busses were a major barrier for women travelling around the city, and that transport was particularly unsafe for women at night.

What impact do personal safety concerns have on young women's transport thinking?

What mechanisms can be put in place to improve the experience of transport for women?

Public transport as a space of autonomy

Personal safety notwithstanding, young women, and to a lesser extent their male counterparts, also experienced public transport as spaces of pleasure and freedom, where they could read, listen to music, meet and make friends, explore the city and have time to themselves.

Sujata (21, Mumbai) spoke about her journey to university on public transport as a valuable opportunity to read and listen to music. For Anika (Dhaka), rickshaw journeys around the city offer her the autonomy to explore the city and discover new areas at a comfortable pace. For Ali (Karachi), particular bus routes were associated with fond memories of travelling through the city, and he spoke about the bus as a space where he could have deep, philosophical thoughts whilst observing out the window how "people interacted in a very Karachi way".

How can the pleasures of travel be harnessed in creating 'youth equitable' transport?

Achieving transport autonomy through technology

Young people in Accra, Dhaka and Mumbai described how ride-hailing apps increased autonomy. Access to technology and the means to pay for it is, however, uneven across our limited sample. Technology as a form of access to transport can therefore also be a driver of inequality of access rather than simply, as it is often casually assumed, a mechanism of democratisation.

B (25, Accra) says he uses Uber "…when it is difficult to get a *tro-tro* [shared minibus used for journeys in the city], maybe because the time of the day, and when I want to feel comfortable sometime, like when I'm carrying some bags. Sometimes, where I'm going to requires walking some distance, and I don't feel like walking, so I just use an Uber to drop me right at my destination. It all goes down to the cost: Uber is less expensive [than a regular taxi]."

How can new transport technologies be equitably harnessed?

Progress and waiting

Progress and waiting were closely related to autonomy and dependency, and mobility and immobility.

<u>Whilst public transport is a public good and a sign of development, the obverse is also true</u>

A well run, efficient and accessible public transport system was valued by young people and seen as a sign of development and social progress. A number of young people explicitly said that government should take steps to limit personal vehicles, putting their focus on equitable public transport instead.

Sarita (25, Kathmandu) says that "People are getting rich and they want more luxury in their life, so there will be more private cars." This is not, however, a good thing from her perspective as it will lead to further congestion. For her, it's the government's responsibility to incentivise people to use public transport.

The obverse of this was, however, that for many, the lack of decent public transport was synonymous with failures of development and the experience of abjection.

For both Aisha (22, Freetown) and Alpha (23, Freetown) the most pressing issue was access to decent roads. Both of said that improved roads in their community and across the city would facilitate their use of public transportation, and broaden their access to educational and vocational opportunities.

How can public transport systems be developed in ways that are synonymous with young people's aspirations for progress and development?

> **<u>Social progress is conceptualised in terms of transport interconnectivity</u>**
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> There is a close link between ideas of social progress and the extent of transport interconnectivity, particularly in terms of public transport and road infrastructure. Where young people saw the development of road and rail networks which might link them to other cities and regions, they equated this with social progress. To a lesser extent, the development of air travel, although out of financial reach of all our participants, was seen as a welcome sign of interconnectivity and social progress.
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> Hana (Mekelle, Ethiopia) says "I wish there would be minibuses every[where], reasonably close to our places. You know here in our town you don't have options to get taxis. There is only one centre, so you are expected to go to this centre if you want to take a minibus. [This means] you have to walk…or to take a contract bajaj [minibus that's not shared] which is also expensive and not always practical. I imagine…a nice public bus and train system in Mekelle in the future like you see in other big cities or like the new train in Addis Adaba. For me, travelling by train and airplane are the ways of transportation in the future. But at the moment, I can't even afford the tickets of Ethiopian Airlines with my salary."
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> ***Why is transport interconnectivity important for young people?***
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> ***What can be done to foster transport interconnectivity that is equitable and furthers social progress?***

<u>Frustrations about a lack of opportunities and resources are linked to ideas about waiting</u>

Young people spoke of their frustrations about a lack of work and educational opportunities, as well as other resources, in terms of stalled progress and waiting. They also often explicitly linked waiting of this kind to the challenges of faltering transport infrastructures and immobility. In this, it is clear that for young people ideas of progress and waiting are bound up, although not synonymous with, experiences of mobility and immobility.

K (25, Accra) has recently completed her training as a physiotherapist, and she's struggling to find work. She relies on *tro-tros* to get to the one private patient she has managed to find. K says "A *tro-tro* will take more of your time. Sometimes it gets full early. But most times, you have to spend a lot of time waiting for people to board the car before it leaves." These delays mean K is often late for her work appointments.

