

# Exploring dimensions of socially just transport: the case of *Metrocables* in Medellín, Colombia

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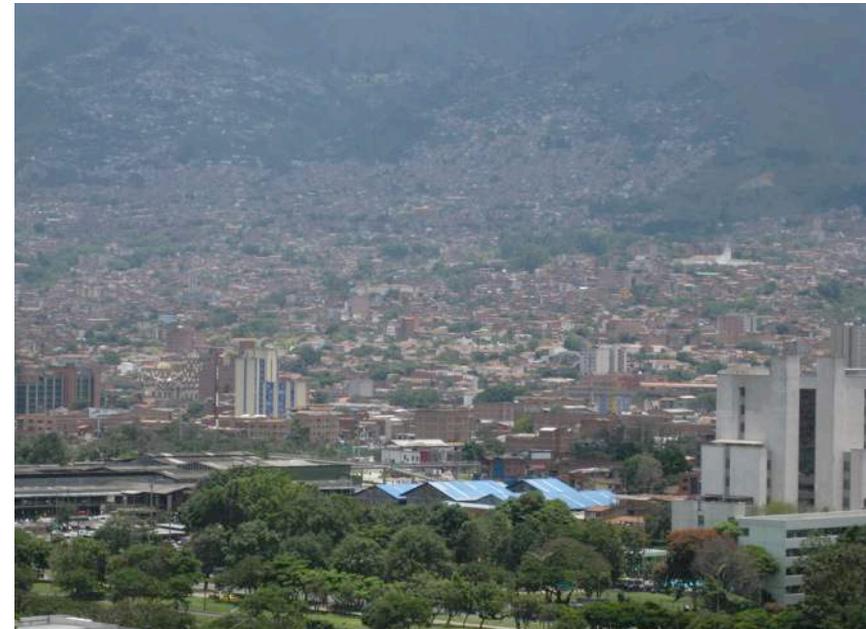
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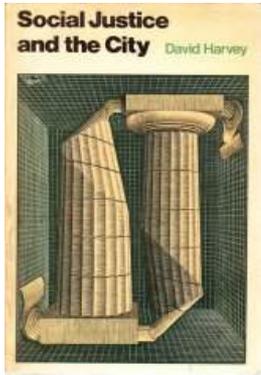
Seminar Series

The Bartlett

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# POST RAWLS INFLUENCES ON DEFINING SOCIAL JUSTICE



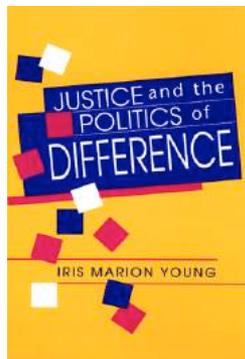
## Harvey

- Urbanisation, capitalist development and socio-spatial justice
- Focus on class relations
- 'just distribution justly arrived at'



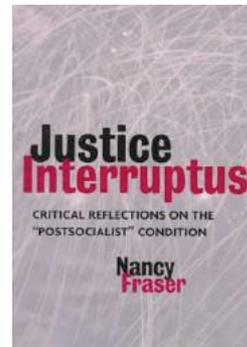
## Lefebvre

- Right to the city
- Right to appropriate & right to participation



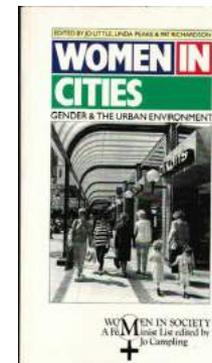
## Young

- Distinction between material distribution & institutional access dimensions of justice



