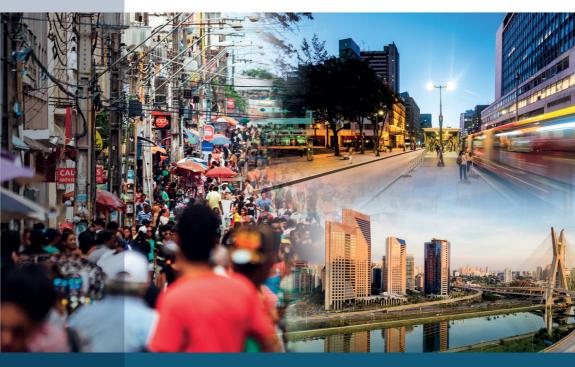
# Urban Mobility and Social Equity in Latin America

Evidence, Concepts, Methods



Edited by Daniel Oviedo Natalia Villamizar Duarte Ana Marcela Ardila Pinto

# URBAN MOBILITY AND SOCIAL EQUITY IN LATIN AMERICA



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# URBAN MOBILITY AND SOCIAL EQUITY IN LATIN AMERICA: EVIDENCE, CONCEPTS, METHODS

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United Kingdom – North America – Japan India – Malaysia – China Emerald Publishing Limited Howard House, Wagon Lane, Bingley BD16 1WA, UK

First edition 2021

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#### **British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data**

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

ISBN: 978-1-78769-010-3 (Print) ISBN: 978-1-78769-009-7 (Online) ISBN: 978-1-78769-011-0 (Epub)

ISSN: 2044-9941 (Series)



ISOQAR certified Management System, awarded to Emerald for adherence to Environmental standard ISO 14001:2004.

Certificate Number 1985 ISO 14001



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#### **PROLOGUE**

# URBAN MOBILITY AND SOCIAL EQUITY IN LATIN AMERICAN CITIES: EVIDENCE, CONCEPTS AND METHODS FOR MORE INCLUSIVE CITIES

Karen Lucas

I have been researching and writing about transport inequities and their punitive social consequences for the affected individuals and communities for more than 20 years now and in numerous geographical contexts. I am pleased to say that over this time more and more academics from around the world are becoming interested in researching this topic, as well as trying to influence policymakers, planners and the funders of transport projects to think more about social equity in the design and operation of urban transport systems. It is an important issue in all geographical contexts, whether in the Global North or South, in urban, suburban or rural contexts, and everywhere in between, for all forms of transport, as well as for urban planning and for how we shape our cities and their rural hinterlands.

Inequality in all its dangerous and pernicious forms infuriates me, especially when the people who experience it have no control over the power structures that create it and no opportunities to fight against it. The mobility and accessibility inequalities caused by exclusionary transport and land-use systems are particularly insidious because almost all countries have overlooked them within their social development and welfare agendas. However, lack of access to transport resources can have hugely negative social outcomes over a person's life course, denying them participation in many activities and opportunities, and can even destroy the well-being of whole communities. In the main, these inequalities are not something that individuals can themselves resolve, although they may invent highly creative strategies to cope with them on a daily basis. Nevertheless, a fundamental overhaul of the power structures that plan and finance urban transport systems as well as dedicated evidence-based policies, integrated planning and sustained project interventions are needed to change the current trajectory, so that cities can become inclusive places for all.

xxii PROLOGUE

Latin America is a vast subcontinent and so we are often talking about very different physical conditions, political economies and human capabilities across the different countries under consideration, as well between the urban conurbations within them. What all its countries demonstrate, in common with the rest of the world, is that mobility resources are almost always distributed unevenly (and often unfairly) and in line with traditional social divisions, so that usually lower income groups get to have much less of them, as do women, children, older people, people with disabilities and other socially disadvantaged groups. It is unsurprising that they undertake most of their trips by walking or walk long distances to access the limited transit services that are available to them. This in turn reduces their opportunities to access employment and other key activities within the rapidly expanding urban realm.

These problems can be particularly acute for low-income women, who not only have to travel to far-flung places outside their areas of residence to take up domiciliary employment in the middle-class areas of the city, but must also combine this travel with the still highly gendered responsibilities of caring for children and elderly relatives and managing the home. The high demands placed on low-income women to travel away from the home to secure a living in the far-flung and often gated communities of the middle-class households in many Latin American cities can also have severe knock-on consequences for their children and family relationships. As such, as the case studies identify, mobility poverty is a social problem from the point of view of social participation and inclusion, and one that needs full integration with other welfare policies, such as housing, employment, healthcare and education provision, in order to address a much broad set of Sustainable Development Goals for Latin American cities.

It is for this reason that the texts that Oviedo, Villamizar and Ardila have brought together in this edited collection are so important. They provide the underpinning theories, concepts and evidence base that has been missing for so long within the discourses surrounding the provision of sustainable *and equitable* mobility in developing cities. Not only do these Latin American case studies serve to highlight the negative consequences of having inadequate mobility resources for people's lives and livelihoods, but they also demonstrate how person-centric designed and context-specific projects can successfully provide inclusive accessibility for all within cities. That the authors are themselves from Latin American origins also lends a certain sense of passion and integrity to the work. That many of them are early career researchers offers the old hands, like myself, hope for the continuance of teaching, research and policy action addressing the intersectionalities between mobility inequalities and social well-being.

It is, thus, my hope that this book will receive the attention it deserves from the people who can make a real difference on the ground in these domains, and so, to recognise the important role of urban mobility in the achievement of greater social equity at every level of Latin American society.

**Professor Karen Lucas** 

School of Environment, Education and Development University of Manchester

#### **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

The culmination of this publication is the result of a collective effort of a wide network of academics, citizens and professionals concerned with understanding the links between urban mobility and social equity. Such network is the result of the collaboration of researchers, universities and research centres, development agencies, public and private institutions, non-governmental organisations and citizens of countries across Latin America and beyond. By committing research, financial, logistical support, translation, editorial and affective support, each one of these individuals and organisations has made this book possible. We express our sincere thanks to each and all of them.

We also want to thank researchers, friends and colleagues of the Latin American Branch of the International Network for Transport and Accessibility in Low Income Communities, INTALInC LAC. This network has offered us, the editors and contributors, a space for voicing debates and exploring the implications for transport planning and urban mobility and their interaction with other dimensions of planning. We thank the members of the network who actively engaged in the production of this book. We also express our gratitude to the editorial and logistic team at Emerald for their undying support in editing and publishing the final product, with a great interest in contributing to the production of knowledge in Latin America. Finally, to our readers, thank you for the opportunity to share our research with you and for continuing expanding the interest in social research in urban mobility in Latin America and the Global South.