

# DECOLONISING POPULAR TRANSPORT



Manchester Urban Institute



**INTALInC 4th Annual Seminar Series with Manchester Urban Institute and Transport Studies Unit, University of Oxford**

**Decolonising Transport Planning: What are the implications for transport poverty?**

**Session 2 | Wednesday 29th May 2024 | 2:30-4:00pm | Online |**

**Chair: Tim Schwanen, University of Oxford**

In this second session, we discuss the appropriateness of western and increasingly Chinese ways of thinking about, and models of, public transport provision for addressing the unmet mobility needs of transport poor populations. The informal nature of public transport in many global south cities is largely viewed as inefficient and inappropriate for the modernising agenda of world cities. Much of the neo-colonisation of public transport planning therefore comes in the form of modern-looking, high-tech and often large-scale infrastructure projects that are funded and designed by global agencies external to the countries in which they are being developed. In many instances, such projects exacerbate rather than alleviate transport inequalities in the cities where they are introduced. Even when their design is purposefully inclusive, their operation is limited to specific corridors and usually does not reach low-income, peripheral communities. We will also consider ways of improving service provision, safety and labour relations that emerge from within the popular transport sector and through authorities working with that sector.

Wednesday 29th May 2024 from 2:30pm - 4:00pm | On Zoom

## **Decolonising popular transport**

### **PROGRAMME**

#### **Decolonising from the void: amaphela, adaptive urban governance, and ‘Southern’ knowledge(s)**

**Bradley Rink | University of Western Cape**

This presentation uses the example of *amaphela* paratransit services in Cape Town, South Africa to offer a critique from the global South about the universality of mobilities theory and the universality of how mobility systems operate and how they are experienced. It harnesses this example of ‘popular’ transport to question how we understand and theorise everyday transport and mobilities. I seek to demonstrate that, rather than dwelling on either extreme of the formal/informal binary, *amaphela* services thrive in an intermediate zone of what I call adaptive infrastructure and governance. The critique of the mobilities canon helps to decolonise our understanding of the everyday movements and circulations of residents who live in a ‘mobility void’, left to their own devices by the State who neglected to offer possibilities of physical and social mobility and the resulting access to economic, social and cultural opportunities.

#### **Challenges in Modernizing Jeepneys in the Philippines: A Case Study on Business Models, Facilitating Factors, and Obstacles of Early E-Jeepney Adopters**

**Sandy Mae A. Gaspay | University of the Philippines - Diliman**

In 2017, the Philippine government introduced reforms to its public transportation system through the launch of the Public Utility Vehicle (PUV) Modernization Program. The program not only aims to replace environmentally-polluting vehicles but also attempts to “formalize” the PUV industry by imposing requirements such as route rationalization plans, operator consolidation and fleet management, among others. Central to this program is the jeepney, the most ubiquitous public transport mode being used in the Philippines that evolved from post-World War 2 jeeps. For a long time, they have been characterized as informal, low quality, and unorganized. One of the key requirements of the program is replacement of vehicles to comply with “Euro 4 or better” emission standards. With this, some operators have opted to go electric.

The presentation examines the experience of E-jeepney cooperatives that have complied with the modernization program. It found that while some of them have achieved financial success, the business models are not easily replicable in other areas and their successes are mostly dependent on local contexts and enabling factors. The findings underscore the importance of not having a “one-size-fits-all” solution to modernization.

#### **Discussant: Benjamin de la Peña | Shared Mobility Center**

Benjie is the CEO of the [Shared-Use Mobility Center](#); he chairs the [Global Network for Popular Transportation](#); is the founder of [Agile City Partners](#); and writes and curates [Makeshift Mobility](#), a fortnightly newsletter covering innovations in informal transportation. He also convenes the [Shared Mobility 2030 Action Agenda](#) and edits and produces [Pop Transport](#). He co-wrote [Ten signs you are a neocolonial transport planner](#).

Benjie serves on the board of the [American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy](#) (ACEEE), the US Advisory Committee of the [Institute for Transportation and Development Policy](#), the [UITP Informal Transportation Working Group](#), the [Digital Transport for Africa Partners Committee](#), the [MobiliseYourCity Steering Committee](#), and is a Senior Fellow for Mobility for the [Canadian Urban Institute](#).

He served as the first-ever Chief of Strategy and Innovation for the Seattle Department of Transportation. He and his team drafted the city’s *Transportation Information Infrastructure Plan*. He also led the development of Seattle’s *New Mobility Playbook*. Benjie is a graduate of the University of the Philippines with a BA in Journalism; and of the Harvard Graduate School of Design, with an MA in Urban Planning.