



Vision 2050 competition – March 2020

By Monty Harr

The Future of Transportation and What We Need to Change

The future of transport lies with those who will consider women in their decision making. By this I do not mean it lies with women, as women are almost as likely to think of the default person as male as men are [1].

What I believe is that women's needs must be considered from at every stage in the planning process by decision makers of all genders. They must be catered for in new technologies and transport systems or they will fail. It is not useful for innovators to forget 50% of their user base.

It is far too often that we as a sector use simple models which much better predict the behaviour of women than men, When transport modelling we often use the simplest models of trips, however it is known that women are 26% more likely to trip chain and this figure increases to 39% if there is a child over the age of 9 in the household [1].

It is the failure of modern transportation planning that these needs are not currently well catered for. In an EU report on satisfaction with urban transport systems [2] male transport patterns are called "standard" whilst expressing discontent over transport systems ability to serve females needs.

The MERGE Greenwich report [3] which considered the viability of a Autonomous vehicle rideshare service notes that women especially were less willing to use the service due to safety concerns. Women are fully justified in feeling unsafe too as pointed out in a 2004 UK department of Transport [5] study there are stark differences in perceived safety after dark and another French study found 90 percent of French women had been harassed in some form on public transport [6]. These concerns would need addressing before such a service could be implemented.

It is also worth noting that while women are also quite likely to assume the default human to be male [1]. They ARE less likely, and the lack of women in the transport sector needs addressing.

From my own experience going to conferences and seeing rows and rows of male attendees and only enough women to count on one hand. Something must change in how we encourage young women into the sector. On top of the statistic that only a fifth of those working in transportation are women [4] something must change.

In order to enact any new technology or change we must consider the impact for women and women's needs. This is how we will succeed in revolutionising transport by any means.

NOTES

[1] Caroline Criado Perez, (2019) Invisible Women: Exposing Data Bias in a World

Designed for men, Chatto & Windus

[2] European Commission, (2013) Europeans' satisfaction with urban transport

[3] MERGE Greenwich Consortium, (2018) Autonomous vehicle ride-sharing services:
Will they make cities greener, more efficient and more accessible?

[4] Marion Roberts, (2016) Fair Shared Cities: The Impact of Gender Planning in Europe

[5] <http://transweb.sjsu.edu/research/how-ease-womens-fear-transportation-environments-case-studies-and-best-practices>

[6] <https://www.thelocal.fr/20160615/half-of-french-woman-alter-clothes-to-avoid-harassment>

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