Towards Inclusive Mobility in the Paris Region

Cosima Malandrino, Luc Berman

Exploratory walk organised by the French Hub in the 12th arrondissement of Paris in September 2020.

Executive summary

This policy brief aims at presenting the main issues related to gender and mobility in the Paris region. Similar to many other metropolitan areas around Europe, women in the Paris region tend to rely more on public transport and walking and have different commuting needs and behaviours than men. These differences are a result of gendered societal roles and socio-economic conditions that structure men's and women's daily lives. Safety and security issues, for example, greatly influence mobility practices as women are more likely to be victims of assault and harassment. Fear of assaults or potential traffic accidents generates apprehension for alternative mobility modes such as bicycles, motorcycles and e-kick scooters. This apprehension affects women's behaviours even beyond their transportation choices, forcing them, for example, to change the way they are dressed or the time of the day they go out. Addressing these issues is key to enhancing women's freedom of movement and ensure equal access and comfortable user experiences to all in the Île-de-France region.

Key messages

• **THE NEED TO INCLUDE GENDER AND DIVERSITY IN SERVICE DESIGN:** Research on the experiences of mobility users in Paris shows that most services are often not adapted to the needs of the most vulnerable users. Running studies that integrate gender, class differences, disabilities and age factors would allow service providers to better tailor their services to this important part of their clientele, increasing their users pool and ultimately improving the experience of all passengers. For instance, the standardised design of shared vehicles and the increasingly higher digitalisation are often key factors that hinder the access to services by categories such as women, the elderly and people with disabilities.

• **POLICY-MAKERS SHOULD LEAD THE WAY:** Policy-makers at the city and regional level play a key role in catalysing innovation towards more sustainable and inclusive models. Integrating an intersectional approach in their mobility policies would allow local authorities to enforce certain requirements in tenders and service contracts, to protect more vulnerable users. A streamlined collaboration between administrative departments of the City of Paris would allow for better policy-making in this field.

• **COOPERATION AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT:** Policy and service design greatly depend on engagement of users and citizens. A systematic effort should be provided to engage with users and stakeholders.
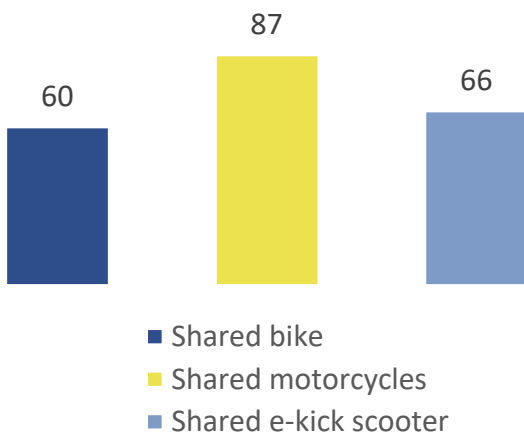
Gendered Mobility Practices in Paris

Our research highlights the main gender differences, which play a role in mobility choices in the Paris region. Compared to men, women in Île-de-France tend to:

- rely more on public transport and walking;
- travel shorter distances;
- travel for a shorter time;
- dedicate more ~~their~~ trips to domestic chores;
- work in central areas of the metropolis and in proximity to their home;
- use less shared mobility means, especially e-kick scooters and shared motorcycles.

Despite their need for flexible solutions for shorter, circular trips, they are underrepresented among shared mobility users in Paris. The standard users of shared services are men, young people, students and executives. Many factors contribute to the picture shown by the data in the figure below.

Share of male users, Paris (%)

Perception of insecurity in the public space, risk aversion and gendered mobility practices are frequently mentioned by researchers as some of the causes of this underrepresentation. The graph to the right shows some of the results of the surveys distributed to the participants of our exploratory walks in Paris. Scooters (motorbikes) and kick-scooters appear as very unsafe. Finally, results highlight higher rates of anxiety for public transportation than for other modes and a clear day vs. night contrast when it comes to security.

Main findings

The gendered differences in transport call for an understanding of why **women continue to prefer more traditional transportation modes.**

1 **RESEARCH APPROACH:** the Hub conducted 10 semi-structured expert interviews, 4 exploratory walks in 4 different neighbourhoods in Paris as well as a literature review. The Hub also organized two workshops with local operators.

2 **RESEARCH RESULTS:** We identified a set of barriers that play a central role in limiting the uptake of shared mobility solutions among women: absence of adequate infrastructure; a higher perception of risk; prevalent socio-economic barriers (as these solutions often have higher costs); differences in IT culture; standardised designs (linked to the absence of diversity in design teams); unequal geographic access; incompatibility of solutions with specific needs (for example: taking care of a dependent person / carrying heavy groceries bags).