## Fraser

- Politics of recognition
- Parity political participation

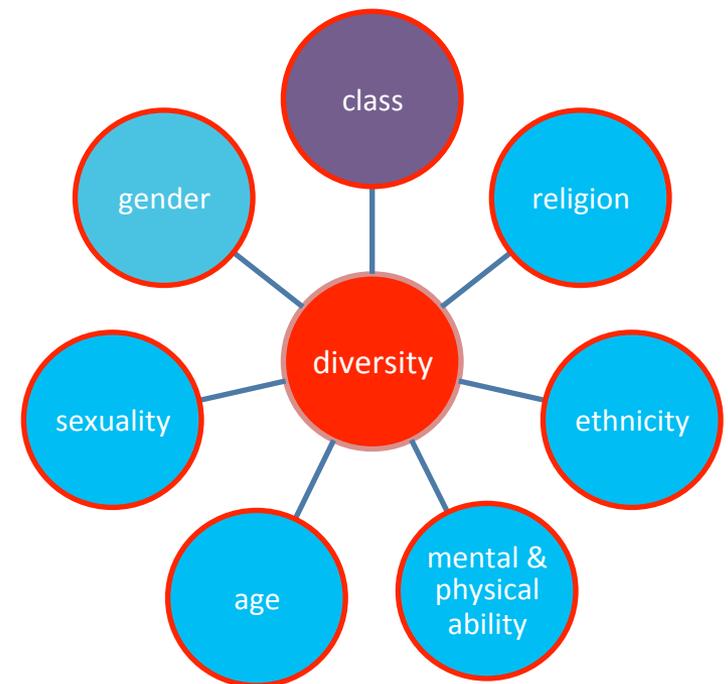


## Feminist geographers

- Urbanisation, capitalist development & gender relations

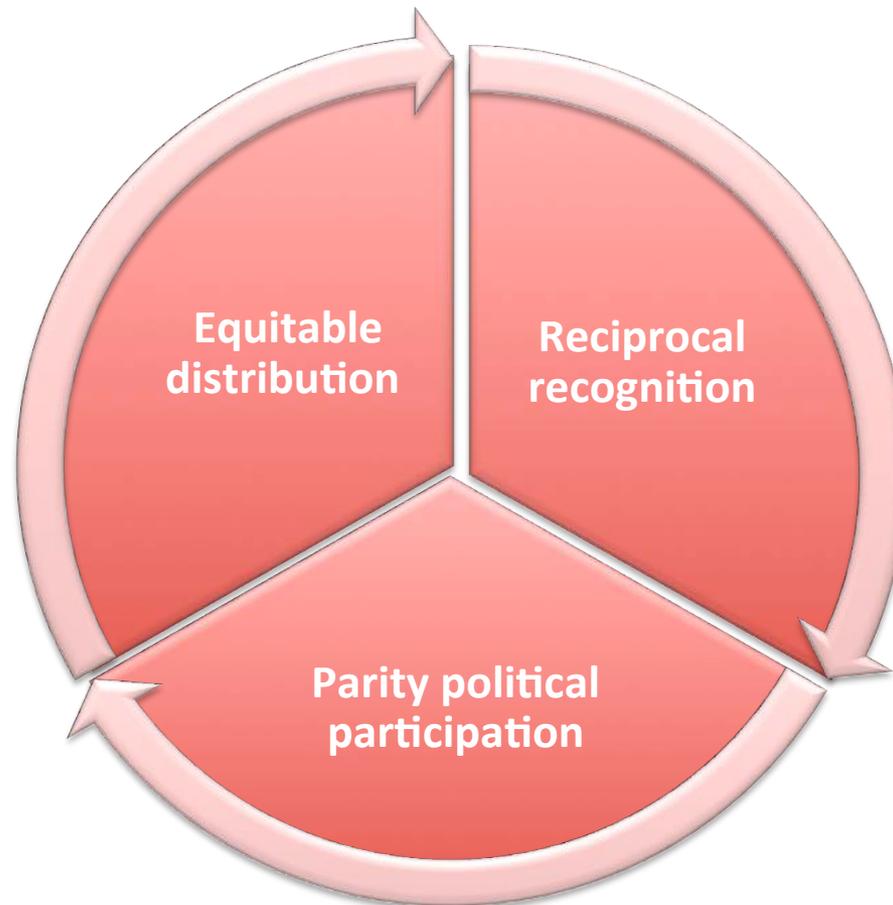
# DIMENSIONS OF SOCIAL JUSTICE

- Some issues for consideration
  - ❑ what kind of urban transport, what kind of city?
  - ❑ Transport in political economy of the city (Harvey, 1976)
  - ❑ Right to the city and transport (Lefebvre, 1991; Levy, 2013) and the politics of recognition (Fraser, 1996, 1997)
  - ❑ Intersectional social relations acting on and in the city (Fraser, 1998a; Peake et al; Levy, 2013; Young, 1998)
  - ❑ Distinction between material and institutional rights (Young, 1991)
  - ❑ Process of change: learning & transformation (McFarlane, 2011)



# DEFINING THE DIMENSIONS OF SOCIAL JUSTICE

(Levy, 2015 building on Young, 1990,1998; Fraser, 1996, 1998 a & b; Allen & Frediani, 2013)