How does the relationship between progress/waiting and mobility/immobility shape young people's engagement with and expectation of transport?

How can transport planners harness this relationship to provide transport which delivers on young people's expectations for progress and mobility?

Poor transport infrastructures are emblematic of social abjection and waiting

Related to the connection between a lack of opportunities and the experience of waiting, poor transport infrastructures are emblematic for young people of social abjection and their experiences of waiting. The interconnectivity that young people associate with well-developed and accessible transport infrastructure often represents, at least partially, their sense of being included in the social order.

Hana (Mekelle, Ethiopia) says "Transport is always related to change. If you had a good transport access you can work anywhere, anytime, use your time efficiently, people can easily get an access to education and reach health centers etc."

How can young people's desires for social inclusion help us develop 'young people equitable' transport?

Mobility and immobility

Young people recognise mobility as a factor within their present daily rationale and future thinking. They highlight five main areas:

Congestion and immobility in the city

Our interlocutors saw the link between congestion and immobility: time spent in traffic came at the cost of educational, vocational and social opportunities.

For Som (23, Bezibazaar, Nepal) congestion and poor roads meant not only that he disliked travelling by public bus, but that he'd also missed out on work opportunities because of travel delays.

What alternatives are there to urban mobility? or ***What are the best alternatives to forms of transport that create congestion?***

Mobility and imagining a hopeful future

Mobility features in how the majority of people we spoke to imagined a hopeful future. Whether it was in terms of the development of reliable transport infrastructures locally and at the national level, aspirations to migrate internationally or fantastical plans for flying cars and "hyper loops", our interlocutors drew a clear link between achieving mobility and their aspirations for the future.

Referring to Elon Musk's far speculative idea to connect cities via "hyper loops", Raj (24, Kathmandu) laughingly said "[It's] something about air pressure that would allow us to travel really fast, faster than an airplane." For Anika (Dhaka), her hopes for future mobility were more grounded, revolving around access to a scooter that would give her the autonomy she craves. One idea she was particularly taken by was the establishment of a scooter sharing service specifically for women.

What can this link between mobility and aspiration tell us about young people?

How can ideas of mobility be harnessed to equitably realise young people's aspirations? or ***How can aspirations be harnessed to influence the future direction and technology of mobility?***

Governments have obligations to facilitate and regulate mobility

A number of the young people we spoke to said that they held their governments responsible for the facilitation and regulation of mobility. For young people then, hopes for improved transport infrastructures and access are thus closely bound up with legitimate governance; where this falters, young people were apt to cite corruption and mismanagement as key issues.

Talking about what the government could do to improve the transport in Kathmandu, Raj (24) proposed a "rapid transport system", that would see the creation of dedicated bus lanes and minibuses being replaced by full-size buses across the city. Aisha (22, Freetown), however, said "In Africa, we don't think of people's convenience, the only thing people think of is the amount of money they can make.", highlighting her feeling that profit and corruption trump equitable governance. Similarly, Alpha (23, Freetown) said that whilst he hopes the government would take a lead in the regulation of bus fares, the current system allows private companies to profiteer at busy times of the year.

How can national governments deliver on the transport aspirations of young people?

The close relationship between development and mobility

Interviewees drew a clear connection between development and the facilitation of mobility, with cohesive, efficient, equitable and accessible transport infrastructures being seen as a sign of social

progress. Development was thus largely framed in terms of the delivery of specific kinds of transport infrastructure, such as roads and railways.

Gautam (25, Mumbai) talked about the link between development and mobility in relation to rural road networks, saying "If you see the rural area, there are heavy chances that roads are not well…So, if the transportation is not fast, roads are damaged, *na*? So transportation speeds are very slow… Transportation [thus] is a major part of the development." For B (23, Accra), existing developmental disparities will have an impact on Ghana's transport future trajectories: "For the world, I know they are already making progress on driverless cars and cars that run on water and electricity, so that is the future I see in the world… The main question for Ghana is whether the country will be ready and willing to adopt those new transport technologies."

Why is development associated with transport infrastructure for young people?

Why do some young people not know about infrastructure development?

Which transport/safety/publicity campaigns reached and stayed with young people in particular contexts and why?

(Im)mobility and rural/urban links

Urban/rural linkages and experiences of immobility were important for a number of our participants. They identified a lack of opportunities for young people in rural communities and the under-development of rural infrastructure not only driving migration to urban centres, but also making it hard for those who had moved to cities to go back to their home regions. This was seen to hollow out rural areas whilst putting a strain on over-stretched and overcrowded urban infrastructure.