Exploratory walks further shed light on these trends. Participants frequently mentioned the reliance on digital means, lack of the devices' stability, weight, and the perceived danger of shared modes as barriers.
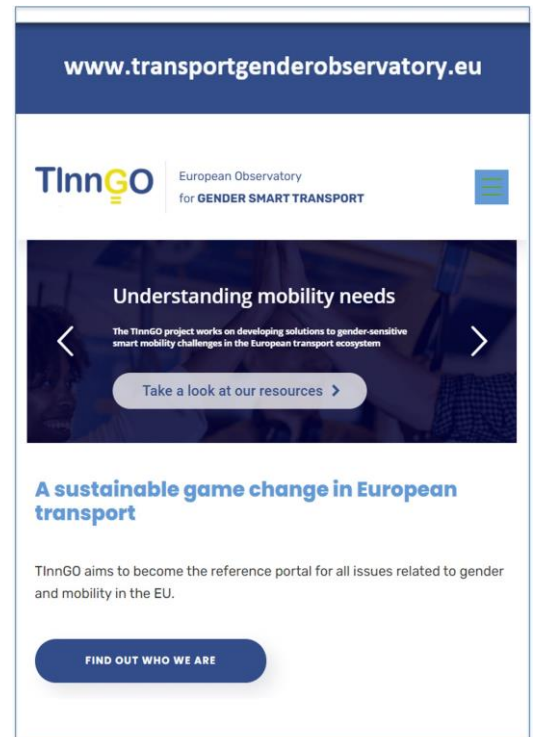
Perception of insecurity
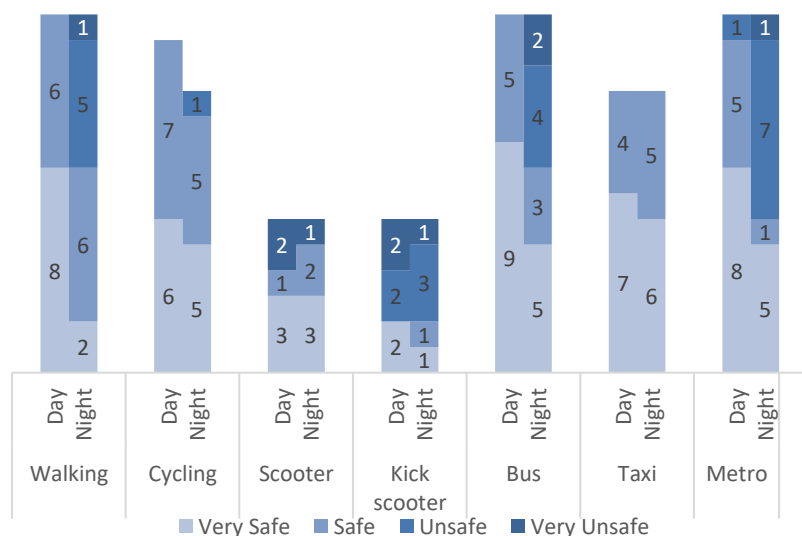
Conclusions and recommendations

In order to respond to these challenges, we urge operators and public authorities to set up gender and diversity action plans that integrate the gendered, spatial, socio-economic and ability differences into their strategies and operations.

On the one hand, public authorities can have an impact developing public spaces for better accessibility and safety, particularly at night. On the other hand, transport operators should systematise their inclusion of gender, age, socio-economic and physical ability in the design and operation of their services. Working with local associations that are already active on issues like harassment and equality in transportation is especially helpful to support operators in adopting good practices.

To resolve obstacles and improve the accessibility of shared mobility modes, we raise the following recommendations:

Shared bicycles	Wider distribution across the metropolitan area Better maintenance / Lighter bicycles Rear-view mirrors More intuitive docks terminals Better/safer cycling infrastructure Lower reliance on the app Possibility of carrying a child / bigger bags
Shared e-kick scooters	Wider distribution across the metropolitan area More intuitive apps and lower reliance on it Suggest the first ride to be free so that one can test the different services
Shared motorcycles	Wider distribution across the metropolitan area Suggest the first ride to be free so that one can test the different services Offer two helmets Lower reliance on the app
Carsharing	Wider distribution across the metropolitan area More intuitive apps Suggest the first ride to be free so that one can test the different services
Taxis/ ridesharing	Heighten the awareness of drivers to gender and diversity issues Greater regulation on drivers' profiles Greater sanctions for drivers who were the subject of complaints Convert fleets to electric and hybrid vehicles

www.transportgenderobservatory.eu

TInnGO — European Observatory for GENDER SMART TRANSPORT

Understanding mobility needs

The TInnGO project works on developing solutions to gender-sensitive smart mobility challenges in the European transport ecosystem

Take a look at our resources >

A sustainable game change in European transport

TInnGO aims to become the reference portal for all issues related to gender and mobility in the EU.

FIND OUT WHO WE ARE

Cosima Malandrino
cosima.malandrino@lgi-consulting.com

Luc Berman
luc.berman@lgi-consulting.com