## THE CASE OF MEDELLÍN: a city of inequality

- Drawing on the findings from the research entitled ‘Local governance, urban mobility and poverty reduction: Lessons from Medellin, Colombia’
- Partners: UCL (DPU and CEGE); Universidad Nacional de Colombia (Medellín campus); Universidad de los Andes (Bogotá)

<https://www.bartlett.ucl.ac.uk/dpu/metrocables/the-research>



## THE CASE OF MEDELLÍN: Planning response

2 key related interventions

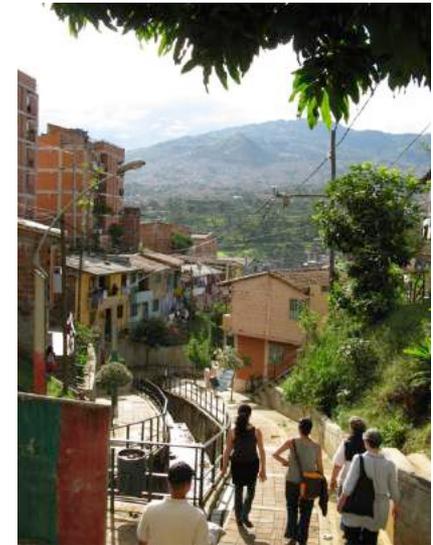
- Construction of *metrocables*



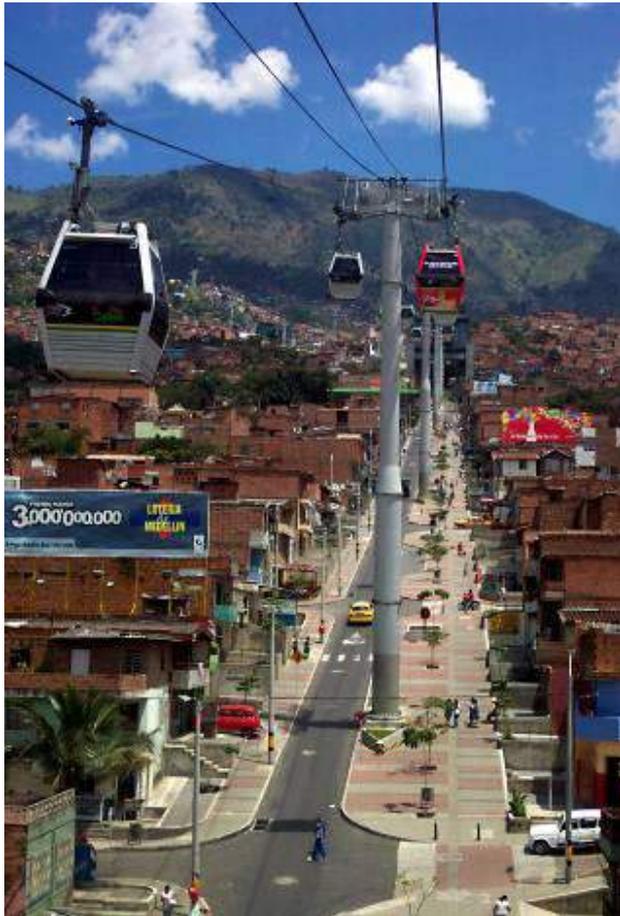
	Linea K	Linea J	Linea L (tourist line)
Launch date (construction time)	August 2004 (14 months)	March 2008 (15 months)	February 2010 (10 months)
Cost	\$24	\$47	\$21
Zone of influence	230,000 inhab.	315,000 inhab.	
Operational capacity	3,000 p/h	3,000 p/h	1,200 p/h
Funding source	Mun. 55%; Metro 45%	Mun. 73%; Metro 27%	Mun. 38%; Metro 34%; Prov. 17%