The need to decentralise national economies, and the role that transport and other infrastructures had to play in this process, was a key question raised by Tania (24, Dhaka). She highlighted the fact that with educational and vocational opportunities focussed in the capital, and poor transport links to villages, young people from rural areas were forced to leave their homes in search of work and learning. Decentralisation of education, industry and employment opportunities across the country would, she thought, ease congestion in Dhaka whilst supporting the development of rural areas. For Tania, this was as much an issue of social equality and equitable development.

How can transport planning contribute to equitable development across rural and urban contexts?

How do young people feel about processes of urbanisation and how can these thoughts and feelings inform transport planning?

Security and conflict

Young people's concerns centred broadly upon their experiences and expectations of **personal safety, road safety and transport accidents**, and **conflict and violence**.

Personal safety

Personal safety was conceptualised in relation to the risk of harm posed by other people in public transport contexts. For more than half of the women interviewed, most of who were based in South Asia, the experience and fear of gender-based violence and harassment played a very important role in how they engaged with transport. They actively modified their behaviour, clothing, schedules and transport choices to avoid unwanted sexual attention and violence.

Pratyuksha (21, Kathmandu) remarked not only on her experiences of unwanted male attention whilst using transport, but also the fact that since moving from her hometown to the capital she has changed her clothing, opting for looser, less fashionable garments, including a hoodie that she can use to cover her face, in an attempt to limit her exposure to sexual harassment and violence. She also takes advantage of women-only areas of the bus, despite believing that social regulation of this kind should not absolve the perpetrators of gender-based violence from their responsibility to treat women with dignity.

The link between transport experiences and sexual violence was not as strong amongst the female participants from sub-Saharan Africa. However, one woman recounted an incident when she was attacked by a knife-wielding man who was known to her when travelling alone one evening in her neighbourhood. This traumatic experience was coupled with a fear of walking around in poorly-lit areas of the city where she lives after dark.

For young men, a limited degree of concern was expressed about theft and pickpocketing.

How can the public transport which young women rely on for accessing work, learning and social resources be made safe for them?

Road safety and transport accidents

Both young women and young men spoke of the considerable risks of accident and death that they felt were associated with transport use. Fears focused on the poor skills of taxi, bus and motorbike drivers, drunk driving, badly maintained roads, overcrowded minibuses, buses and trains and, in India and Bangladesh, accidents and death resulting from unsafe train and metro infrastructure in cities. Indeed, fears about road safety and transport accidents were voiced by twelve of the fourteen participants.

Sujata (21, Mumbai) spoke about her fear of accidents whilst commuting to work on the city's extensive rail network. She recounted two particularly alarming incidents she has personally experienced, the first when the train in front of hers slipped off the tracks and the second when she saw the body of a dead woman who had fallen from the open door of a train. 2000 people a year die whilst travelling on Mumbai's railway network.

How, in contexts of ineffective regulation and where infrastructure is under-developed, developing, or in need or investment, can the safety of transport users be not only protected, but also be made a legitimate priority by governments and other stakeholders?

The environment

The young people highlighted four broad sets of environmental questions:

Climate change is not something that makes sense to everyone

Questions about climate change did not make sense to all of our interlocutors. This climate confusion also, importantly, appears not to be linked to educational attainment; one participant with a science degree did not understand or respond to the question of climate change.

Why does climate change not make sense to some young people?

What impact will this lack of understanding have on their transport choices and ideas of transport in the future?

Where there is an awareness of climate change, young people might have other priorities

Climate change awareness did not mean that it was necessarily a priority for young people. Other issues, such as ensuring they were mobile enough to secure uncertain livelihoods, could be far more pressing and immediate.

Hana (Mekelle, Ethiopia) said "I know that transport affects the climate, but I have never been worried about this. My problem is not the climate, but the practical problem is lack of transportation. How am I going to worry about the future of climate change if I don't even have a transport system that I can currently rely on?"

What are the other factors which young people are prioritising over climate change? What can be done to address these factors?

How might attention to the other priorities in young people's lives impact climate change?

When climate change was something relevant to young people, their understandings were varied

Half of the young people we spoke to were aware that transport was linked to changes in their environment. These understandings, however, were varied. Focus was given to-

- the role that transport played in the production of air pollution;
- the role that electric vehicles might play in limiting air pollution and climate change;
- the relationship between the development of road infrastructure and cutting down trees;
- transport as a driver of noise pollution, and related negative health consequences;
- litter and the experience of uncollected refuse in urban settings.