## THE CASE OF MEDELLÍN: Planning response

- Investment in Integrated Urban Projects - constituted 7 times the cost of *Metrocables*
  - Upgrading and creation of public space (including drainage)
  - Education and cultural space (6 schools, park-libraries; cultural centres)
  - Selected housing (Juan Bobo)



# REDISTRIBUTION IN MEDELLÍN



- Transport impacts on accessibility
  - ❑ Reduced travel times from 45 to 15 minutes (not incl. queuing)
  - ❑ Cost of travel – multi-modal trips cheaper, but buses still cheaper – trade off time
  - ❑ Class – workers with produce/tools often excluded; bus drivers/taxi less in demand
  - ❑ Gender – women consider buses safer; sexual harassment in queues & on the Metro in rush hour
  - ❑ Disability (50,000) and age: +/-access issues; books & computers but no toilets
- Financial redistribution within city
  - ❑ EPM transfers 50% of surplus = 27% of municipalities investment resources

# REDISTRIBUTION IN MEDELLÍN

- Integrated Urban Projects
  - ❑ High quality architecture and landscaped public space: “...we must implement projects for the poor as if they were for the rich; the poor are entitled to more than conventional projects for the poor” (Mayor Luis Pérez, 2001-2003)
  - ❑ Decrease in violence - but safer for women?
  - ❑ Public facilities and housing for low income - projectised
  - ❑ Construction jobs – mainly to low income men
  - ❑ Promotion of small businesses – difficulty of establishing causal links to poverty reduction; not specifically gendered
  - ❑ Training opportunities - women as well as men accessed these



# REDISTRIBUTION – ADDRESSING ‘DEEP DISTRIBUTION’



## ■ Accessibility

- ❑ transport ‘...has an integrative dimension in people’s lives, enabling them to balance – or orchestrate activities on a daily basis.’ (Levy, 2013b:24)
- ❑ There everyday urban practices embedded in structural processes interacting with the city
- ❑ Problematic to equate travel patterns with the actual travel needs – diverse women and men are making trade offs in a transport system
  - underpinned by planning assumptions that reflect ‘western’, gender and middle class stereotypes about transport users
  - Embedded in cities of inequality – contribution to reproducing inequality
- ❑ Socially just transport and distribution - need to address ‘**deep distribution**’ (Levy, 2013a)

# POLITICS OF RECOGNITION IN MEDELLÍN

- Central state: recognition of right to public space
  - 1989 Urban Reform Law in Colombia - redefined public spaces as areas for meeting collective urban needs
  - 1991 National Constitution - recognised public space as a constitutional right, with public authorities designated as its guarantors
- Local state: ‘social urbanism’
  - Mayor Sergio Fajardo, 2004-2007 – viewed as spatialized social policy (Sotomayor, 2013: 3)
  - Recognition of ‘historic debt’ to urban poor