Talking about 'climate change' K (23, Accra) said "If it is very sunny and I'm going to pick a *tro-tro*, I feel disturbed by the heat…compared to a taxi, where you ride alone, in the *tro-tro* you are many and the heat is so much…Sometimes the *tro-tros* are so old and their engines are very dirty. They pollute the air with those black vapours. It is not good. We shouldn't be inhaling so much [pollution]."

What do these varied understandings of climate change tell us about young people's experiences and priorities?

What role can such insights play in the design and development of 'youth-equitable' transport infrastructures?

Young people have concerns about their environment and transport that aren't related to climate change. A lack of metalled roads and drainage in Freetown, where our two Sierra Leonean interlocutors lived, meant that during rainy season limited mobility seriously impeded their everyday lives.

What impact do other environmental concerns have on young people's lives?

How does awareness of these concerns aid the development of youth equitable transport?

Climate change, global emissions and fairness

Vikram, (Islamkot, Pakistan) spoke about the relationship between climate change and global equity. He said that he believes Pakistan should take climate change seriously, and implement changes and make investment urgently to tackle the issue. However, he also believes that Pakistan's emissions are dwarfed by those of what he termed 'westernised countries'. For him, this meant the issue was a global one which demanded global solutions.

How can climate change can be tackled fairly for those living in countries which have not historically contributed significantly to global emissions?

What impact can transport planning have on the issue of global equity in relation to climate change?

Conclusion

Whilst there was a degree of variation across contexts, broadly speaking the young people included were not from the most vulnerable or marginalised socio-economic backgrounds. None of the participants were totally without resources, be that the support of relatives, educational establishments or NGOs. However this access was not equally distributed, and some young people in our cohort had greater access to opportunities and support than others. Future work will need to prioritise understanding how differential access to social resources shapes young people's understandings of transport and the future, as well as engaging with those who are excluded from access to public transport. An awareness of how issues of autonomy, disability, educational attainment and class position relate to children and young people's access to transport should underpin this work.

This pilot study also raised important methodological questions about how we might best understand the relationship between young people's transport experiences, their aspirations and ideas of the future. Our interviews with sixteen young people across country contexts highlighted various questions, many of which are pressing but few of which were particularly surprising. What we learnt thus largely confirms our existing understandings of the relationship between young people's lives, aspiration and mobility.

Given the urgent challenges, however, that transport planners face creating 'youth equitable' transport systems that are environmentally sustainable whilst also fulfilling the aspirations and future desires of young people, we would contend that sustained ethnographic work, predicated on participatory, mobile and visual methods, would be the most productive approach to understanding children and young people's transport experiences and ideas of the future. Ethnography opens up spaces where through immersion in the lives and everyday practices of children, young people, their families and wider communities, new questions and approaches to thinking about transport and the future can emerge. Unlike interviews, which rely on a set of often predictable questions and which often result in the replication of predictable answers, ethnography foregrounds participation, lived experience and the joint creation of new kinds of questions and knowledge.

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Appendix A

"Voice of the Youth" and transport futures: Note to researchers

The purpose of this research is to prepare a "think piece" exploring issues affecting young people and the future of transport in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia.

Youth is defined as 16-25.

Overall, the project will consider:

The constraints and opportunities for developing "young people-equitable" transport infrastructure and services and promoting involvement of young people within decision-making processes.

Specifically, and in order to reach this overall goal, the project will address:

- Particular travel needs and transport patterns
- Access to secondary and further education and employment
- Interaction between mobile technology and travel needs of young people
- Road safety for the youth and the implications this has for addressing transport services
- Future aspirations, desires

What we would like from you

For you to talk with young people you know well in your field sites about transport so as to be able to provide contextual and rich background material for each conversation. We would like three pages of text from each conversation. Half a page of this should provide contextual information on the person you spoke to (anonymised), much of this may already be known to you. The remaining space should be written in an ethnographic style, using vignettes if these enhance the material of the respondents' transport experiences, ideas and aspirations. Please also note that where ever possible it will help if you describe where the person lives and what the local transport scene is like, i.e. what is normal, innovative or considered old-fashioned. This will help us locate the "Voice of the Youth" within the local context. How might the voice of this youth differ from that of a neighbour?

Contextual questions

Researchers are asked to provide half a page of contextual information, particularly insights into relative income level/class/education and age and gender.

- Where do you live?
- Are you studying/working/both/something else?
- What does an average day look like for you?
- What kinds of activities are you engaged with on an everyday basis?

Main questions

The following questions are indicative and do not all need to be asked. These questions should provide 2.5 pages of text with vignettes/preliminary analysis. These questions may not all apply – if so, please explain why.