## POLITICS OF RECOGNITION IN MEDELLÍN

- State - civil society ‘social contracts’ in the Metro and metrocables:  
*Cultura Ciudadana*
  - “set of conventions for dealing with violence, exclusion, and difference” (Steinen, 2009: 110) in relation to mobility in public space
  - reinforced in the city’s transport system by the rolling out of *Cultura Metro* (from 1996)
- Critique of *Cultura Ciudadana* and *Cultura Metro* on public transport and ‘social urbanism’:
  - Underpinning by middle class notion of space and lifestyle – class, gender and age dimensions
  - Dislike element of social control – mediates movements in space
  - Women are ambivalent - suffer harassment and violence on the metro & metrocables, but think it would be worse without *cultura metro*

## RECIPROCAL RECOGNITION

- Transport about more than accessibility – discussions of recognition highlight issue of mobility: ‘that is, the freedom and right of all citizens to move in public space with safety and security – and without censure and social control.’ (Levy, 2013b:26)
- Politics of recognition around mobility not only about recognition of social identity and inequalities by the state
- Also recognition of injustice by diverse women and men in civil society and more particularly – can engagement with transport and their city raise consciousness of oppression and inequality, individually and collectively?

## RECIPROCAL RECOGNITION

- Mobility and self development:
  - “developing and exercising one’s capacities and expressing one’s experience” (Young, 1990:37)
  - Linked to learning - “the specific processes, practices and interactions through which knowledge is created, contested and transformed, and for how perception emerges and changes.” (McFarlane, 2011: p.3)
  - Mobility in public space is both physical, political and symbolic
- In Medellín – recognition of rights built through
  - Previous experience of public Round Tables and participatory budgeting – link between politics of recognition & participation
  - Low income women’s involvement despite gender blind approaches – women saw engagement as ‘a learning process’
- Lead me to reframe concept: from ‘recognition’ to **‘reciprocal recognition’**

## POLITICAL PARTICIPATION IN MEDELLÍN

- Built on national framework for participation (Constitution, 1991)
  - *Mesas de Concertación* (public Round Tables) and Open Forums with grassroots organizations, local NGOs, trade unions, universities, the municipality and the city's business sector in Medellín
- Participatory budgeting (1996)
  - 5-10% of municipal budget (1997)
  - Prioritisation of education
- 'Social urbanism' in Medellín:
  - Community participation in the planning and design of public spaces and facilities
  - Issues of representation
- Low income women as well as men leaders took the opportunities in a gender-blind participatory planning – many felt empowered

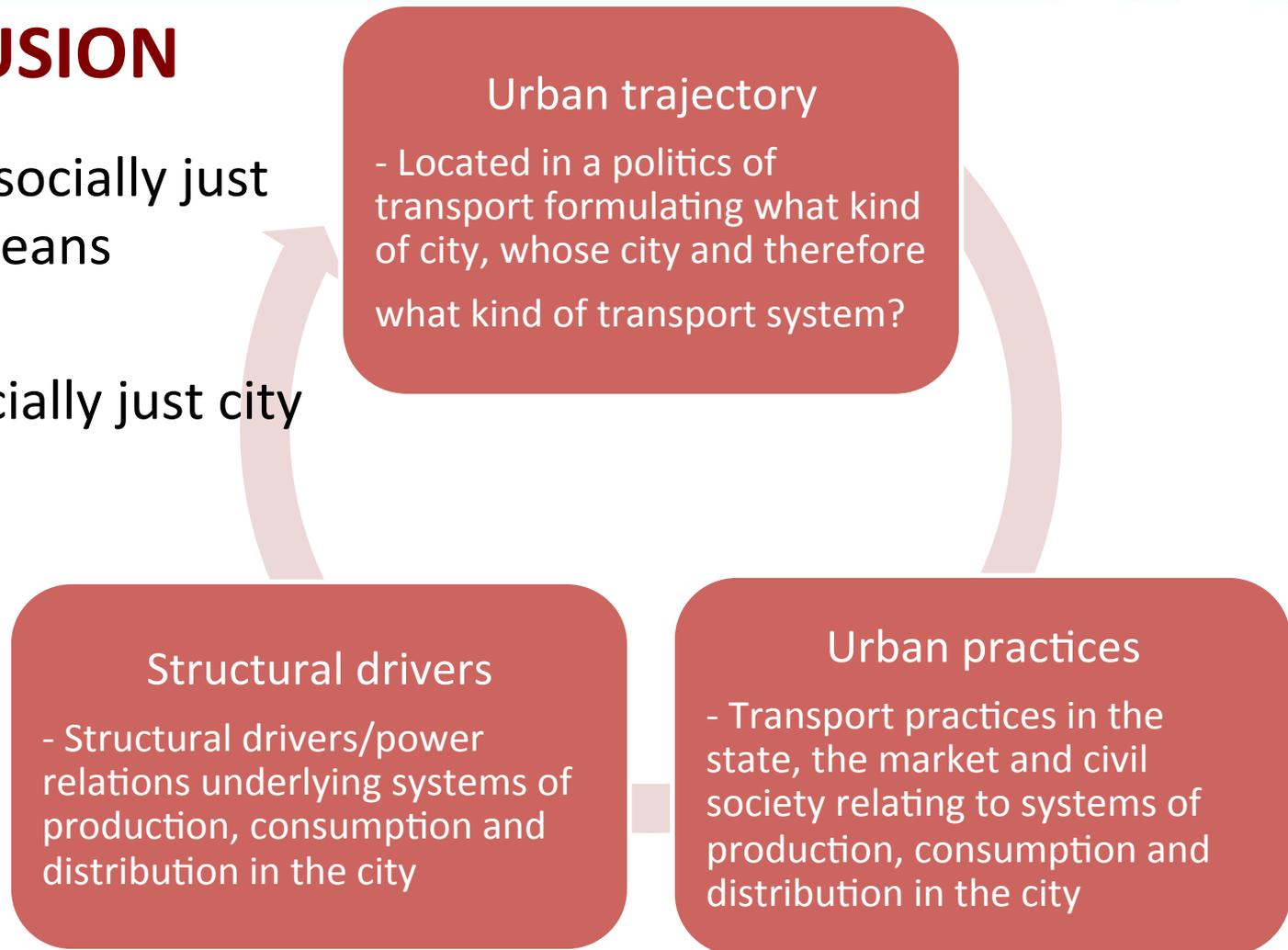


## PARITY POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

- Two dimensions of ‘parity political participation’:
  - self determination: ‘participating in determining one’s action and the conditions of one’s action” (cf. Young, 1979 in Young 1990:37)
  - ‘parity’ dimension of this participation, or “... social arrangements that permit all (adult) members of society to interact with one another as peers.” (Fraser, 1996:30)
- the right to participate in transport planning decisions, which by their very nature have medium and long term impacts on the structure of cities and therefore on the medium and long term **travel and wider urban experiences** of citizens

## CONCLUSION

Addressing socially just transport means engaging with the socially just city



**Source:** Levy, C, 2016, Transport, development and the reproduction of inequality in cities, Presentation, Transport Equity & Urban Mobility, Module, MSc Urban Development Planning, DPU, UCL

## CONCLUDING COMMENTS

Addressing socially just transport means engaging with the socially just city – some issues of importance:

- **intersectional** social relations in the reproduction of social (in)justice
  - planning and the social position of transport users
  - implications for social movements
- **multi-sectoral** interventions in transformative change – intermediate character of transport – need for an integrated approach
- **multi-scalar** relations in the reproduction of social (in)justice – the limits and opportunities of transport projects

## CONCLUDING COMMENTS

Addressing socially just transport means engaging with socially just city – some issues of importance:

- **public and private space** – travel ‘choice’ is about private tradeoffs and public politics
- inter-relation of **material and discursive practices** in transport planning and urban development
  - ❑ limits of undertaking social engineering through spatial practices
  - ❑ participation & the centrality of political struggle
  - ❑ creation of public myth to reconcile contradictions eg ‘social urbanism’

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