Transport experiences

- How do you get to work/school/elsewhere on a daily basis? Do you use transport to get there? If so, which kinds?

- What kinds of transport do you use most often? Why?
- How much time do you generally spend travelling each day? And how much time do you use using transport each day? How far do you have to go from your house to connect with your regular transport?
- How do you feel whilst you're travelling? And whilst you're using transport? Why do you feel this way? Do you travel alone?
- How do you feel about the transport you use most often? Why do you feel like this?
- Are there other forms of transport you use less often? What are they? What do you use them for? Why do you use them? How do they make you feel? Why?
- What kinds of things does transport allow you to do? How do you feel about these things/activities? Can you describe your life if you didn't have access to the transport you use?
- Do you pay to use transport (regular/periodical)? If you do, how much do you pay? Does paying for transport affect which kinds of transport you use? Or how often you use it?
- What are the other factors which might influence which kinds of transport you use and how often you use it? (e.g. distance to transport stops, safety concerns, timetabling of transport, other social factors)
- What are the positive/exciting associations you make with the transport you use on an everyday/ occasional basis? What about the negatives?

Technology

- Do you use mobile technology? Apps?
- Are local forms of transport/ride sharing connected to the Apps you use? Which ones? How do you use them?

Travel Safety

- Do safety concerns affect the way you use transport?
- Have you or any of your friends suffered from safety failure in relation to transport?
- How is it possible to best inform people about transport safety?

Transport futures

- If you imagine your future, what kinds of transport do you imagine there?
- If you imagine the future of your community/the place you live, what kinds of transport do you imagine there?
- If you imagine the future of the world as a whole, what kinds of transport do you imagine?
- In what ways are these three futures similar, and in what ways are they different?
- If you think now about your own future, what role does transport play in it? And how does the role of transport in your imagined future compare to its role in your life today?
- Do thoughts about transport relate to your hopes/desires/fears? If so, how?
- Thinking about how you imagine your future, what kinds of transport do you think you'll need to realise your hoped-for future plans? Do you have access to this transport? If not, can you imagine how you might get access to it?
- Do you think transport is related to change? If so, why? If not, why not?
- Do worry about climate change and transport? Does awareness of climate change affect the way you think about your future transport choices?

Edward Simpson and Niamh Collard

Appendix B

Participant Information sheet

This research is being undertaken by a team of researchers working at SOAS, University of London, who have been commissioned by IMC, a UK-based development consultancy, to find out about-

• How young people use transport;

• How young people feel transport in relation to their future.

You have been asked to participate in this research because we are interested in hearing about how you use transport in your everyday lives, and how you imagine transport in the future.

The information you share with us will be used by the team at SOAS to write a short report which will then be shared with IMC, to help them understand what young people think about transport.

Any information you decide to share with us will be anonymised, removing your name and other personally identifiable details, so that those reading the final report will not be able to identify you individually.

The researcher you'll be speaking to will have a few questions relating to your thoughts about transport, and they'll be interested in exploring and understanding your thoughts, feeling and experiences about transport in your everyday life and in relation to your thoughts about the future. There are no right or wrong answers and please feel free to ask questions of your own.

If, once you've finished speaking with the researcher, you have further questions, do let them know.

Similarly, if once you've finished speaking with the researcher you decide you would not like to participate any further in the research, please let them know. Their contact details are-

• [Note to researchers- please include your email address etc here!!]

• Niamh Collard- Research Assistant, SOAS- nc32@soas.ac.uk

You have the right to withdraw your participation at any point up until we publish our final report and share it with IMC on the 15th December 2019.

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this research, the experiences and thoughts you share with us will help the teams at SOAS and IMC understand how young people across the world feel about transport.

Informed Consent

•   I have understood the Participant Information Sheet- YES [   ]   NO [   ]

•   I have been given the opportunity to ask questions and have had them answered clearly and satisfactorily- YES [   ]   NO [   ]

•   I understand that this research is being conducted by researchers at SOAS, on behalf of IMC, to understand young people's thoughts on transport, and I agree to take part in this research YES [   ]   NO [   ]

•   I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time up to the date of publication (15th December 2019) without giving a reason- YES [   ]   NO [   ]

•   I understand that the information I share with the researcher will be kept confidential and any information about me will be anonymised before its inclusion in the final report-

YES [   ]   NO [   ]

•   I agree that the SOAS research team can retain the data I share with them in compliance with GDPR for use in future research project- YES [   ]   NO [   ]

Participant's name:

Date:

Name of researcher: