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Intersectionality in Motion: Women's Perceptions of Safety and Access in Groningen's Bus Infrastructure



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Abstract

Gender inequalities are permeated into every structure of society, with public transport infrastructure as no exception. This thesis explores women's perceptions of safety and accessibility while utilising the bus in Groningen. The purpose is to apply an intersectional feminist lens, investigating how certain traits like gender, race, ethnicity, among others, influence women's experiences on the bus. Qualitative primary data collection was employed, including in-person interviews and online qualitative surveys. Findings reveal that despite the bus being generally perceived as safe and accessible, varying accounts among women prove the significant influence of these intersecting characteristics. The study emphasizes the importance of considering social aspects of infrastructure to address gendered disparities effectively. Implications contribute to a deeper understanding of how intersectionality shapes women's experiences in public transport, as well as their mobility, particularly within the Dutch urban context. For future recommendations, the topic could also incorporate a quantitative dimension, recognising the merits of a mixed-methods approach. Additionally, a follow-up study may elaborate further on key findings, involve new groups, and expand the geographical scope beyond Groningen.

Key words: intersectionality, women's perceptions, safety, accessibility, public transportation.

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1. Introduction

Gender inequalities are permeated into every structure of society, and failure to address them under the guise of naivety only serves to perpetuate such disparities (Maharaj, 1994, p. 41; Bibeau, 2019, p. 164). Public transport infrastructure is no exception, with ‘gender-blind’ designs maintaining existing inequalities between men and women in shared public spaces (Kaygan *et al.*, 2023). Understanding how women and other disadvantaged groups experience and perceive the safety and accessibility of infrastructure in cities is crucial to serve diverse interests, confront the inherent ‘neutrality’ of urban planning, and challenge traditional paradigms to account for women’s experiences, hence outlining the importance of ‘Feminist Urbanism’ (Visakha, 2023).

Issues surrounding the bus infrastructure in Groningen (Figure 1) are spoken about often, however expressed concerns tend to focus on delays, lacking accessibility for rural peripheries, staff shortages, excessively long travel times due to routing decisions, alternative fuel sources due to the energy transition, and other relatively ‘technical’ aspects (RTV Noord, 2022; Collins, 2023; Scheffer, 2024; Renkema, 2024). Despite the rather limited geographical scope, the importance of such studies and their implications should not be overlooked, since the “failure to look at the infrastructure of everyday life in cities from a gender perspective results in negative consequences for people at the margins” (Macaya *et al.*, 2021, p. 402). Hence, the scientific motivation for this study stems from lacking comprehensive research that focuses on such social aspects and experiences, also addressing discrepancies through an intersectional lens, acknowledging gendered, racial, and classed differences.



Figure 1: Map of Bus Network Groningen (Qbuzz, 2024)

Regarding societal motivations, investigating gender equity and social inclusion proves helpful for informing policy, enhancing safety, improving the mobility of vulnerable groups, as well as being wielded as a tool for advocacy, empowerment, and education (Weldon, 2019, pp. 127-128). Additionally, the author's interest towards themes of infrastructure planning, a passion for deliberating gendered and racial disparities, and the will to gain a deeper understanding of how such domains interact, all acted in conjunction to create a personal motivation to explore this issue. While experiences of gender inequality are not unfamiliar for the author, the intersecting of further characteristics that target marginalised women are. Hence, the research recognises this position throughout, that despite being a woman, as someone foreign to these phenomena the author remains strictly an observer to the particular circumstances investigated.

1.1. Research Problem

The main purpose of this research topic was to examine the adequacy of the bus infrastructure in Groningen according to women, through an intersectional lens. To realise this purpose, the specific concerns and anxieties that inhibit women's sense of safety and accessibility while using public transport, as well as strategies they use to combat and avoid these threats must be acknowledged. Hence, the provisional central research question is:

“How do intersecting factors influence perceived safety and access of existing bus infrastructure among women in the city of Groningen?”

Consequently, arising sub-questions that aid in addressing the central research question through interpreting specific dimensions and providing an enhanced understanding of the topic are:

- “What are the specific safety concerns that women in Groningen associate with using existing bus infrastructure?”
- “What strategies do women in Groningen employ to mitigate safety concerns while using the bus network?”
- “Do women feel that the current state of the bus network in Groningen adequately addresses safety and access concerns?”

2. Theoretical Framework

2.1. Social Impacts, Safety, and Accessibility

Leading concepts of this topic relate to intersectionality in urban planning, assessment of social impacts, and more broadly, perceptions of safety, accessibility, and justice in cities. Set out by Vanclay *et al.* (2015) within the lexicon of ‘Social Impact Assessment’ (SIA), defining the ‘social impacts’ of any intervention pertains to exploring resulting changes in people’s culture, way of life, and their community structure, but shifts within factors such as individual rights, wellbeing, exposure to harm, and fears – also encompassing perceived safety – are equally as significant to consider. The latter factors are especially meaningful for this study, wherein the social effects and repercussions of infrastructure were explored. Additionally, the European Institute for Gender Equality extends such considerations, specifying the importance of ‘Gender Impact Assessment’ as an estimation of outcomes (positive, negative, or neutral) of implemented policies for the state of equality between men and women (EIGE, 2024).

Defining safety and access is important so that perceptions can be effectively assessed, but due to subjectivity of such terms in literature, they are less amenable to objective scientific measurement and cannot be reduced to single, agreed-upon definitions (LeDoux *et al.*, 2018). Understanding these terms is vital, particularly given the crucial role that subjective experiences play by influencing memory, judgement, and most significant for this study, intergroup relations (Bless & Forgas, 2000). Women adjust travel patterns and behaviours according to whether or not distinct safety needs are met in their transit environments, particularly true for groups more vulnerable to victimisation (Loukaitou-Sideris, 2014). Simply put, a safe environment entails freedom from harassment, crime, misogyny, and a situation wherein women are free to be physically, cognitively, and emotionally expressive, denoted as ‘safe spaces’ (Lewis *et al.*, 2015). The second element considered is accessibility, defined as the potential for interaction, referencing both the quality of the transportation system (travel time and costs) on the one hand, as well as the quality of the land-use system (potential reachable destinations) on the other hand (Hansen, 1959; Straatemeier, 2008, pp. 128-129). A crucial addition is that “two people in the same place may evaluate their accessibility differently” (Handy and Niemeier, 1997, p.1175). Hence, it is notable that accessibility can, and should be assessed from a gendered perspective, taking into account certain elements that boost access for some, and inhibit it for others, so that systems can be optimised for all (Al-Hussaini & Al-Ahbab, 2020, pp. 9-10).

UN Women provides policy insights and global trends surrounding safe and accessible cities for women, adding quantitative support toward the topic’s significance. Such reports affirm that women’s experiences on public transport vary when considering intersecting factors. For example, a Dutch study revealed that migrant women with a non-Western background, less educated women, and single mothers are more likely to experience mobility challenges in the Netherlands (UN Women, 2020). The Dutch central bureau for statistics also confirms that women are disproportionately affected by ‘disrespectful behaviour’ on public transport (CBS, 2018). A newspaper article outlines that following a nation-wide survey, approximately 46% of young women were subjected to sexual remarks while walking down the street or using public transport, acting as a mobility barrier for many women – about 15% of those surveyed – resulting in avoidance of public transport, hence impacting mobility (NL Times, 2023). Failing to acknowledge such stark indicators and data resultantly infringes on Article 13 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, prohibiting an individual’s right to ‘freedom of movement’ (United Nations, 1948).

2.2. *Intersectional Feminism and Social Justice in Planning*

Assuming the homogeneity of ‘social impacts’ replicates harmful practices, and hence the analysis calls for a multifaceted approach, acknowledging how overlapping identity components such as gender, race, and class combine to shape the experiences of structurally marginalised groups, exemplifying the concept of ‘intersectionality’ (Crenshaw, 1989, pp. 139-140). Intersectionality strives to de-naturalise stereotypical categories and single-identity thinking, positing that just as identities cannot be divided, neither can oppression and privilege. As an example, Crenshaw (1989) specifies that depending on how an individual is perceived racially impacts one’s experience of sexism, delineating the unique standpoint of women of colour in society.

Incorporating this into the planning context, Forde (2024) uses ‘spatial intersectionality’ as a framework for equitable urban planning, showing how socially excluded individuals are frequently omitted from planning discourse and practice, and how a changing perspective would re-envision mobility for all. Despite this study being conducted within the framework of deeply divided, post-conflict cities such as Cape Town and Jerusalem, the central concepts and ideas are transferrable to other contexts. Likewise, Webster and Zhang (2021) argue for an intersectional perspective in urbanism, highlighting the potential for policy changes and a shift in thinking from singular solutions towards recognising experiences of differently situated groups in planning, according to overlapping components. The in-depth review of intersectionality and urban mobility of Yuan *et al.* (2023) analyses how the transport mode chosen by individuals is strongly linked to gendered, socioeconomic, as well as cultural factors. It found that in general, women with lower socioeconomic status (SES) tend to walk more out of necessity, whereas women with higher education levels and more free time tend to have access to ‘convenient’ infrastructure, while for many, gendered socio-cultural factors act as deterrents from preferred modes (Yuan *et al.*, 2023, pp. 14-16).

Challenging the objective nature of urban geography and planning, David Harvey is credited as one of the first advocates for a new, revolutionary stance in the discipline, raised as one that transcends existing limitations and promotes social justice in city planning and policy (Harvey, 1973). As a product of the early 1970s context, Harvey’s work dominated the urban planning social and academic landscape during a period of immense upheaval and newly emerging social movements, directly opposing traditional, technocratic approaches in planning. Presently still understood as important for fostering understanding, and as a tool for demystifying categories used for urbanism, *Social Justice and the City* remains a landmark reference for the discipline, marking an important paradigm shift in planning discourse (Attoh, 2023, pp. 388-389). Despite embodying an approach that integrates Marxist methods and social justice to better understand urbanism under the influence of capitalism (Paterson, 1984), Harvey’s book effectively made invisible the gendered aspects of cities, and specifically the differing experiences of women within them (England, 1994, p. 632). Further, *The Just City* by Fainstein (2010) encourages the discipline to embrace an approach that combines a progressive earlier focus on equity, social justice, and material well-being like that of Harvey, alongside considerations of diversity and participation to foster a better quality of urban life within the capitalist context.

Further elaborating on how intricate concepts like social justice may be operationalised in reality, past fallbacks of leading scholars are addressed through feminist urban geography. Focusing on gendered social practices in the home, workplace, and built environment, this recent trajectory in planning challenges traditional models and incorporates feminist thought as a critical element of the discipline (Fincher, 1990). On the significance of adopting a feminist approach, particularly for urban geography, Landesman describes how feminist thought strengthened his doctoral dissertation’s

research design, even when not explicitly carrying out research surrounding gender, instead stating that: “simply put: if it’s not feminist, it’s not critical” (Landesman, 2018, p. 457). More broadly, various scholars now use the focus of urban feminism as a new interdisciplinary research field to encourage intersectional perspectives in urban development policies. An example of such a study involves delineating the stigmas associated with disability as unequal to the stigmas associated with women, hence demonstrating the unique position of women with disabilities in society. Instead, such categories heed special attention in planning policy and practice, stating that the “experience(s) of women with disabilities open up a parallel city” (Naberushkina *et al.*, 2020, p. 2862), where space is produced through corporeality and emotional components. An example affirms that while women feel safer in urban areas considered ‘crowded’, women with disabilities increasingly associate such spaces with danger, highlighting how perceptions differ within a socially homogenised group (Naberushkina *et al.*, 2020).

2.3. *Phenomenology of Perception and ‘Othering’*

Illuminating perceptions of minority groups in the context of urban mobility, Shaker (2022) provides great insight into the experiences of Muslim individuals in the Netherlands on public transport, stating that “spaces of public transit for participants and myself have been a stage of social drama, exclusion, discrimination, and racialisation where intercultural encounters fail, the threshold of tolerance is crossed, bodies are read and judged based on race, beard, veil, dress, gender, age, size, language, and objects they carry” (Shaker, 2022, p. 89). This analysis unveils how harmful practices on public transport are subconsciously internalised by the ‘other’ and often explicitly and consciously reproduced and perpetuated by those that do the ‘othering’, where “specific sitting/waiting places are imposed upon the Muslim Other, which they are supposed to deserve” (Shaker, 2022, p. 97).

To explain this process of ‘othering’, Van Dijk (2011) explains how ideologies and beliefs are perpetuated through positive self-presentation and negative ‘other’ presentation, leading to the creation of an ‘us vs. them’ binary, which is then weaponised to marginalise and stigmatise certain groups in society. Understanding such experiences links more broadly to Merleau-Ponty and the ‘Phenomenology of Perception’, exploring the nature of human perception (of others), emphasising the embodied, lived experiences of humans and an interrelation between the self and the world (Merleau-Ponty, 2012). Further elaborating on the impacts of Merleau-Ponty’s theories on contemporary feminist and critical race theorists, some suggest that characteristics like race, gender, and ability are not inherent traits, and should instead be considered dynamic characteristics with the power to disrupt established norms of superiority and inferiority (Weiss, 2015, p. 78).

Investigating literature that handles the merging of urban planning practice alongside gendered, racial, and other social considerations in contemporary space unveils that the discipline has evolved to take such themes into account. Despite this, as backed by ongoing research, much progress remains to be made in truly synthesizing the physical built environment with the underlying social landscape.

3. Conceptual Model

The central concepts of this study and their interrelations are shown in Figure 2. The conceptual model illustrates Groningen's bus network as the infrastructure under study, the adequacy of which is evaluated, according to gendered needs. Characteristics of the network translate to (changes in) women's travel patterns and behaviours. From this main object of study, it is shown how an intersectional approach unveils a multitude of other considerations that influence women's perceptions of the bus infrastructure in terms of safety and accessibility, then looping back to alter patterns and behaviours. Overall, the analysis of infrastructure through gendered ideation connects with feminist urbanism. Breaking down the bus network itself according to feminist urbanism principles, leads to question its design as 'gender-neutral', concerning the system's physical elements.

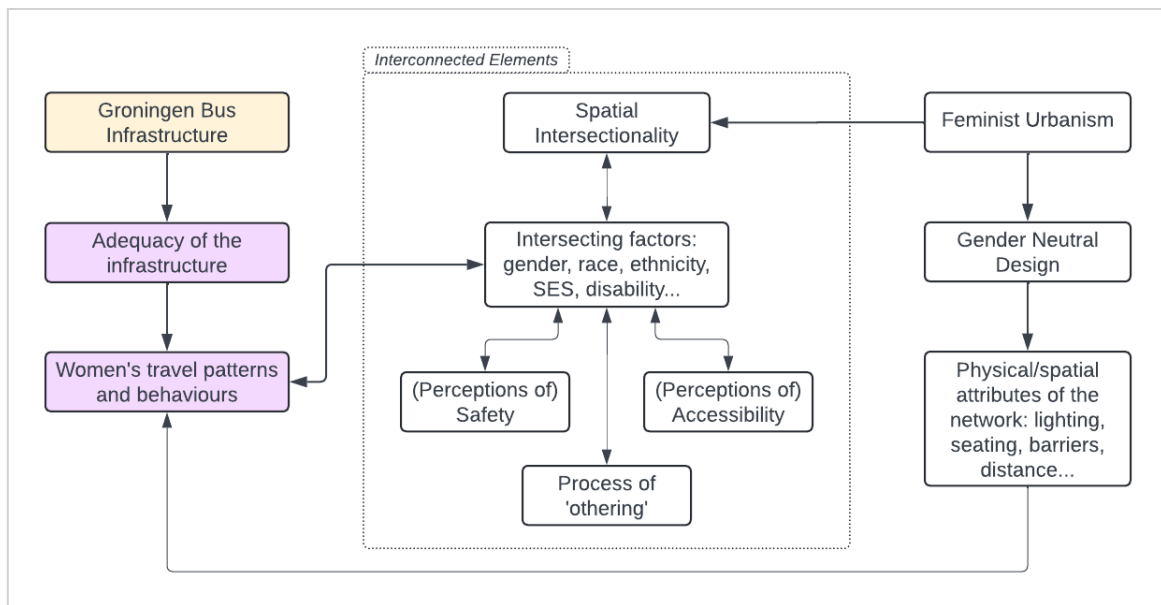


Figure 2: Conceptual Model (Author, 2024)

4. Expectations

Traditionally not easily quantifiable, considering the social adequacy of infrastructure did not utilise quantitative data. Therefore, the study was indicative of less nomothetic expectations. This suggested that results would be context-specific, focusing on unique characteristics of the particular situation (city of Groningen) and specific groups (women in the city of Groningen). Despite this, some transferability to the Dutch urban context is considered reasonable. There was an expected relationship between perceived safety and access on the bus, and an individual's gender in combination with ethnicity, race, and potentially other elements.

5. Methodology

A focus on how spatial interventions manifest socially, and the desire to retrieve information first-hand, called for qualitative primary data collection. Methods used included semi-structured interviews and qualitative online surveys. The survey contents were created during initial stages of the research, resulting in a somewhat ‘exploratory’ format, whereby it was not yet clear whether the methodology would be strictly qualitative. It was later decided that no quantitative elements would be utilised, and rather that open-answer survey quotations fit the research objectives best, providing a ‘wide-angle lens’ on the topic (Braun *et al.*, 2021, p. 643). The aim was to consult women from varying backgrounds who utilise the bus in Groningen, to determine how intersecting characteristics affect their perceptions.

An example of how a similar study is operationalised is that of Irazábal and Huerta (2016), who carried out primary data collection in Manhattan, New York, to understand how LGBTQ+ youths of colour have limited access to safe urban spaces, through an intersectional lens. Also emphasising the merits of a multidisciplinary approach (intersecting feminist, planning, and queer studies) to understand how planning institutions and enactment of their policies affect marginalised populations, this previous study lays out how the chosen approach may be applied within the Groningen context.

5.1. Data Collection

Interview conduct varied on a case-by-case basis, according to context, availability of time, and interviewee/researcher preferences. To ensure that gathered data was sufficient, each participant was approached with an interview guide or ‘Data Collection Instrument’ (DCI), providing some predefined semi-structured format (see Appendix A). Given the topics discussed, an informal environment fit best, fostering ease of communication and producing more naturalistic data (Swain & King, 2022). Interviews were structured to first introduce the research, inform participants about ethical considerations, incrementally gather data to answer research questions, and lastly open the floor to final remarks and questions. Using a gradual buildup structure, participants addressed elements relating to each question, while also being informed on core ideas of the topic, without being overwhelmed with technical jargon. In total, 6 interviews were conducted, and 30 valid survey respondents were gathered.

5.2. Participant Recruitment

Face-to-face interviews and group discussions were employed with individuals and groups in various community centres around the city of Groningen (W1, W2, W3, W4, W5), and within the ‘Stichting Discriminatie Meldpunt Groningen’ (SDMG), an organisation that collects discrimination reports in the city (O1). All interview locations are shown in Figure 3.

Regarding interviewee selection, women were chosen randomly and according to their preference, with no planned recruitment system. A diverse participant pool was gathered to account for the intersectional element, not only gaining insight into women’s experience, but additionally according to racial, ethnic, and cultural differences. ‘Snowballing’ of participants was used to widen the potential sphere of interviewees, wherein individuals partaking in the study disclosed new participants from their own network (Goodman, 1961). The interviews were the most significant contributor of data to the study, due to their innate nature as personal.

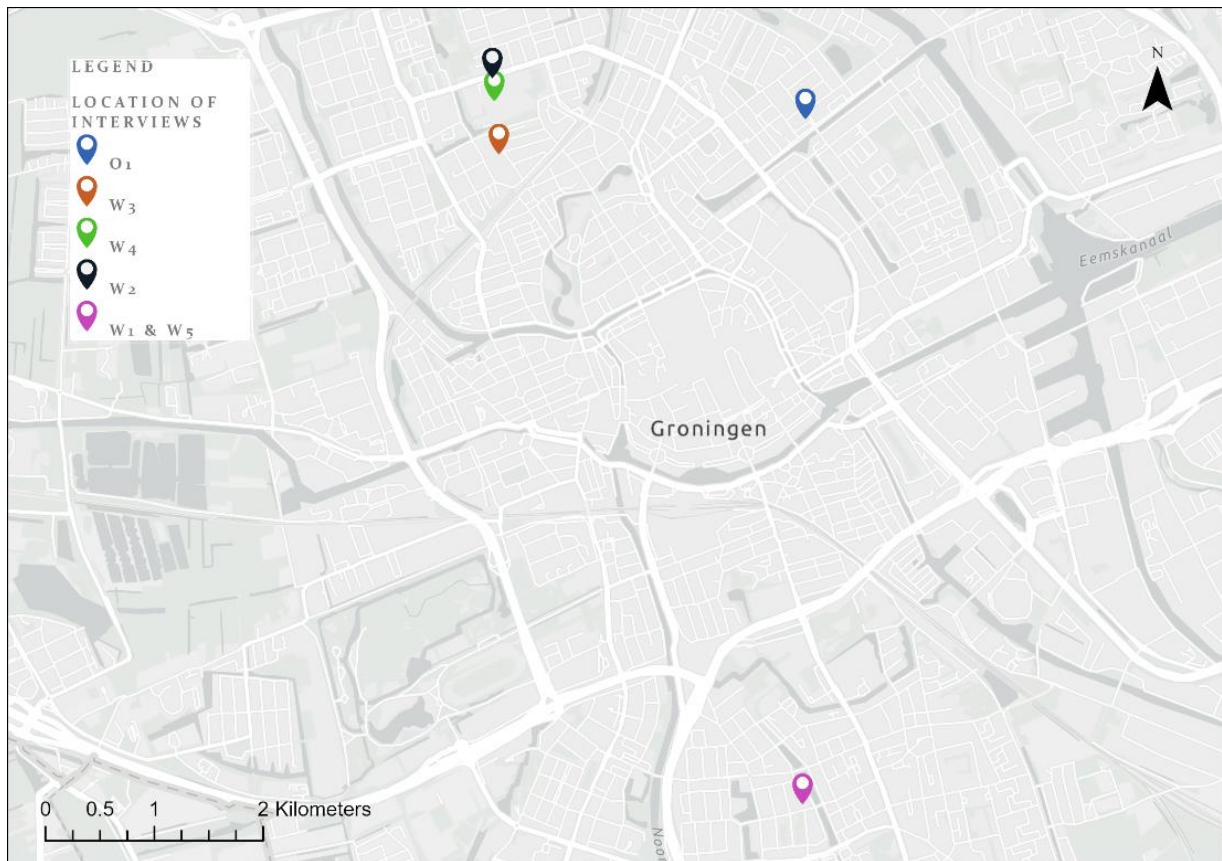


Figure 3: Mapped Locations of Interviews (Author, 2024)

Surveys were digitally distributed as ‘Google Forms’ links (Appendix A). Recruitment included distribution on the social media platform WhatsApp, targeting ‘Buying and Selling’ groups, whereby the respondent pool was not limited to students. Additionally, sharing the survey within the community of the ‘Groningen Feminist Network’ (GFN) and ‘Black Ladies of Groningen’ (BLOG) through contact on Instagram ensured a diversity of participants. Some respondents were gathered through personal relations on social media platforms (aforementioned ‘snowballing’). Some fallbacks pertain to lacking depth and impersonal nature of the survey investigation and no assurance that provided data was as accurate or trustworthy as other methods (Kelley *et al.*, 2003, p. 265).

5.3. Data Analysis

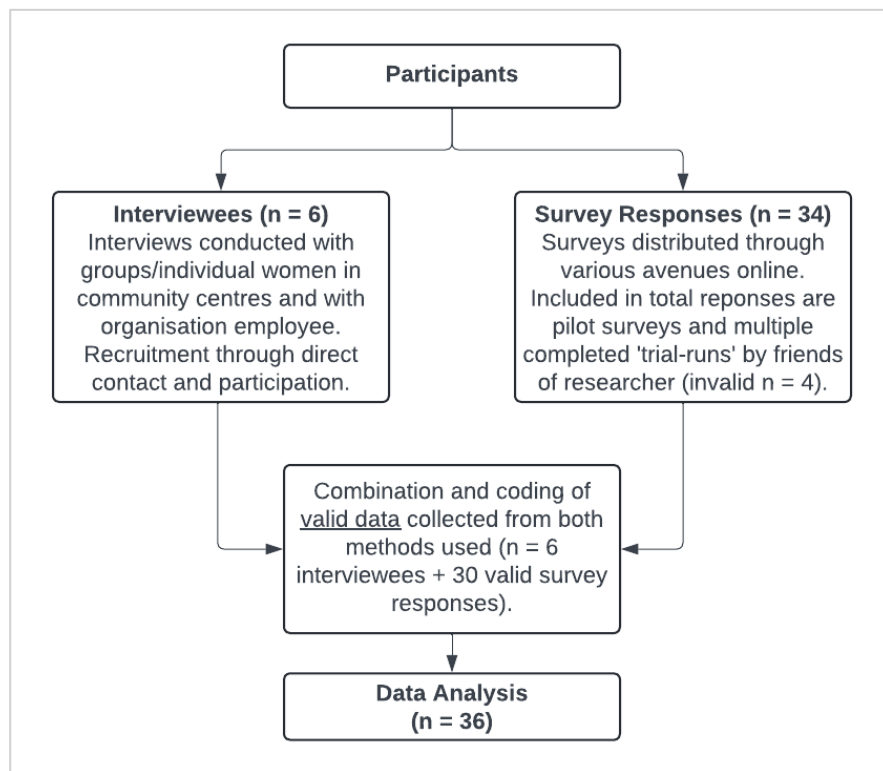


Figure 4: Data Analysis Scheme (Author, 2024)

Interviews and survey responses were transcribed (Appendix B) and coded in Atlas.ti to identify trends and commonalities, highlight significant quotes, and condense data into a tangible volume (Hwang, 2008). Figure 4 illustrates the data analysis scheme, providing an overview of how data was gathered and analysed. The coding tree, according to which transcribed data was grouped into themes on Atlas.ti, can be seen in Figure 5. Coded quotations from interview/survey transcripts, according to this coding tree, can be found in Appendix C.

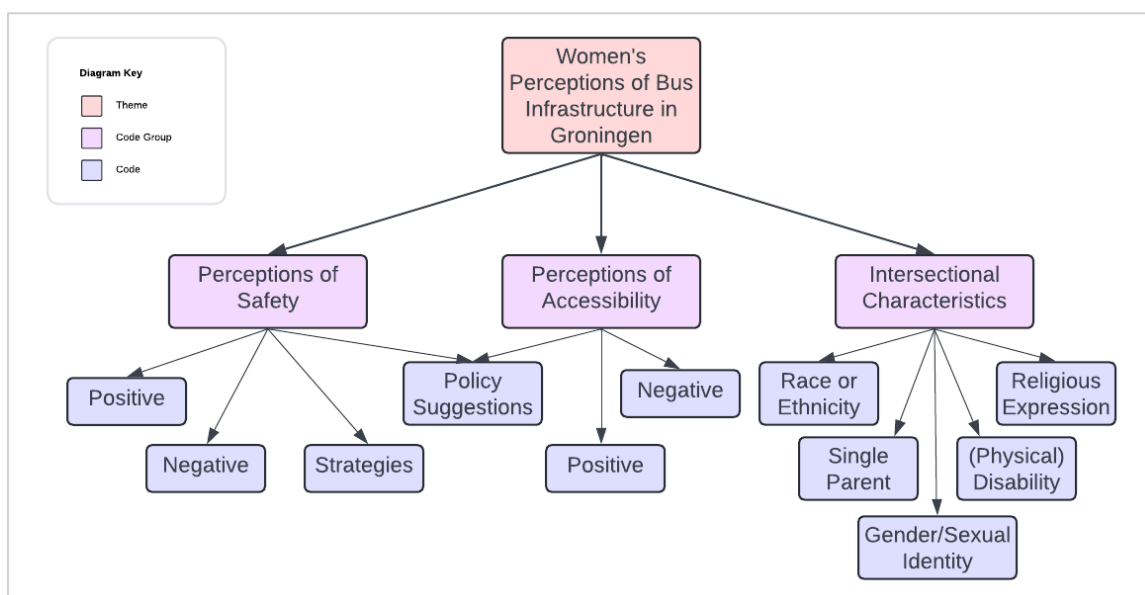


Figure 5: Coding Tree (Author, 2024)

5.4. Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations should be present at all stages of the process, from data collection, through analysis, and dissemination (Byrne, 2001). In the same text, the significance of informed consent for qualitative research is explained. Before interviews commenced, consent to audio record was requested, as well as permission to utilise gathered data. It was outlined that participants can withdraw consent at any time and that there is no obligation to share information they wish not to. Consent was established through verbal acknowledgement, along with signing a consent form (Appendix A). This information was reiterated when concluding the interview, and possibility to access the ‘final product’ of the thesis was made clear.

The study aligns with scientific integrity standards of the University of Groningen, protecting individuals along the duration of this study, and beyond, also including values from the Code of Conduct like honesty, transparency, and responsibility (Hol, 2019, p. 13), all instrumental for an ethical approach. Recorded interviews were transcribed manually, without utilising AI tools that may compromise data privacy. Saunders *et al.* (2015) discuss the importance of retaining anonymity of interviewees, particularly in highly sensitive contexts, while Kang and Hwang (2023) extend such considerations to the conduct of surveys, both relevant here. Data was stored on the personal drive of the researcher, shared only with the thesis supervisor.

More broadly, considerations comply with the EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), reinforcing fairness and lawfulness along the research process. The GDPR makes a distinction between ‘normal’ and ‘special’ data. ‘Normal’ information includes name, address, contact information, and occupation, while ‘special’ data encompasses information that reveals racial/ethnic origin, political opinion, health data, and sexual orientation of an individual. Article 9 of the GDPR outlines that the ‘special’ category requires extra protections, and while both categories were treated with care, confidentiality was particularly crucial for this ‘special’ data (EP, 2018).

5.5. Positionality

Positionality, or the position that an individual adopts about a research task and its social context, must be laid out clearly (Holmes, 2020, p. 1-2). Reflexivity is the acknowledgment and disclosure of that position to understand one’s influence and part in it. The researcher is positioned as an outsider, external to the situation under study. While relating to unsafety as tied to gender, experiences resultant from intersecting factors of race/ethnicity, among others, are foreign to her and hence unfamiliarity must be recognised. Therefore, the perspective of the researcher is restricted to her own ‘social location’ relative to that of others in society (Tushman and Romanelli, 1983, pp. 13-15).

6. Results

6.1 Participants Gathered

Of the interviews conducted, five were with women at community centres in Groningen, each lasting about 10 to 20 minutes, the sixth being significantly lengthier (approximately 50 minutes) with an employee of the SDMG. An overview describing key elements of conducted interviews is shown in Figure 6.

Participant	Code	Status	Bus Use	Intersecting Characteristics
Interviewee 1	W1	In-person	Approx. one time per week.	Racial/ethnic characteristics (South-East Asian), gender.
Interviewee 2	W2	In-person	Rarely, often when children were younger.	Nationality (European non-Dutch), gender, recently moved to Groningen.
Interviewee 3	W3	In-person	Twice every week.	Racial/ethnic characteristics (Arab), gender, recently moved to Groningen.
Interviewee 4	W4	In-person	Rarely, often when children were younger.	Racial/ethnic characteristics (South American + Dutch), gender, single parent.
Interviewee 5	W5	In-person	Once or twice per month.	Racial/ethnic characteristics (Middle Eastern), gender, religious expression.
Interviewee 6 (Organisation)	O1	In-person	Rarely, more often in the past.	Gender (Interview focuses on accounts of other women).

Figure 6: Interviewee Overview (Author, 2024)

A demographic overview of valid survey respondents is shown in Figures 7 and 8. Survey respondents are referred to by their ID from survey transcripts (Appendix B), while interviewees are cited according to their code (W1, W2...). Both methods proved invaluable in gathering the desired data relating to safety and accessibility of the bus, as perceived by women in the city of Groningen.

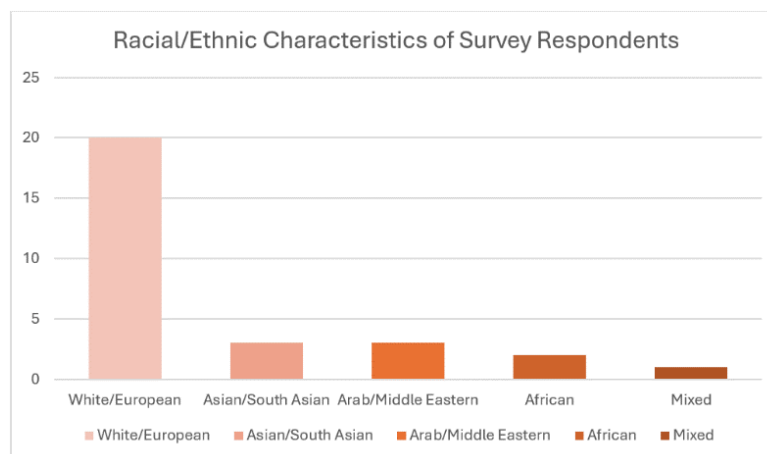


Figure 7: Racial and Ethnic Characteristics of Survey Respondents (Author, 2024)

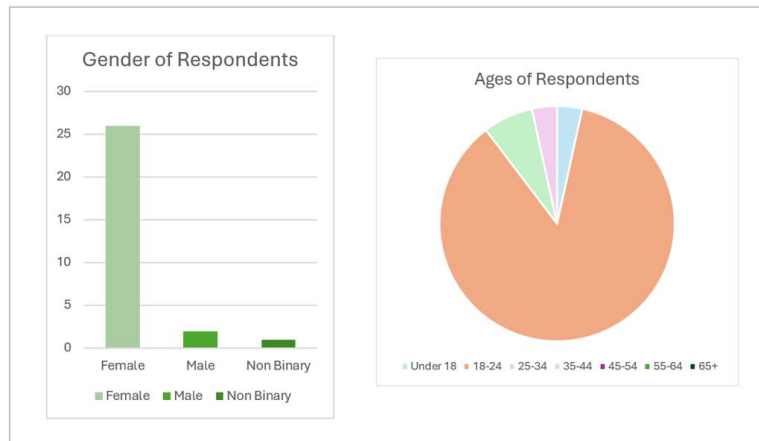


Figure 8: Gender and Age Characteristics of Survey Respondents (Author, 2024)

6.2. General Perceptions of Safety and Accessibility

Evaluating the bus network as a whole, women generally feel safe on the bus in Groningen, but as with most infrastructure, no system is perfect. Commonalities with interviewees who find no safety concerns while utilising the bus are lower frequency of use (rarely, or once/twice per month), as well as the time of day they travel:

“I felt 100% safe. I never had any problems... But I commute (in the) mornings, in the day, not like ‘weird’ hours, or late at night... so I don’t know that part at all.” (W2)

“For the thirty-four years that I am here, everything has been good.” (W5)

A similar consensus exists for accessibility, whereby women classify the bus in Groningen at a high standard. Exploring these perceptions was especially relevant to gain insights into travel experiences of (single) mothers, those travelling with small children or a stroller, physically disabled women, and individuals with other mobility complications.

“So far, we always have had seats for both me and my children. If I ever don’t find a seat, that is always okay too.” (W3)

Several women interviewed used their country of origin as a reference point for evaluating the safety and accessibility of the Groningen network. Citing countries like The Philippines, Greece, and Syria, among others, women evaluate the bus system of Groningen significantly higher regarding both safety and access. Related to this, some interviewees interpreted ‘safety’ as traffic safety – i.e. speeding and dangerous driving – rather than social safety as intended. This relays different interpretations of what safety means for each individual, potentially a result of the language barrier present, as most participants had high Dutch proficiency, whereas the chosen language for interviews was English.

“...in the Philippines we have a lot of traffic rules with public transportation...there they do not follow the rules, they go their own speed...I think it is more dangerous than here.” (W1)

“...because I’m coming from Greece, this is not a very nice option, to move or commute by bus, especially with kids and a stroller, I think it’s impossible (in Greece). So, for me, this is very luxury.” (W2)

6.3 Determinants of Safety

For women, significant determinants of safety perception when travelling with the bus include time of day, number and proximity of other bus-users, lighting on bus-stops, specific locations of the city, and previous experiences of unsafety. All women interviewed perceive travelling at nighttime as more unsafe as opposed to the daytime, citing increased levels of awareness, attentiveness, as well as fear:

“I feel safe at daytime, and maybe when it’s not yet so late in the evening, maybe at eight or nine o’clock...but after ten o’clock in the night, I feel a little bit afraid and scared that something bad will happen. You never know what might happen...” (W1)

“...if you talk about safety in the evening...as a woman for me, you are always more careful...” (W4)

“...as a woman I am hyper aware of my safety while in public and especially when taking public transport.” (S34)

A mixed perception about the role and influence of bus-drivers was present, varying from one participant to another. Some women view them as mediators, safeguarding peace on the bus, as well as somebody to turn to in the case of a potentially harmful or risky situation (S30). Other women view the driver as a passive and indifferent entity, uncaring in terms of passenger safety (W4). Others again form perceptions on the basis of previous experiences, whereby it was specifically the driver that compromised their safety while using the bus (O1, S27):

“I’ve had a few bad experiences with old drunk men...yet buschauffeurs helped me in a couple of those experiences.” (S30)

“Since corona there is this glass, the bus driver is less approachable...makes me feel that he is sitting there doing his job and we are just sitting...like maybe you are still a little bit alone.” (W4)

“Two years ago, a bus driver didn’t stop for a Muslim younger girl, and also stuck up his middle finger.” (O1)

“One bus driver was jokingly pretending to not let me out unless I paid 5€ to him...he thought of it as a light joke, it didn’t feel like one for me...” (S27)

6.4 Determinants of Accessibility

Overcrowding on the bus, lacking awareness from bus drivers, as well as placement of bus stops were significant determinants of access, as expressed by participants. Despite generally perceiving the bus as accessible, mothers who have used the bus with a stroller recall instances of difficulty, particularly in finding a free space, boarding, as well as exiting the vehicle at their destination. Additionally, the notion that many obstacles exist for those utilising a wheelchair or individuals with disabilities was conveyed often:

“They don’t increase the number of buses around peak times often resulting in me struggling...I have also seen many wheelchair users just get a friend to help instead of

waiting for the ramp to lower for them as it takes very long...wheelchair accessibility seems barely accessible in my opinion.” (S16)

“Travelling with heavy luggage has been quite difficult so I can only imagine how difficult it is for people with a wheelchair or other walking aids. I’ve also seen parents struggle with strollers due to no ramps...and the smaller curvy entrance into the bus.” (S8)

“I once saw a girl who wanted to take off the stroller...the bus was very far from the platform, and it was difficult...it’s also dangerous for the child who can fall into the gap.” (W4)

6.5. Significance of Intersectionality

By virtue of the subject-matter explored, most women recognised their feelings of ‘unsafety’ predominantly as linked to gender (i.e. perceptions of safety as a woman, relative to men). When accounting unsafe scenarios, many women recall instances where men have made them feel uncomfortable while travelling on the bus, particularly when combined with previously laid out determinants, like nighttime travel:

“I have felt unsafe but mostly due to unwanted looks or strange behaviour of other people (mostly men) on the bus.” (S24)

“...specifically, by drunk male(s)...sexual or provocative remarks were made, they were very loud and hostile near me and made me worried they would suddenly target me.” (S16).

While all participants experience some safety concerns while travelling with public transport, it’s evident that these concerns change according to inherent characteristics. In particular, women belonging to certain racial and ethnic groups experience heightened unsafety perceptions according to concerns stemming from more than their gender alone. Additionally, women perceive higher risk according to their religious expression, shown by various reported incidents disclosed by Muslim women, conveyed by the employee of the SDMG (O1). The majority of complaints received by the organisation are directly linked to instances of racism and xenophobia, but due to apparent underreporting of women’s experiences, the employee estimates that the true number of instances of discrimination are significantly higher.

“I speak with a lot of these women...about how people have remarks about their religion, about their skin colour; bus drivers that do not stop, they just pass them by for example.” (O1)

“I’m a brown woman minority...so it definitely affects it too. I try my best to dress conservatively and not wear South-Asian clothes/jewellery, so no one bothers me.” (S15)

“I must always be aware of criminals...as a woman with a hijab, sometimes Muslim women are threatened and judged.” (W5)

Not only is the abundance of such discrimination inadequately represented, but an alarming trend also pertains to an apparent upward surge of reported instances. A recurring sentiment expressed by multiple women was the necessity for heightened awareness when using the bus, due to the current Dutch political and societal climate, whereby instances of racially fuelled, xenophobic, and Islamophobic discrimination are escalating. Additionally remarked by O1, it is notable that despite being held accountable for discriminatory behaviour, many people also feel as though they have some “free ticket” to speak and act on certain subjects in a derogatory and disrespectful way, simply

because certain political figures and organisations do so, specifically referring to the influence of the PVV and Geert Wilders. Such structural action only perpetuates an insolent attitude toward already oppressed groups, extending to impacts on infrastructure, also recognised as a significant force in women's perceived safety in public spaces and transport.

"...but I am afraid for the future...extreme right-wing and radical thinking is on the rise. It panics me...people should accept, tolerate, and respect everyone, but at this moment that is not the case." (W5)

"We notice that people feel like they cannot 'say whatever they want', because they are now being held responsible...which I think is very positive...the fact that the PVV, Geert Wilders won does not help...it gives people some kind of 'free ticket' to speak on these subjects in a way that he does... he does and its accepted, he's even a politician, so 'why not'." (O1)

6.6. Strategies employed

For women that utilise the bus during times and contexts perceived as unsafe, it was crucial to discuss some strategies and coping mechanisms they employ, in order to understand how such concerns can be further mediated when considering public transport infrastructure interventions going forward. A repeated strategy was avoidance, whereby many women simply choose alternative modes of travel – cycling or walking – when perceptions of risk are heightened, or avoid travelling altogether.

"Avoiding nighttime travel." (S2, S27, S28)

"Sometimes, I stay over at a friend's place over opting to take the bus at night or even considering walking an easier alternative..." (S15)

"I have not had one (women's meeting/discussion) group where women did not take certain precautions to protect themselves...especially in the evening of course." (O1)

Specific strategies named by women include using – or pretending to use – their phone, placing their bag on the seat next to them, keeping friends and family members updated on their trip, utilising only well-lit stops, choosing seating closer to the driver, as well as altering the way they dress and act on the bus to attract as little attention as possible. It was evident that all women have a heightened level of awareness while utilising the bus at night, with some opting to carry self-defence tools as an extra precautionary measure (O1). Another important factor was whether or not they travel alone, whereby when accompanied by a friend – “especially if that friend is male” (S30) – the bus is perceived as safer.

"I prefer to go with somebody, it's much safer... if I go alone, then I don't feel safe, late at night especially like eleven or twelve o'clock in the evening." (W1)

"I have also received stares that made me quite uncomfortable in the bus... I generally try to close my jacket or cover up more while being in the bus." (S8)

When prompted, all respondents agreed that more could be done to further alleviate safety concerns that women may have. This included the desire for increased surveillance and cameras, more lighting, implementation of emergency alert systems, hotlines, and higher legal consequences for harassment. Additionally, many cited the need for increased awareness and responsibility from bus staff, supported by calls for more training and education by O1.

“Maybe extra cameras, or the drivers need to pay more attention, because indeed sometimes the driver is just like, ‘okay, I just drive the bus’, sometimes they don’t pay attention” (W2)

“Bus drivers need to be aware...since drivers are sometimes the ones doing it, they should get some training...first training to be more open towards different cultures and backgrounds, but also to have a clear protocol onto what will happen if you do something like that.” (O1)

It transpired that several strategies used by women were employed – consciously and subconsciously – as a response to deficiencies within how the bus network exists in its current state, as well as how these shortcomings ‘endorse’ the behaviour of other passengers.

7. Discussion

Along the course of the interviews, several important points of discussion were noted. To restate the objective of this study, its aim was to examine women's perceptions of safety and accessibility of public bus infrastructure in Groningen, specifically according to their unique and varying characteristics, striving for an intersectional feminist approach. Dissecting findings according to the sub-questions proves as a suitable way to offer some clarification toward this objective.

Firstly, the discrepancies of specific safety and accessibility concerns according to intersecting traits were made evident, aligning with the rejection of homogeneity of effects as advocated by Crenshaw (1989, p. 154). Dialogue with interviewees and analysis of survey data uncovered that all women experience some form of 'unsafety' in an urban transport setting, whether it be while waiting for the bus, commuting, or disembarking. The notion present in some academic circles that *safety* and *accessibility* are terms too 'subjective' to be concretely defined should be problematised. It became clear that although women interpret 'unsafety' on public transport to mean varying things (i.e. speeding, dangerous driving, harassment, invasion of personal space, etc.), there is little subjectivity in the notion that being 'safe' means being free from emotional, cognitive, and of course, bodily harm.

Lacking access of the bus was not explicitly expressed by all respondents, affecting mostly women with mobility complications, and occasionally mothers travelling with strollers. It was however uncovered that accessibility concerns may be intertwined with perceived unsafety for many women, particularly when it comes to avoiding travel due to well-substantiated fears, often due to past experiences. In effect, this may mean that women opt out of travelling at certain times or to certain locations on the basis of remaining safe, disconnecting them spatially (and socially), hence impacting accessibility, as understood by Hansen (1959) and Straatemeier (2008). Since these safety concerns target minority women disproportionately, accessibility perceptions are also distributed accordingly, affirming the notion laid out by Handy and Niemeier (1997), whereby individuals may evaluate accessibility differently despite sharing the same location. More broadly, the laid-out experiences of marginalised women illustrate the processes of 'othering', used as a tool to further stigmatise (Van Dijk, 2011), particularly relevant given current political considerations as mentioned by O1.

The second and third point relating to mitigation strategies employed by women, and assessing the current state of protocols in place, can be assessed in conjunction with one another. As laid out, strategies are employed to mediate safety concerns that women face on public transport. From using their phone and altering behaviour patterns, to complete avoidance of the bus, women in Groningen expressed a multitude of coping mechanisms.

Despite a consensus about a generally safe bus network – particularly for travel during the day, or rare commuting – all participants agree that more could (and should) be done to further address safety and accessibility concerns, therefore endorsing arguments of an intersectional planning approach (Webster & Zhang, 2021; Yuan *et al.*, 2023; Forde, 2024). Progressing from Harvey's (1973) *Social Justice and the City*, a necessary shift toward *The (socially) Just City* as laid out by Fainstein (2010) still needs to be realised, whereby we not only seek justice within cities, but acknowledge that such equity cannot be achieved without recognizing and emphasizing (perceptions of) marginalised groups, i.e. employing an intersectional approach.

8. Conclusion

In accordance with feminist urbanism theory, the conducted research confirms that women's intersecting traits have an evident impact on their perceptions of both safety and accessibility. Specifically, intersecting characteristics like gender, race, and religious expression subject women to overt acts of discrimination, as well as more subtle processes of 'othering', in turn affecting perceptions of what is deemed safe and accessible. Thus, a woman's traits translate to behaviours and patterns while utilising the bus, exemplified by an array of protective measures and strategies, including complete avoidance. The study affirms that by adopting an intersectional feminist approach, a plethora of overlooked considerations are made visible, uncovering that the bus network of Groningen is culpable for women's perceptions of unsafety. It was found that the network is safe and accessible for most, however when certain determinants like time of day, proximity of other users, and attitude of the driver are countering what is deemed safe or accessible, then perceptions also shift accordingly. Hence, instead of considered as 'gender-neutral' by design, a common accusation of mainstream feminist urbanism, the network appears rather male-oriented, actively upholding and facilitating harmful patterns toward women.

To generalise the research results, taking an intersectional approach indeed unveiled how already marginalised groups in society are excluded from planning policy and practice (Forde, 2024) in a real-world context. The findings reflect the results of similar studies, like that of Shaker (2022), especially considering 'othering' experiences on the basis of ethnicity, race, and religious expression, explicitly also conducted in the Dutch urban context. It can therefore be assumed that women hold similar sentiments toward public buses in most Dutch urban contexts, allowing for some generalisation and transferability of findings.

With regards to limitations, restricted time span and scope of the study inhibited more comprehensive and representative research, for example by gathering more participants from new locations. Despite disclosing positionality, it should still be restated that the research output is limited by the authors values and perspectives on the topic. For future recommendations, the topic could also incorporate a quantitative dimension, perhaps strengthening scientific legitimacy and outreach, recognising the merits of mixed-methods approach. Content-wise, a future study may explore the diverse roles of bus drivers concerning the safety of women.

All in all, the study yielded fascinating insights into perceptions of safety and accessibility that women have while utilising the bus in Groningen. An intersectional approach unveiled the diversity of these perceptions, and how women utilising the same network may experience it in vastly different ways. A continued focus on such discussions about the social impacts and gendered realities of physical infrastructure can only serve to realise *The Just City* as a tangible reality, not just a broad concept from urbanism.

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10. Appendix A – DCIs, Information Sheet, and Consent Form

10.1. Interview Guides

(a) Interview guide: Investigating Women's Perceptions of Safety and Access in Public Bus Infrastructure in Groningen

1. Introduction and consent:
 - Introduce myself and the purpose of the research.
 - Explain confidentiality, voluntary nature of participation, retraction of any information if desired, address ethical concerns...
 - Obtain informed consent (also for audio recording).
2. Gather demographic information about participant:
 - Demographic background (age, gender identity, ethnicity, SES, etc.).
 - Remain sensitive throughout, underline voluntary sharing of info.
3. Perceptions of safety/access:
 - General perceptions of safety when using the bus?
 - Specific perceptions: ever felt unsafe or experienced difficulties with access?
 - o If comfortable: describe the situation/circumstance?
 - Does your perception of safety/access change at day vs. night?
 - Specific locations?
 - If wish to share:
 - o Targeted due to gender?
 - o Targeted due to race?
 - o Ethnicity/age/SES/other factors...?
 - Have you witnessed anyone else get targeted due to characteristics described?
4. Strategies/coping mechanisms:
 - What strategies used to feel safer?
 - Witnessed others use strategies?
5. Policies in place:
 - Aware of any safety/access measures in place on buses/stations/stops?
 - o Are they effective?
 - o Why/why not?
 - Should more be done to address needs of women specifically?
 - o What about other disadvantaged groups?
 - Suggestions for policy changes?
6. Closing:
 - Anything more you would like to share about your experiences/opinions?
 - Questions?
 - Reiterate privacy and confidentiality of data collection/storage process.
 - Thank interviewee for their time and participation.

(b) Interview guide (organisation employee): Investigating Women's Perceptions of Safety and Access in Public Bus Infrastructure in Groningen

1. Introduction and consent:

- Introduce myself and the purpose of the research.
- Explain confidentiality, voluntary nature of participation, retraction of any information if desired, address ethical concerns...
- Obtain informed consent (also for audio recording).

2. Background Information:

- Can you provide an overview of the work conducted by your organisation in the city of Groningen?
- How does your organization collect and handle reports of discrimination, particularly within public transportation settings?
- What are some of the main challenges or barriers faced by marginalized communities when accessing and using public buses in Groningen?
- Describe specific instances (without identifiable information) where discrimination within Groningen's bus infrastructure has intersected with factors described? (simplify)

3. Policies and Interventions:

- Are there any existing policies or initiatives in place aimed at addressing discrimination/improving safety/accessibility?
- Improving access to/knowledge about these initiatives?
- How effective are these policies in addressing the needs and concerns of diverse communities?

4. Collaboration and Partnerships:

- How does your organization collaborate with local authorities, transportation agencies, or other stakeholders to address discrimination?
- Organisations have authority to implement/take action? Coordination?
- Are there any partnerships or initiatives that have been particularly successful in addressing safety and access concerns within Groningen?

5. Recommendations and Future Directions:

- What recommendations would you offer to improve safety and accessibility for marginalized communities within Groningen's bus infrastructure?
- What do you see as the future direction for addressing discrimination and promoting inclusivity within public transportation in Groningen?

6. Closing:

- Any other insights you would like to share about your organization's work?
- Thank interviewee for their time and participation.

10.2. Survey Guide

(Digital) Survey: Investigating Women's Perceptions of Safety and Access in Public Bus Infrastructure in Groningen

Hello. I am a third-year student in the course Spatial Planning and Design at the RUG. For my bachelor's thesis, I am conducting research about social aspects of infrastructure, more specifically, I wish to look into women's perceptions of safety and accessibility when using the bus infrastructure in Groningen. This research is conducted through an intersectional lens, hence also addressing discrepancies according to gendered, racial, and class difference (among other characteristics). First there will be some questions regarding personal characteristics, followed by questions specifically about how you perceive the bus infrastructure in Groningen. Finally, there is an opportunity to share any thoughts/ideas/opinions on the topic at hand.

It is preferred that individuals identifying as women reply to this survey, however if you do not fit this description and have noticed any particular events surrounding this topic, your input would still be much appreciated! (and there is an opportunity to describe such events if you wish). Most questions are open-response and are not required for completion of the survey, so do not feel obligated to describe any personal experiences you are not comfortable sharing. Additionally, open-response questions provide some examples for potential answers in brackets. These are only some possible answers, not the only options - feel free to use whatever descriptors you feel characterise you best.

I appreciate your time and thank you for contributing to my research!

(Please note that all responses are anonymous and will be used for research purposes only)

SECTION 1.

Q1. What is your gender identity? (open answer, required)

- (e.g. male, female, non-binary, transgender, prefer not to say, other, etc.)

Q2. What is your age? (multiple choice, required)

- Under 18
- 18-24
- 25-34
- 35-44
- 45-54
- 55-64
- 65+

Q3. What racial/ethnic group(s) best describe you? (open answer, required)

- (e.g. White, European, Arab, Black, African, etc.)

Q4. Other Characteristics. (open answer, not required)

- Do any further characteristics influence your perceptions and experiences on public transport? Which ones and how?
 - (e.g. disability, nationality, religious identity, etc.)

SECTION 2.

- In this section, there will be a few questions about your perceptions of safety and accessibility when using the bus. Again, all responses are anonymous and will only be used for research purposes.

Q5. How regularly do you utilise the bus in Groningen? (multiple choice, required)

- Daily
- Several times a week
- Once/twice a week
- A few times a month
- Rarely

Q6. Initial perceptions. (open answer, required)

- Do you feel that public bus infrastructure in Groningen is **safe** for all individuals regardless of their gender, ethnicity, or socioeconomic status (and other traits)?
 - Yes
 - No
 - Not sure

Q7. Initial perceptions. (open answer, required)

- Do you feel that public bus infrastructure in Groningen is **accessible** to all individuals regardless of their gender, ethnicity, or socioeconomic status (and other traits)?
 - Yes
 - No
 - Not sure

Q8. Your Experience. (open answer, not required)

- Have you ever felt **unsafe/ targeted** while using public buses in Groningen?
 - Examples: verbal/physical harassment, unwanted looks/comments, etc.)
- If yes, please briefly describe your experience.

Q9. Your Experience. (open answer, not required)

- Have you ever experienced **difficulty in accessing** public buses in Groningen?
 - Examples: when using a baby stroller, wheelchair, lack of ramps in place, inconvenient placement of bus stops, etc.)
- If yes, please briefly describe your experience.

Q10. Applying Intersectionality. (open answer, not required)

- Does gender identity (and any other characteristics described before) influence your perception of safety and accessibility when using the bus? In what way?

Q11. Further Experiences. (open answer, not required)

- Have you ever experienced another person being targeted while using the bus in Groningen? If yes, please briefly describe your experience.

SECTION 3.

- In this final section, there will be questions regarding strategies that you (or others) use to feel safer on the bus. Additionally, questions about current policies in place are asked to gauge an awareness among bus-users about existing measures in Groningen.

Q12. Strategies and Coping Mechanisms (open answer, not required)

- What strategies (if any) do you use to feel safer or more comfortable while using public transportation in Groningen?

- (some examples include: travelling with a friend, avoiding night-time travel, only using well-lit bus stops, etc.)

Q13. Existing Policies. (multiple choice, not required)

- Are you aware of any existing policies or measures aimed at addressing safety and/or accessibility concerns on public buses in Groningen?

Q14. Suggested Policies. (open answer, not required)

- Are there specific policies or initiatives you believe would enhance safety and accessibility for passengers using public transportation in Groningen?
 - (examples include: training bus staff, public awareness campaigns, increased surveillance, etc.)

Q15. Closing Statements. (open answer, not required)

- Is there anything else you would like to share about your experience or perspectives on safety and accessibility in public bus infrastructure in Groningen?

The End. Thank you for contributing to my research about perceptions of safety and access on bus infrastructure in Groningen. I appreciate your time and input!

10.3. Informed Consent Form

Interview: Women's Perceptions of Safety and Access on Bus Infrastructure in Groningen

Name of Student: Anna Marta Skudrina, University of Groningen | a.m.skudrina@student.rug.nl

Name of Supervisor: Philippe Hanna de Almeida Oliveira, PHD MA MSc, University of Groningen |

p.hanna@rug.nl

Name of Participant:

Assessment:

- I am well informed about the study and was able to ask any additional questions.
- I understand that:
 - o I may ask questions about the study at any time
 - o I have the right to withdraw from the study at any time, without giving a reason.
 - o I may refuse to answer questions without consequence.
 - o I will not benefit directly from participating in this research.
 - o I can contact the researcher and supervisor in the case that any issues arise.

Confidentiality and Data Use:

- I understand that:
 - o None of my personal information will be disclosed to anyone outside the study team and my name will not be published.
 - o The information provided will be used only for this research and publications directly related to this research project.
 - o Data will be stored safely and not shared (including consent forms, recordings, interview transcripts).

Optional Future Involvement:

- I wish to receive a copy of the scientific output of the project.
- I consent to be re-contacted for participating in future studies.

Having read and understood all the above, I agree to participate in the research study: yes / no

Date:

Signature:

To be completed by the researcher:

- I declare that I have thoroughly informed the research participant about the research study and answered any remaining questions to the best of my knowledge.
- I agree that this person participates in the research.

Date:

Signature:

10.4. Information Sheet

Women's Perceptions of Safety and Access on Bus Infrastructure in Groningen

Dear Participant,

Thank you for your interest and willingness to participate in this research! This information sheet explains what the study entails and how the research will be conducted. Please read it carefully and do not hesitate to ask questions if anything is unclear. Further contact information is available at the end of this sheet 😊.

What this study is about:

- This study aims to understand how women and disadvantaged groups perceive safety and accessibility of bus infrastructure in Groningen.
- The study is conducted as a bachelor thesis at the University of Groningen.
- This study is not sponsored or funded by anyone.

What participation entails:

- Interviews about your experiences on public buses in Groningen.
- Participation is voluntary.
- Participants can withdraw from the study at any moment and choose not to answer questions.

How information will be stored and protected:

- Personal information will not be available to anyone but the researcher and her supervisor.
- Information will be stored securely according to the GDPR rules of the University.
- Confidentiality and anonymity of data is guaranteed (your information cannot be traced back to you in any way and your name and personal details are not used!).

Informed Consent:

- Please carefully read and sign the consent form provided by the researcher.
- You have full control of the process and may withdraw at any time.

Who you should contact for further information:

- If you have any further questions or remarks, please contact:
 - o Anna Marta Skudrina
 - o Email: a.m.skudrina@student.rug.nl
- Or alternatively contact the research supervisor:
 - o Philippe Hanna de Almeida Oliveira
 - o Email: p.hanna@rug.nl

I greatly appreciate your time and help in participating in my research, Thank you!

11. Appendix B – Interview and Survey Transcripts

11.1. Transcript Interview 1: MFC De Wijert & Helpman 03/04/2024

(Notes: Interviewee began talking about her experience already before commencing the recording, so the recorded section is only after being asked for consent to record – prior to the recording the purpose and theme of research was already explained, and the information form was provided).

Interviewee: When I first came here, I spoke English with my husband, but after that not anymore (I learned Dutch), so my English is not that great anymore because I'm not using it every day.

Researcher: It's okay, your English is very understandable

[Another member of women's meeting present: Your English is very good!]

Interviewee: I'll try my best.

Researcher: So, first for the study, maybe you could first explain your background a bit. You already mentioned you're from the Philippines, right?

Interviewee: Yes. Also, in the Philippines we have a lot of traffic rules with public transportation, but there they do not follow the rules, they go their own speed, and that's why I think it is more dangerous than here.

Researcher: Yea, okay. So, how long have you been living here?

Interviewee: Thirty-one years, so that was a very long time ago. But I hear some places in Groningen, like Beijum outside the city, I heard that a bus driver had a robbery. Somebody robbed money from the bus driver, a few years ago. That's why we have to pay now with card, not with cash, for the safety of the bus.

Researcher: So, you use the bus every day?

Interviewee: No, not that often. I go mostly with the bicycle.

Researcher: Ahh okay.

Interviewee: But if it is very far, then I go with the bus.

Researcher: Okay, so how often would you say you use the bus?

Interviewee: Twice a month, sometimes once every week. But I mostly go everywhere with the bike, as I live near the city centre. I would go to the city with bike, do some shopping, groceries, or things like that

Researcher: Okay, so when you go on the bus, do you feel safe? Not because it's too fast or dangerous, but do you feel safe when you go on the bus, like you said before, so at night for example.

Interviewee: Yeah, I don't feel safe at night. I feel safe at daytime, and maybe when it's not yet so late in the evening, maybe at eight or nine o'clock then I still feel safe. But after ten o'clock in the night, I feel a little bit afraid and scared that maybe something bad will happen. You never know what might happen so late at night.

Researcher: So, why do you feel scared or unsafe, what is it that you are scared of happening?

Interviewee: Maybe they might rob you, and take your bag, cell phone or belongings, or something like that.

Researcher: Have you ever had any experience on the bus because you are not from here? Has anyone ever said or done anything on the bus that made you feel that you were being discriminated against?

Interviewee: No, luckily not. Until now not.

Researcher: Do you know of anyone who has, maybe friends?

Interviewee: Also, not.

Researcher: Okay. And then if you had to choose places around Groningen, like you said at night, where you feel unsafe, is it all of the bus stops at night that you find scary? Or maybe only some?

Interviewee: Only in the city center.

Researcher: Have you ever seen someone else either at the bus stop or while using the bus get harassed or had something said to them? Specifically, women maybe?

Interviewee: No, umm, no.

Researcher: Like you said, at night, when you travel, is there anything you do to try to feel safer, so maybe you travel together with someone?

Interviewee: Yes, I prefer to go with somebody, it's much more safer but if I go alone, then I don't feel safe, at late at night especially like eleven or twelve o'clock in the evening.

Researcher: Yea, okay. So, um you already talked about how it's safer because you use the card,

Interviewee: Yes, yes.

Researcher: ... do you know of anything else that is on the bus to make you feel safer, so any existing policies, maybe for example, should there be more cameras, or should there be something else...?

Interviewee: Yes, maybe that is much better, if there is a camera right in the bus, yea.

Researcher: For example, in some other cities, like Eindhoven, you can see the camera (screen) that shows what is recorded...

Interviewee: Yes, I think that maybe that's a good idea! That would be safer for the bus.

Researcher: Do you think the city should do more to make specifically women feel safer, maybe especially at night?

Interviewee: Yes, yes, women need to feel safer. At this moment, things happen, and you never know what bad things could happen

Researcher: Yes, I think that's everything, do you maybe have any other experiences related to this topic you wish to share?

Interviewee: No, no.

Researcher: Okay, thank you.

11.2. *Transcript Interview 2: Forumbibliotheek Selwerd, SONDE2000 08/04/2024*

(Notes: Interview conducted prior to the beginning of the 'Kleintje Koffie' hour, where the interviewee and her children would be participating. Interviewee provided consent for recoding of the conversation, and received information form and an explanation of the research purpose prior)

Researcher: So first could you tell me a bit about yourself, so maybe where you are from...?

Interviewee: I'm from Greece. We live here in Groningen for almost two years. I am a mother of two - six months and three years old. And yea, my husband works in Drachten, and that is why we live here. I teach some yoga classes and pilates in the university, in ACLO by the way haha, ahhh yea.

Researcher: So, generally, how often would you say that you use the bus network in Groningen?

Interviewee: Mainly, I commute by bike, because it is the easiest way with the kids, to easily visit and see the city centre, most things we do happen there. But when she (her child), was a newborn, so the first let's say three months, four months, I was really using the bus and I was really impressed. Because in this neighbourhood, and for my house, it was really convenient by bus and I was like, wow. So just walking two minutes out of my house, and I was taking the bus to the city center, so I really enjoyed it, mainly it was always on time. And because of the situation, most of the time I had the stroller and a carrier, people were very – like the driver also was – very concerned, you know, waiting for me, uhm but I felt like when the bus is full, especially with students, they do not really pay attention. They were not even moving out of the area that you put your stroller, you know, for safety, and they were not even standing to have a seat, as I also had the baby here (she gestured to her youngest child who she had in a wrap baby carrier around herself). It was like, pros and cons always, but considering the timing, and that you can always check on your phone... because I'm coming from Greece, this is not a very nice option – to move or commute by bus, especially with kids and a stroller, I think it's impossible. So for me, this is very luxury here.

Researcher: Okay, so you said usually people are accommodating with the stroller, and stuff, but did you ever experience a time when you maybe couldn't get on the bus because you had the stroller with you, or other than only because of students... are there any bus stops that didn't have ramps, or something to help?

Interviewee: Amm... No, I think most of the time, I never really had many problems to be honest. In my area where I commute from Selwerd to Groningen city centre – no.

Researcher: And, in terms of social safety, have you ever maybe felt – not necessarily in danger but – like as a woman on the bus, do you feel safe?

Interviewee: I felt 100% safe. I never had any problems... But I commute also like you know, mornings, in the day, not like 'weird' hours, or like late at night, or not even evenings... so I don't know that part at all.

Researcher: So, you have never commute during the night, for example?

Interviewee: No, because to be honest, when I didn't have the kids, I was just taking my bike, so no. Its only during the day, and most of the time, hours when the bus is really busy.

Researcher: Yea, okay.

Interviewee: So no, I never experienced this unsafety.

Researcher: Okay, do you maybe know of anyone from your own like friends that have experienced something similar?

Interviewee: No, no. But also, my network in Groningen is not very big, because also I just live here almost two years, but I never heard any experience. Like things, like to steal something, not mainly the bus, but in the city centre in general – yes that happened to me. Recently twice actually, my bag and my bike, but I was not threatened – I was just tired and forgot something, and of course it was gone. But I never experienced a threat, like somebody came to me, and I really need to protect myself or my kids.

Researcher: and am, maybe have you seen anyone else, when you use the bus, did you see anyone else struggling with a buggy or maybe someone with a disability, having trouble getting on the bus...?

Interviewee: No, not really.

Researcher: and for the instances in the nighttime, when it might be unsafe, do you think there is maybe something more that the city should do to make it safer, like potential changes they could make?

Interviewee: I think maybe with extra cameras, or maybe the drivers, they need to pay more attention, because indeed sometimes the driver is just like – okay, I just drive the bus, sometimes they don't pay attention to what's going on, or like they go and driver very fast, so also sometimes they don't pay attention to someone with a stroller, or wheelchair because of that – these things, maybe. So drivers should be a little bit more aware.

Researcher: Okay, so actually I think that's everything... so unless you have any other experiences to share, that will be all.

Interviewee: Okay, no, no.

Researcher: Okay, great, thank you!

11.3. *Transcript Interview 3: Buurtcentrum Sonde-2000 09/04/2024*

(Notes: Interview conducted following the poetry and painting activity. The purpose and topic of the interview was explained beforehand, and consent was given. Additionally in this interview, a third member of the meeting joined as an 'interpreter', to help convey misunderstood phrases in English through Dutch)

Researcher: So, first before I start interviewing, can you please tell me a little bit about yourself? so maybe where you are from, what you do, just so that I can get to know you.

Interviewee: Okay, I'm from Syria, I am a mother of three children. We came together from Syria, with my 'man', my husband, and we live in Groningen since 1 year ago – 1 and a half years actually. I am learning Dutch, and my children go to school here.

(Third party: tell a bit about your professional background)

Interviewee: Is that important?

Researcher: No, not really if you don't want to its okay.

(Third Party: I think it's interesting, yea)

Interviewee: I have a civil engineering diploma from Syria, yea, I also have worked in Latakia, in the university in my city, that is near the sea. I have worked for eleven years and yea that is it.

Researcher: Okay, so how often do you think you use the bus? Like every week, every day...?

Interviewee: I use the bus every Thursday and Friday, so twice a week. Also, if I want to go to the centre, then also use the bus.

Researcher: so, you live outside of the centre and if you want to go in, you use the bus?

Interviewee: yes so, I live here in Paddepoel.

Researcher: Ah yes, okay.

Interviewee: Ahm, so when you use the bus, what are your general perceptions of safety, so do you find it safe?

Interviewee: Eh, yes, I find it safe. I don't think that something is difficult or that someone will do something bad, or that its not good. 'Overdag' (asking third party to help phrase), I think all over the day it is not a problem for me. In the evening also its not a problem, its good with me. Frankly, I don't experience the bus at night usually.

Researcher: So, you don't use the bus at night too much?

Interviewee: No, I don't really know the problems at night too much.

Researcher: Have you ever seen, or maybe heard from your friends or somebody that you know, that someone else felt unsafe? Maybe people you know that do use the bus at nighttime, did they ever express concern?

Interviewee: No, frankly I don't really hear that much from anyone. Here in the Netherlands, I think that... in my country, that happens a lot, all times of the day. Here not really.

Researcher: Do you think that at night, maybe because you use the bus during the day you're not sure, but for those that use it at night, should the city do more to help women feel safer at night? So for example women who do use the bus at night, at later night, do they need extra protections in place to help them?

Interviewee: Yes, maybe, yea.

Researcher: Is there anything, even from your experience on the bus in another country, that you do to feel safer on the bus? So, what would you do, what strategy would you use?

Interviewee: More lighting, extra lighting on the bus stops and streets, more cameras for security are useful, for children, women, and also for men. Maybe, emergency telephone number are also good.

Researcher: You said you have children, so have you use the bus here with a stroller before?

Interviewee: Yes, I have.

Researcher: have you travelled together with your children on the bus? And was there always enough space and was it always accessible, have you ever had issues with overcrowding?

Interviewee: So far, we always have had seats for both me and my children. If I ever don't find a seat, that is always okay too.

Researcher: Yes, so I think that is everything I wanted to ask... so, generally would you agree that, despite your experiences being okay, would you agree that neighbourhoods like Paddepoel are maybe safer at night than the city centre? Or do you think that its about the same? Waiting for the bus here at nigh would it feel safer for you than waiting for the bus, let's say, on Zuiderdiep?

Interviewee: Yea, yea. The place I know is always safer for me than the other place. Because I know the neighbourhood, I know the places, I use them, I feel safer waiting.

Researcher: And do your perceptions of safety on the streets, not just on bus, where you know is safe and where not, did that change when you first moved here and now? Are they different?

Interviewee: Yes, of course, yes.

Researcher: Okay, so unless you have any further questions, I think that's everything, so thank you!

11.4. Transcript Interview 4: Buurtcentrum Sonde-2000 09/04/2024

(Notes: Interview conducted following the poetry and painting activity. The purpose and topic of the interview was explained beforehand, and consent was given)

Researcher: So, first before asking questions about the bus, can you tell me a bit about your background, where you are from, what you do, maybe?

Interviewee: I'm a single mum and I studied art in holistic medicines and massages, now I am staying at home, but I'm trying to get to work, to make more drawings again, get a new portfolio.

Researcher: Okay, interesting. And you're from Groningen?

Interviewee: well, actually I lived in Hoogeveen, but I was born in Colombia, but I have Dutch parents, so I feel very Dutch – with a Latin vibe.

Researcher: Ahm, so how regularly do you use the bus?

Interviewee: Oh well in school I went very often, but now its more walking and going by bike.

Researcher: Okay, so if you were to say generally what your perceptions of safety and access on the bus are, how would you describe it?

Interviewee: For me it depends on the hour I guess, if you go during the day, there was a lot of people, but if you talk about safety in the evening, for me it was – for me I don't know, I guess as a woman for me, you are always more careful, even with the position in the bus where you sit. I guess you want to be noticed by a bus driver, or someone in the bus, but yea, I think that's the feeling.

Researcher: Yea, so during the day its usually fine, but then at night it's a bit more uneasy, or you are more aware, basically,

Interviewee: Yea, I guess so.

Researcher: Ahm, have you ever experienced a specific moment where you yourself felt specifically targeted, also on the bus or bus stops... maybe not even physical threats, maybe someone said something, or made you feel uneasy specifically, can you recall a moment?

Interviewee: Oh, I don't think I ever had that. No.

Researcher: Okay, and then have you ever witnessed anyone else get targeted? Or verbally harassed, threatened, or maybe followed?

Interviewee: I don't think I have. I do think that I did see some bullying in the bus once, but that was a girl with, a mental disability, I don't know for sure, but it definitely felt like they were bullying her from a distance... I don't think she noticed but I saw it, it was a feeling I had.

Researcher: Okay, so you said you are a mom. So, do you or did you use the bus a lot with a baby stroller?

Interviewee: Yea, yea. So, in the beginning I did... it was a little bit hard because, ahm I felt a bit awkward on my own, but I think it's just a feeling that I had, with people around me there was a lot who wanted to help me get the stroller on or off the bus – so I think it was just my own feeling.

Researcher: And do you think that the bus stops have enough ramps, or is that people always have to help you physically lift the stroller in and out, or do you feel that if a mother was getting in/out the bus alone and that there was nobody to help her, that she would be enough like support with ramps and stuff? Or could more be done?

Interviewee: Well, I once saw a girl who wanted to take off the stroller, but the bus was very far from the platform and it was a difficult, because if you are on your own and nobody helps you, its also dangerous for the child who can fall into the gap of course. So, yea, but normally I see them getting help or just doing it on their own, strong women ahaha.

Researcher: And then, like you said at night is when you feel more aware, is there anything you would do specifically, even maybe subconsciously at night, to feel safer? So, for example, people don't travel alone at night, or maybe with friends, or maybe like you said, you sit in a place on the bus that is a bit more visible to the driver, is there any other strategies you can think of that you use to feel safer?

Interviewee: I think because I had one experience, not in the Netherlands, but in a different country, it made me feel aware of where I'm sitting, and I also keep my phone close to my hand. So when something happens I can just, I don't know what the person would do when I'm on the bus, but it makes me feel not alone, at night also, so yeah that's what I'm doing.

Researcher: I'm also doing surveys alongside the interviews, and I think a lot of the survey respondents also said they use the phone or even pretend to call or text someone just to feel that they're not, that they don't have to sit in silence for 20 minutes while they get home, when they're a bit uneasy so I don't think you are alone in that.

Interviewee: Phew ahaha.

Researcher: So, ahm, kind of the last question is just about if you think that bus drivers, or maybe more specifically like the whole city of Groningen should do more to make women feel safer in terms of the bus transport, like maybe what changes could be made? Do you have any ideas?

Interviewee: I think, well maybe because I haven't seen it that much so maybe I don't know exactly what there should be happening, but I do think since corona there is this glass, that the bus driver is less approachable, I think. That makes me feel that he is sitting there doing his job and we are just sitting, and of course you say thank you when you get off the bus, ahm, yea it makes me feel like maybe you are still a little bit alone maybe.

Researcher: Okay, yea, that's a good observation. I also feel like when you get in the bus, the driver is in like a little box and everyone else is outside of the little box. Yea, yea, that's true.

Interviewee: Yea, that's what I think. And maybe on the bus stops there should be – when you're alone in the dark at the bus stop it feels very uneasy of course, maybe surveillance, I don't know.

Researcher: Yes, yes... well anyway I think unless you have any more insights or experiences to share that will be all... thank you, I appreciate it!

11.5. *Transcript Interview 5: MFC De Wijert & Helpman 17/04/2024*

(Notes: Interviewee spoke little English, so a third party joined the interview as an interpreter and translator from Dutch to English. Prior to the recording the purpose of the research was explained, and the information sheet was provided).

Researcher: So first could you maybe introduce yourself, say where you're from, who you are?

Interviewee: I'm Amina, I'm a Kurdish woman from Kurdistan, I live here in the Netherlands for thirty-four years.

Researcher: So, when you use the bus do you find it safe? Generally?

Interviewee: Yes, yes. For the thirty-four years that I am here, everything has been good. All good.

Researcher: How often do you use the bus?

Interviewee: Not often, sometimes. At the moment once or twice a month with the bus. I also used the bus to go to Assen in the past.

Researcher: Do you use the bus during the daytime or also during the night?

Interviewee: During the day only.

Researcher: Do you think it is safer at nighttime or at daytime? And then why do you think this?

(interpreter and interviewee converse for 1 minute in Dutch).

Interviewee: I think it is safer at daytime.

Researcher: So, did you ever see somebody else targeted on the bus? For example, women being called on, or harassed?

Interviewee: No, I have not, all is good.

Researcher: Do you always find it easy to use the bus, is it accessible? For example, is it always easy to get on and off, do people help?

Interviewee: All has been good!

Researcher: How does this bus safety compare with the bus safety in your home country?

Interviewee: There is no bus in my home country, everyone uses the taxi.

Researcher: and is it safe?

Interviewee: The taxi was safe in the early years but it has been a long time since I was back in Kurdistan, I do not know how it is now. In the early years, everyone walked, long distances, and when there was a cab, people would just tell the cab to stop and did not have a bus there. Now I have a phone to call back home, but it is not so safe.

Researcher: So, some women who use the bus here think it is unsafe only at night, and should more be done to address women's fears? So, maybe more cameras, more help from the bus driver? Should more be done?

Interviewee: I agree with more cameras in the bus. Yes, that would be much better. When I am home, I do not go out at night, I do not feel so safe.

Researcher: So overall the bus is safe, but maybe not at night, would you agree?

Interviewee: Yes, yes, I agree. The world is difficult at the moment. For me, I must always be aware of criminals, aware of pickpockets, or, as a woman with a hijab, sometimes Muslim women are threatened and judged.

Researcher: Yes, that is also very important for my research because I want to see how women also from different backgrounds feel too, so that is actually really helpful, that women from different backgrounds and ethnicities will get targeted more on public transport, than for example me, so actually that is really helpful, thank you.

Interviewee: At this moment, I have no trouble, but I am afraid for the future. In this time, extreme right-wing and radical thinking is on the rise. It panics me, and it is more and more and more. People should accept, tolerate, and respect everyone, but at this moment that is not the case.

Interpreter: Here in the group, there is acceptance and tolerance. Lots of people only see all the bad things in the world, and the good things do not get talked about.

Interviewee: When you are walking on the street, I do not immediately trust someone.

Interpreter: I'm the opposite!

Interviewee: Cabs in the city are trustworthy, I do not have a car, but sometimes I call a cab. Sitting alone in the cab I never have any problem, never. Also, not in other cities, cabs are always trustworthy. My husband also has a car.

Researcher: Do you have other comments to add? ... okay, thank you so much!

11.6. *Transcript Interview 6: Stichting Discriminatie Meldpunt Groningen* 26/04/2024

(Notes: Interview conducted at the office of the Discriminatie Meldpunt, which was set up with an employee at an earlier time over email. Prior to recording, purpose of the research was explained, consent was obtained, and information sheet was provided).

Researcher: So, firstly I just want to gather some background information about the organisation itself. Could you provide a brief overview of the work that you do here in Groningen?

Interviewee: Yea, so people who feel discriminated again, they can file a complaint here, and I am one of the people who could help them with the complaint, so that would be my function here. Ahm, so, that can mean different things, because on one side we could just register a complaint, sometimes people file a complaint anonymously and we just register it so we can keep up with all the statistics and every year we have a monitor. Last year's monitor just came out with all the number of, grounds of discrimination, where it happens, and what kind of discrimination happens and things like that. So, that's one part, so that municipalities can choose what kind of policies are important for them. And also, some people want more than that, so not only a listening ear to throw everything out, but also, they want that we contact the other party and its always between a citizen of the province of Groningen and a company, or organisation. So, for example, if neighbours are in a fight, that's not really our department, but we do have really good contact with the police, so if we see that there is possibly a lot of discrimination going on in that conflict between neighbours, we could ask the police officer of that area of the city to contact them and to try to help the situation. Or for example a WIJ team, we try to contact them for example, just to see how we could push it forward a little bit. But we don't have any say in these. Its just a citizen with an organisation, like supermarket, bus, or school, work... And then we write a letter after having an intake meeting here in the office, we write a letter for the other party, and we explain the situation, we explain what our job is, because we are independent, so we don't work FOR the one who complained, we are just objectively looking at the situation, researching what has happened.

We do take everything seriously, because it's a feeling, mostly, but its based on the laws that are there and that we work with, it's not always possible to make a clear conclusion of what really happened or if that's really discrimination. So, we are objective, and then they respond to us, also via a letter, and then it can be very different what happens next. Some people do not even want to acknowledge what happened if something happened. Some people have a very different story than the complainer. Yea, sometimes we cannot really get any further, so we keep it at an advice for example, towards the company for example. Sometimes we do see some connections, that there has been discrimination, we have the possibility then to go to the human rights organisation, yea '*College voor de Rechten van de Mens*' in Utrecht, and they can actually decide whether something is discriminative or not. And then our role would change, and that would mean we are no longer objective, an independent party, but we stand next to the complainer and actually support and defend them in this case. So that's a possibility, if it turns out to be discrimination, if they decide that it is, they have the possibility to go to court for example, and until court you cannot really connect any consequences to discrimination.

So, we cannot give them a fine, or anything else, also the human right organisation cannot do that either, they are also an advisory organisation. So, for some complainers that's it, and for some it goes a long way and they get an apology, or we try to sit with all parties to come up with a solution, so there are many options, but our role is actually to prevent it from escalating, so we would hope that people come to us before things explode so that we maybe can help to prevent that. And then, because we know that discrimination is very difficult to prevent or probably it will never completely go away, its very important for us to also work on prevention via education. So we go to a lot of schools and companies, we give trainings and workshops, just to bring awareness to people that discrimination exists, what kinds of discrimination there are, how do you work with diversity and inclusion, how do you gain that, so we also do that. And then we also have some policy things we also do, some projects, those are smaller. But yes, our primary tasks are the possibility to complain here, and the education.

Researcher: Yea, so, how does the organisation, as you said before about complaints, so do people just call in? Or do they come here physically? So, how do you actually collect the reports?

Interviewee: Well, since this year we all work same under the same website. So, every province, or region, in the Netherlands has a discrimination centre. And before, we use to have our own website where you can file a complaint, you can also always call us of course still, but now we went all together under one name, 'discriminatie.nl', and then there's 'discriminatie Drenthe', Groningen, Friesland, and so on. So, when you go to the website, discriminatie.nl', you can just fill in the report and your postal code and then it just automatically goes to us. And yea some people knock on the door, but that's not how we work. Its really, first you call, or file online, or email or whatever, we discuss it and then we see what the possibilities are.

Researcher: And generally, you said you have some statistics and maybe if you are aware of some, what are some general challenges or barriers that marginalised women have, specifically with public transport in Groningen? Do you have any insights to share?

Interviewee: Yes, I have checked it in our system, and this year we have only had one about a Muslim woman that was wearing a hijab, and she got certain remarks from the bus driver, a female bus driver, about Muslims in general, but also about the hijab, and she felt very insulted, she was crying and calling her boyfriend, he filed the complaint with us. My colleague helped them, so I'm not exactly sure how this went, but I know that they decided to first just register it here, and to also file a complaint with the bus company. He would let us know what came out of that, but we didn't hear anything yet, so I'm not sure if that will happen, so this is one example. But also like I said, I speak with a lot of these women in 'Jasmijn', they are speaking about how people actually have remarks about their religion, about their skin colour, bus drivers that do not stop, they just pass them by for example.

We also had one, two years ago, a bus driver that didn't stop for a Muslim younger girl, and also stuck up his middle finger, so, the father contacted us, as well as the bus company. For us it was also only registration, because the bus company handled it pretty well, they organised a meeting between the father and daughter, the bus driver, and some management. And he apologised, said he shouldn't have done this, so they had a good talk. Actually, what we would've tried to do, they did very well. We did say that in case they do not pick it up as they should, that you can always come back to us of course. But those are things that we hear a lot.

There was one who said that the bus driver hung up a piece of paper in the bus, that said that you cannot speak any other languages other than Dutch in the bus. So, I know that this was also not my case, but I do know that they took the paper away, so that's also what we hear. But we also hear of women that don't feel safe in the bus, so for example, there was one that said that there was a guy also already on the bus stop, already in her face, coming really close to her and she assumed that she was going to be safe inside the bus, but also there he was very intimidating, nothing really happened in the sense that he touched her or anything, but she felt intimidated and she felt the need to file a complaint. So, these things we hear. We also have one workshop where we speak about behaviour that goes over certain boundaries of people, invasive behaviour. We speak with students about this, and we hear very often about girls that are scared when they go home in the night, even with the bus, or even going from the bus stop to their house.

Researcher: yes, so far that is primarily a lot of my findings, a lot of women say that during the day its fine, there's lots of people, its pretty safe. But then at nighttime it turns a bit different, also because its emptier, you're just more hyper aware of your surroundings, and a lot of women also talk about how

they try to sit in a really certain space on the bus, so that the driver sees them, but its still not as safe. Theres a lot of strategies they use to try to feel safer are that they pretend to call someone, or go on their phone, but even then, its still just very indicative of them not feeling safe enough. But then also, seeing how women who also have other traits, for example like you said, wearing a headscarf, or having a different skin tone, they obviously experience this unsafety in different ways, as they're scared of different things happening to them.

Interviewee: and also, more from bus drivers as well.

Researcher: Exactly, and that's also a really interesting finding, that a lot of women said that, it was very mixed with drivers, because a lot of people kind of think 'oh I'm safe', and others thing 'am I safe?' because yea, a lot of people said bus drivers are nice and helpful with their baby stroller, but then in my survey a women said that the bus driver at night was joking that she had to pay him money to get out of the bus, something that was funny to him, but to her, she's already travelling alone at night, and it was not a safe feeling at all for her. So, its things like this that are quite mixed, and people feel that drivers are both a threat to them, and also a safety net for some people, because there are also instances where bus drivers tell these drunk people, threatening people, to back off, but then others don't. yea I also think it is about awareness, and training bus drivers to be more aware of this.

Interviewee: Very much so, yes. I think, it depends on the characteristics that you have as a woman with what kind of things you are confronted. We had one woman, a woman of colour, that told us that she was bullied a lot, also where she lives, but then she took the bus, and the bus driver wouldn't open the door for her, so she could get out. She felt very, very threatened, and intimidated, people were laughing at her, young people in the bus. So, it was almost like they all worked together even, with the bus driver, because he wasn't opening the door. And he was also telling her very specifically, to go back to her country, so yea, that's not okay. And I have given many, many of these workshops, I have spoken to a lot of groups of young women, but also men, that I have not had one group where women did not take certain precautions to protect themselves while going home, especially in the evening of course. So, it's a real thing.

Researcher: Yea, its that like intersectional approach with not only are you a woman travelling alone at night, but you are a woman of colour, a woman with a disability or something, all these different things overlap and like you said, its very true that I don't think a single woman has a perfectly safe feeling when they're on the bus unfortunately. So, you already described quite a few specific instances, but would you say generally that you get a lot of complaints about public transport or is it more focused on other individual cases, like you said in the workplace or something?

Interviewee: The complaints that we formally get are not too many about public transport, the talk that I have, because of the education that I do, that's where I hear a lot about it.

Researcher: Ah, ok. So, a lot of it just goes unreported formally?

Interviewee: And that is a general problem with these things, because I don't know if people just don't have a lot of faith in what will be done with it, or they just don't know we exist in some cases. Or I don't know what it is, but it just doesn't go reported. I am one hundred percent sure that there is much, much more that we do not hear, because in any group that I go to, and where I speak to women, and I hear things, for example about travelling, so yea, we don't hear even ten percent, I think.

Researcher: And is there any – you said that the municipality or province might use insights from organisation like yours to then see what to focus on in policies – so are you aware of any policies that

target discrimination as a whole in the city, not just for public transport? So how does Groningen target these issues?

Interviewee: They do not really report it back to us, but for example, if they do get a lot of reports about, let's say, the central station, a lot of women have been harassed there for example, they might choose up more cameras or to have police drive by more often, go check the situation you know, being more available there. So, this is what is possible, but we don't get a report back on what they exactly do with the numbers, no.

Researcher: How do you think that they should address it more? Other than maybe putting up more cameras, do you have any ideas for what could be done to target these specific complaints that these people have, women specifically?

Interviewee: I think there should be more training, in any case I am always for more education and awareness. I think that bus drivers should have some kind of protocol on what is acceptable on the bus and what is not. Maybe there could also be some kind of a signal or a button to push. To be more aware of when women in particular do not feel safe anymore, so that they can quite literally, kick someone out of the bus if that's necessary. So, I think its also starts with that, bus drivers need to be aware of it. Also, since us drivers are sometimes the ones doing it, they should also get some training in this, first training to be more open towards different cultures and backgrounds, but also that they have a clear protocol onto what will happen if you do something like that. For example, if there is a complaint like that of the father and daughter, that the bus driver didn't stop for her, she was wearing a headscarf, that if this complaint is there are he picks it up well, its no problem. But if there is another complaint about the same bus driver, doing the same thing, that he knows 'this is my second complaint about me, about the same thing', that he knows there's a protocol, this is what will happen at another complaint, that there's a consequence. So, I think the bus company can definitely do something about this, they can take responsibility for this, because they are responsible in the end. I don't think necessarily it would hurt to hang more cameras and stuff like that, but that doesn't really prevent, maybe it will prevent some things from happening, but I think the awareness is more important.

Researcher: When I was interviewing one woman, she said she feels that the bus drivers aren't really approachable either, so even if something did something. She mentioned that when you enter the bus, the shields are still up from covid, which are not so necessary anymore, but it does kind of shut the driver into this little box, and she said that she feels like even is something happened, it wouldn't be approachable to go to the bus driver and speak to him/her, because yea, he's sitting there doing his job, and she's just a passenger and that's it. I think that's a common conception that people have in the bus. And like you said, emergency buttons or something, or even like in the train – I guess the train is a bit different because there is no 'driver' that you can see – but like there's an emergency number on the train, so maybe something similar.

Interviewee: I have heard some complaints about that number. Some, multiple examples, of women calling or texting that number, and getting back something like "oh then you should just go and sit somewhere else". Something like that. So, if you have something like that, it is important to act on it, like its not just "oh we have a number, so we are fine", yea like a checked box, a checklist to have something done, but you have to actually do something with it ... on top of everything else, and that's too big of course, but that is to educate men, to make sure that maybe the next generation will thing its logical to not harass someone.

Researcher: Yea, 'crazy' thing to say out loud hahaha.

Interviewee: But that's of course something that will take much more time, but I think it would not hurt to bring awareness, training, protocols, and also just to act on it. If the bus company notices that there are a couple of complaints about the same subject, about the same bus driver, act on it. Like set an example.

Researcher: Yea, because then if something actually happens, everyone knows, "oh you can't just get away with this".

Interviewee: Yes, because in our work, we see many, many times that it works so much better if you have managers that are an example, who take the lead on things, who are showing what is the norm within a company, what do we accept, and what we do not accept. So that helps a lot at least, that's what research shows.

Researcher: I'm not sure how long you have been working at this organisation, but would you say that generally complains about the train and the bus have increased or decreased over time, or how would you characterise any trends about train and bus complaints?

Interviewee: If I just look at the last, well let's say two years, because this year doesn't really count yet, ahm, in those two years I see a decrease, as in 2022 there were five, and then last year there were three, and then this year we are at one still. So, I'm not sure what this will say. Our registrations don't go that far back, I think there's maybe 2021, but I'm not sure. I think that there will not be a big increase, but not because it doesn't happen. It really goes back to unreported cases, and we see that with many, many subjects, that we know happen much more. I can imagine that in Amsterdam it will be maybe different, but people just don't report. SO, based on the conversations that I'm having, I think that's its not decreasing.

Researcher: I guess you already spoke about how you are independent, so there wouldn't really be any more partnership happening than what you already said, that you just inform or maybe collaborate in the sense that your train or do these workshops. Is there any other types of actions, where you directly collaborate with certain organisations?

Interviewee: I mean, yes, we do actually. For example, 'Vrouwencentrum Jasmijn', its not really a collaboration, but we do collaborate in some way to reach these women. They know they can find the women, and we can tell them something, so we work together in that sense. Also the libraries for example, like I said we are always independent so even if we work with the library, someone can still file a complaint, we will still research it, we are not dependent on them, but we do try to work together with these places where people go, people meet eachother, and for example, the library in Hoogezand, we go there, sometimes to talk to people because people gather for a cup of coffee, we just tell them about us, about our work, we could hang posters or something. With a lot of schools also, we try to make collaborations, we work on certain projects, also with the municipalities, yea, usually its not something that takes years – its more like a certain focus in a certain moment, or over some months. But we do try to work with other companies to reach people.

Researcher: Do have any future idea or direction for all of Groningen? How to address discrimination on public transport and then to promote inclusivity of public transport? The municipality and the province as a whole, do you see an exact direction that the bus transport becomes more inclusive?

Interviewee: I don't know if I see that happening, I think maybe it could also help if bus companies could be more diverse, if there are more different people working there. Because it is often white people, a lot of men. We had one complainer that said – a male with an Arab background – that said that he was bullied a lot, treated a certain way by colleagues so, based on the background, so I think it

probably would help if they were more diverse, so that they could relate to the diverse society that we live in, but if that doesn't happen.

Researcher: Yes, that was a notion that multiple people expressed, that an older woman I spoke to, said that she usually feels safe on the bus, but I guess because she does not use it often enough to have too much of an opinion. But then without even prompting, she started talking about a general feeling in the Netherlands, but obviously also in other parts of Europe, that there's a growing sense of islamophobia and growing sentiment that is very backwards, but she felt there's a growing discrimination against people of colours, Arabs, and things like this.

Interviewee: We notice that people have a difficulty with, they feel like they cannot 'say whatever they want' anymore, because they are now being held responsible for what they say, which I think is very positive. But we do hear that a lot, and I think the fact that the PVV, Geert Wilders, won basically, does not help. I think that it gives people some kind of like free ticket to just speak on these subjects in a way that he does, because he does it and its accepted, he's even a politician, so 'why not'. So, I think that doesn't help the case for sure, we also see that more than half of our complaints are about racism, so background, where you come from, languages you speak, colour of your skin, and this is consistent throughout the years. So, I think I would confirm what that woman said, unfortunately.

Researcher: Do you have any other insights about the organisation surrounding this topic that you would like to share, or would you say it is all covered?

Interviewee: Yeah, the only thing is, I said that it's underreported, any subject or theme, any kind of discrimination, but we now have a person for communication since one and a half years ago, and she is trying to spread the word that we exist, and let people know where to go, so I hope that this will make a difference.

Researcher: Okay, and away from the organisation, as a woman yourself, do you often use the bus?

Interviewee: Not anymore, but I used to.

Researcher: When you did use the bus, did you perceive it as generally safe, or have any complaints?

Interviewee: I do have the privilege of my colour, and the fact that I do not wear a headscarf or anything like that, so in that way, I have never dealt with certain things. I think, because of that I have dealt with it a lot less, but its not that I always felt safe, not because of the bus driver, I have never had any strange interactions with a bus driver, but just other travellers, other people in the bus, that just sometimes it feels intimidating. So, for example, when you sit somewhere and there's a lot of space, but someone – a man – comes and sits right next to you, it just feels some type of way, even though nothing really happens in that moment, but the fact that there were so many other seats available, just brings up some type of feeling. Stuff like that.

Researcher: And do you have also the feeling about nighttime as a lot worse than daytime?

Interviewee: Yeah.

Researcher: Is it also true for you that if you had to speak of just Groningen, that the centre is where you would feel unsafe? Is it maybe certain places, or certain streets?

Interviewee: I think its also certain buses, for example a bus that goes to the South, so Wijert, Corpus, I felt different than the bus that goes to Beijum, maybe because there are just certain types of people on the bus, there are a lot of different people living in Beijum than there are in Zuid, so maybe it has

something to do with that. But I do have to say that this is when I was younger, because now I just don't really go on the bus at those times anymore. I also never had any problems when I was travelling from Groningen to another city for example, or village, so the Q-Liner, I never experienced anything bad in a Q-Liner, I don't know if that says anything.

Researcher: So, it is just the ones that are in the inner city? Okay, yeah. I guess since you don't use it much anymore, maybe you don't give it much thought anymore, but when you did, did you find yourself employing any strategies to feel safer for yourself, like I spoke about before, maybe these subconscious things that you do to feel safer?

Interviewee: Yeah, actually for me it was very conscious, still till this day, and not just in the bus. I also used the phone, I held my keys, one time someone gave me this keyring that was like hard, round thing hanging from my keys, and you could really hit someone hard with it.

Researcher: Ah, like a self-defence tool?

Interviewee: Yes, I got one, and I still have it on my keys. I also think that it's because of my work, that I'm just very much aware of my surroundings and I know very well what you have to take into consideration. So that might also be from that, and not necessarily from my experience, but yes, I did do that a lot. And, also before, I tried to not travel alone, especially also when going for example, with taxis. I would never go alone, because I would go to the city at night you know, the last bus has left, and I would take the taxi, but also only if there was a friend there. Yeah, I do still take a lot of things into account and try to protect myself still, consciously for me.

Researcher: That feeling also extends to bus stops I'm guess, where you are hyper aware?

Interviewee: Yes, definitely, and it depends on which bus stop, but there are bus stops that I think 'yea, I would never get in here, I would never wait for a bus here'.

Researcher: Which ones, if you can recall?

Interviewee: For example, the one at the Pop Dijkemaweg, close to the one before Kardingse, so when you go from here before the bridge, towards Kardingse, its one bus stop before. Its just not a lot of people, I think I would probably never get out there, after a certain time, I would feel like a lot of things can happen there.

Researcher: I think that's all the questions I have, thank you so much!

11.7. Survey Response Transcripts

Note: rows marked grey were not included in the analysis (this includes pilot, trial-run surveys, and surveys completed by friends of researcher, hence deemed not valid)

ID	Timestamp	Q1: What is your gender identity ?	Q2: What is your age?	Q3: What racial/ethnic group(s) best describe you?	Q4: further information you wish to share	Q5. How regularly do you utilise the bus in Groningen ?	Q6. Initial Perception s.	Q7. Initial Perception s.	Q8. Your Experience.	Q9. Your Experience.	Q10. Applying Intersectionality.	Q11. Further Experiences.	Q12. Strategies and Coping Mechanisms .	Q13. Existing Policies.	Q14. Suggested Policies.	Q15. Closing Statements.
S1	21/03/2024 15:10:42	Female	18-24	White	n/a	Rarely	Not sure	No	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	All of em	No	No	n/a
S2	21/03/2024 19:50:10	Female	18-24	European	n/a	Rarely	Not sure	No	Yes, unwanted looks	n/a	Yes, my identity as a woman	No	Avoiding night time travel	No	Awareness and surveillance	n/a
S3	21/03/2024 20:24:58	Female	18-24	White	n/a	Rarely	Not sure	No	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	No	n/a	n/a
S4	21/03/2024 20:28:51	Female	18-24	White	n/a	Rarely	Not sure	No	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	No	n/a	n/a
S5	24/03/2024 15:36:58	Male	18-24	Arab	n/a	Rarely	Not sure	Yes	n/a	n/a	Yes- islamophobia and xenophobia	n/a	n/a	No	n/a	n/a
S6	08/04/2024 12:18:05	Pilot	18-24	Pilot	Pilot	Rarely	Not sure	Not sure	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
S7	08/04/2024 12:27:22	Female	18-24	White	n/a	A few times a month	Yes	Not sure	No	I've seen occasions in which the stuff that's supposed to help disabled people enter and exit the bus doesn't work, and people had to be carried out.	Since I've never had any negative experiences, no. However, had I been catcalled/harassed, I probably would've felt more unsafe as a woman than I might have as a man.	n/a	n/a	No	I know that in trains, they advertise a phone number you can call if something's wrong. They could do something similar in buses.	n/a
S8	08/04/2024 12:30:00	Female	18-24	White European	n/a	A few times a month	No	No	n/a	I don't use a wheelchair but with traveling with heavy luggage it has been quite difficult so I can only imagine how difficult it is for people with a wheelchair or other walking aids. I've also seen parents struggle with strollers due to no ramps being available and the smaller curvy entrance into the	Yes. I feel like as a woman I am more aware while sitting in the bus. I have also received stares that made be quite uncomfortable while sitting in the bus - especially with more summery clothing - so I generally try to close my jacket or cover up more while being in the bus.	No	letting my boyfriend/my mom know when I enter and exit the bus (especially at night), covering myself (eg closing a jacket)	No	n/a	n/a

										bus						
S9	08/04/2024 12:31:34	Female	35-44	Asian	n/a	A few times a month	Yes	Yes	Nono	No	No	No	n/a	No	n/a	n/a
S10	08/04/2024 12:35:45	Female	18-24	European	Disability, Dutch	Daily	Yes	No	No	Yes, buses are often full, iften unable to sit, I don't look disabled so it is often hard to access seating	Slightly, being alone in the dark with only a few men on the bus is never fully comfortable, but other than that not really	No	I try to go earlier	No	ldk	ldk
S11	08/04/2024 12:44:37	Female	18-24	Middle Eastern	n/a	Once/twice a week	Not sure	No	When dressed less casual (in the sense that when wearing pieces of clothing or accessories that were more luxurious or chic), I would feel uncomfortable and like people were staring at me. Like this was judged or unaccepted.	Not that I can remember	I haven't experienced a lack of safety in Groningen, compared to my home country where females safety on public transportation is a big issue.	n/a	avoiding eye contact with male passengers	No	increased surveillance and higher legal measures, as well as bringing awareness to bus staff	n/a
S12	08/04/2024 12:45:53	Female	18-24	African	nationality-sometimes, people may not sit next to me on regards of my race	A few times a month	Yes	Yes	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	No	n/a	n/a
S13	08/04/2024 12:59:40	Female	18-24	White European	n/a	Rarely	Yes	Not sure	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	No	n/a	n/a
S14	08/04/2024 13:00:30	Female	18-24	White	n/a	Once/twice a week	Yes	Yes	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	Putting my bag next to me so nobody would invade my personal space.	No	The increased surveillance might be a good option for ensure safety.	n/a
S15	08/04/2024 13:14:45	Female	18-24	South Asian	Chronic Disability	Once/twice a week	Yes	Yes	No, however I have very narrowly avoided some creepy men when it is dark outside.	Placement of stops is definitely a big factor, I often cannot walk much and I struggle to find buses that get me where I need to be. A lot of bus routes are often redundant based on your residential location and it makes living	I am a brown woman minority in Groningen so it definitely does affect it too. I try my best to dress conservatively and not wear South-Asian clothes or jewellery visibly so that no one bothers me.	n/a	Sometimes, I stay over at a friend's place over opting to take the bus at night or even considering walking an easier alternative just because	No	n/a	n/a

										outside the city centre very hard. On a day with pain and flare ups, not being able to find a bus, or it not showing up or being delayed without notice means that I am stuck and confined to my home.			the buses are extremely unreliable and infrequent.			
S16	08/04/2024 13:15:44	Female	18-24	White	South african (hence an immigrant and my dutch isnt good) , autistic (hence easily overwhelmed on public transport and might not realise a situation is dangerous until its too late)	Several times a week	Yes	No	Yes, specifically by drunk male dutch teens / young adult. Sexual or provocative remarks were made or they were very loud and hostile near me and made me worried they would suddenly target me	Yes, when coming back with lots of groceries or with a large item I bought or transporting my cat to the vet in a container. The buses especially around university are very full and they dont increase the number of buses around peak times often resulting in me struggling to run my errands as the bus is too full and I cant get on with my stuff. i have also seen many wheelchair users just get a friend to help their wheelchair in instead of waiting for the ramp to lower for them as it takes very long. So the wheelchair accessibility seems barely accessible in my opinion, especially if it were peak time	Yes, as a woman I feel a lot more unsafe around drunk young men on the bus. I feel safer sitting next to female presenting or nonbinary individuals in the bus.	No, but I tend to take short bus trips during the middle of the day, near city center. So my experiences might not reflect how others could experience it during other times of the day/night or in less populated areas of the city.	Avoid night travel, prefer well-lit bus stops, sit near the exit/entrance or near the bus driver. I listen to music to calm me down but only in one ear so I can stay aware of my surroundings. I always look at when someone gets on or off.	Yes	I know there is some surveillance and there is a place to complain if you had a bad experience. I also know that there are often female drivers on the buses I take. This helps me feel safer. I also appreciate the buses being well-lit (even if the lights can give me a headache). I think training bus staff to be aware of hand signs women may use if they feel unsafe or training them on how to handle a situation if a minority/female/lgbtq individual experiences harassment on the bus that would be nice.	n/a
S17	08/04/2024 13:30:18	Female	18-24	White	Dutch	Several times a week	Yes	Yes	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	No	n/a	n/a
S18	08/04/2024 13:54:09	Female	18-24	White	n/a	A few times a month	Yes	Yes	No	There isn't a bus stop close to my house. I have to walk 10 minutes	n/a	n/a	well lit stops and make sure someone is	No	maybe having a code with the staff if you feel uncomfortable	n/a

										out of the way sometimes. So it's easier to cycle			waiting for me			
S19	08/04/2024 14:51:30	Female	Under 18	European	n/a	A few times a month	Yes	Yes	Yes me and a friend (talking this task with me) Have... There was a drunk men screaming and cursing in the bus. And lots of people where uncomfortable	The bus driver closed the door way to early, before I could go of and drove a way. So I was still in the bus and had already check out... had to walk a long way to get home.	Nope	No	Travelling with an friend.	No	I don't know	I think it's pretty good, sometimes the busses are a bit nasty
S20	08/04/2024 15:09:23	Female	18-24	European White	n/a	A few times a month	Not sure	Yes	occasionally at the bus station late at night	yes - when on crutches due to an ankle injury. When its very busy, there's not always space to sit down even when not able to stand on both feet.	i feel like it has mostly to do with gender and how safe one feels using the bus/public space at night as a woman	n/a	i text a friend that im in the bus and when i arrive	No	n/a	n/a
S21	08/04/2024 15:19:27	Nonbinary	18-24	White German	In gro nationality, not in terms of perceived accessibility or experiences on public transport itself, but maybe that the OV student product wasn't available for me in my first two years here. Now it is because I work the required hours but still isn't for a lot of internationals.	Several times a week	Yes	Not sure	Not in the bus itself, but at one of the stops where I was sitting and someone came up to me and didn't leave me alone even after asking repeatedly	No	Being read female I do am careful when waiting at bus stops alone at night, but other than that not much	No	When I don't have to I don't travel by bus at night or when I notice I am alone with the bus driver I try to get out quickly.	No	All of the examples but what I've recently heard of is a telephone hotline you can call at night that stays on the phone with you until you're home, so that you can feel a little more safe. You can also send them your location so that they know where you are in case something happens.	I think if you're taking an intersectional approach it might also make sense to take trans women's opinion on the topic (don't know if you are, it's just not explicitly mentioned) because they are often more targeted than cis women
S22	08/04/2024 16:16:52	Female	18-24	White	n/a	Rarely	Not sure	Yes	No	No	Yes, gender. Using the bus at night can be daunting as a female.	No	Travelling with a friend, trying to avoid day time.	No	Increased surveillance	n/a
S23	08/04/2024 16:32:18	Female	18-24	White	n/a	Rrarely	Not Sure	Not Sure	No	n/a	Yes, gender	n.a	Phone	No	n/a	n/a
S24	08/04/2024 16:47:50	Female	18-24	White	n/a	A few times a	Not sure	Yes	I have felt unsafe but	No	I think gender does	No	Go on my phone either	No	n/a	n/a

						month			mostly due to unwanted looks or strange behaviour of other people (mostly men) on the bus				text or call someone, not sitting in the end of the bus if it's empty but rather sitting somewhere closer to other people that don't look threatening to me			
S25	08/04/2024 16:52:45	Female	18-24	European	n/a	Once/twice a week	Not sure	No	n/a	n/a	Yeah, as a woman I avoid taking the bus at night, especially when it's dark outside. When something unsafe would happen in night transport, I feel like no one would be there to help you so taking the bicycle feels safer for me as you can cycle away when someone tries to come at you.	n/a	Avoiding night-time travel, seating in the middle/front, reading	No	Yeah, awareness training and more street lights in dark areas. Furthermore bus staff needs to be protected more and should have the right to give people who appear drunk/stoned a breathalyzer test.	n/a
S26	08/04/2024 18:33:51	Female	18-24	Asian	Not really	A few times a month	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	At a well-lit bus stop	No	public awareness campaign might help	No
S27	08/04/2024 19:09:53	Female	18-24	White European	n/a	Several times a week	Not sure	No	Unwanted looks and uncomfortable conversations with drunk men. Once bus driver was jokingly pretending to not let me out unless I paid 5€ to him. As he thought of it a light joke, it didn't feel like one for me and I was humiliated.	n/a	Yes, expressing my femininity and wearing for example out-going clothes make me more aware of my surroundings and safety.	Not that I have noticed, but as I don't speak Dutch I'm afraid it could've gone unnoticed	Avoiding night time travel, not wearing revealing clothes	No	Increased surveillance	No
S28	08/04/2024 19:43:18	Female	18-24	White	n/a	Rarely	Not sure	No	n/a	n/a	If it's late at night and you are one of few women on the	n/a	Avoiding night time travel	No	Increased surveillance	n/a

											bus amongst a majority of men, it can be uncomfortable and can make me anxious.					
S29	08/04/2024 20:04:09	Female	18-24	White	International	Once/twice a week	Yes	No	harassment shouting and pointing and not giving up on trying to start conversations from drunk men (not students like drunk adult men) by the zuiderdiep bus stops at literally all times of the day	not in my own personal mobility but when i was using the bus to move lots of my stuff when moving houses i realised how little ramps and stuff there are	yes, much more aware of who is also on a bus/waiting at a station - assessing them for threat maybe	yep, i've seen an intoxicated man follow a few girls onto a bus and be kicked off	well lit or bus stops on main streets with more of foot traffic, not playing music too loud in my headphones so i can listen out	No	better lighting at bus stops	n/a
S30	08/04/2024 20:46:15	Female	18-24	White	Dutch	A few times a month	Yes	No	I've had a few bad experiences with old druk men that would not stop talking to me at night. Yet, buschauffeurs helped me in a couple of those experiences.	When my knee was in a cast, I found it annoying that the busses to zernike are often full, because then I had to stand without a railing to hold on to comfortably. In addition, because the busstop at the Grote Markt is gone it is hard to reach the city center when you are unable to bike.	Yes, I feel like old drunk men tend to target young women more.	No	Travelling with a friend feels safer, especially when that friend is male.	Yes	n/a	I feel like the lack of punctuality is more the reason why I don't take busses often. Also, your questions were a bit broad, especially the open one in the beginning.
S31	08/04/2024 22:16:10	Female	18-24	African	I'm from St.Maarten and our buses are different to the ones here	Rarely	Not sure	No	No but I have realized that the street lights in Groningen are only bright enough for bike riders and car drivers. When I rarely walk around to the bus stops during evening, I feel very uneasy	No but I believe it is hard to access the bus if you have most disabilities	Yes i believe so. I can imagine if you're visibly queer, you might get slurs thrown at you easily.	n/a	I bike mostly due to the bus schedules in my area being unreliable. But if I'm coming home late, I feel better biking than walking	No	Increased surveillance would be helpful	i don't feel like the bus itself is unsafe but the lack of light by the bus stops makes it feel unsafe. Also, the bus often takes longer than walking in Groningen with some journeys including 8-14 minutes of walking. It's fine during the day but I'd rather not deal with it at

																night.
S32	08/04/2024 22:24:14	Female	18-24	Brown (Arab)	n/a	Rarely	Not sure	Not sure	I was screamed at twice (different times)	n/a	n/a	n/a	I go w bus only when I really have to (avoidance)	No	n/a	n/a
S33	09/04/2024 00:33:01	Male	25-34	White	Mentally unwell	A few times a month	Not sure	No	Drunk, loud people	n/a	n/a	n/a	Sitting near exit	Yes	Free public transport	I think Groningen does incredibly well and think that travel by bus is one of the safest ways to travel.
S34	09/04/2024 13:31:08	Female	25-34	Coloured / Mixed (South African)	n/a	A few times a month	Yes	Yes	Yes, there have been a few instances with guys not taking no for an answer, they've either ignored my no and still changed seats to talk to me despite me not engaging. I have also experiences young Dutch girls making rude comments about my curls (while they spoke Dutch, I understand the language and therefore understood what was being said)	n/a	Yes, as a woman I am hyper aware of my safety while in public and especially when taking public transport, this is just based on my own experiences of public spaces from South Africa and not being able to push the thought out of my mind even while being in another country	No	well-lit bus stops but also more streetlights around the bus stops, travelling with friends	No	n/a	The public transport in Groningen is general very safe and reliable but I have notices as the residence or Dutch natives get more and more fed up with internationals and expats, there is a growing sense of hostility present in public spaces

12. Appendix C – Codes Extracted from Transcripts

Each section of Appendix C shows quotations as extracted from transcribed interview and survey data according to the codes shown in Figure 5 (Coding Tree).

Additionally, it should be noted that the ID number of each quotation follows the chronological order in which the interview and survey responses are listed in Appendix B. For example, “ID 2:22” indicates a quotation extracted from the second interview (W2, document 2), while it was the 22nd quote extracted from that transcript overall. Quotations with an ID number from 1 to 6 are from interviews. All respondents of the survey fall under ID number 7.

Figure 9 shows the coding overview as seen on Atlas.ti, illustrating the prevalence of each code, as well as the three code groups as shown in the coding tree in Figure 5.

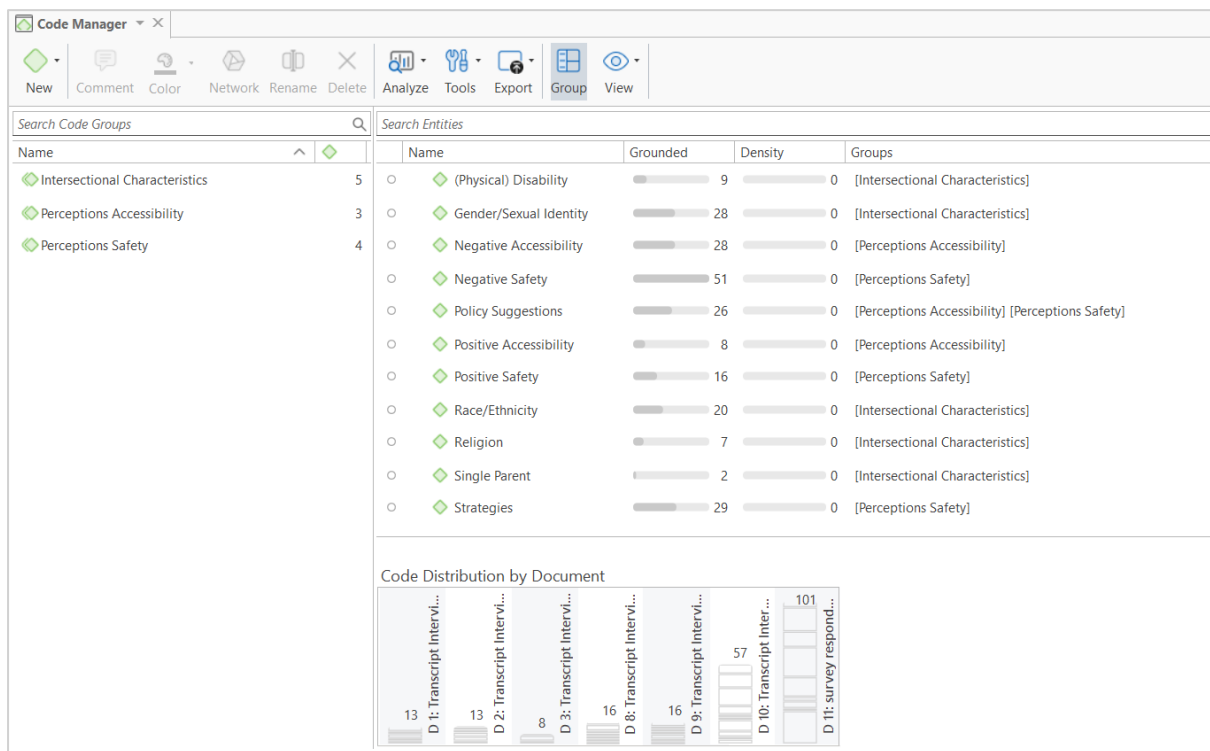


Figure 9: Coding Overview as seen on Atlas.ti (Author, 2024)

12.1. (Physical) Disabilities

ID	Quotation Content
2:22	I think maybe with extra cameras, or maybe the drivers, they need to pay more attention, because indeed sometimes the driver is just like – okay, I just drive the bus, sometimes they don't pay attention to what's going on, or like they go and driver very fast, so also sometimes they don't pay attention to someone with a stroller, or wheelchair because of that – these things, maybe. So drivers should be a little bit more aware.

- 4:4 I don't think I have. I do think that I did see some bullying in the bus once, but that was a girl with, a mental disability, I don't know for sure, but it definitely felt like they were bullying her from a distance... I don't think she noticed but I saw it, it was a feeling I had.
- 6:7 it depends on the characteristics that you have as a woman with what kind of things you are confronted.
- 7:9 Yes, buses are often full, often unable to sit, I don't look disabled so it is often hard to access seating
- 7:19 Placement of stops is definitely a big factor, I often cannot walk much and I struggle to find buses that get me where I need to be. A lot of bus routes are often redundant based on your residential location and it makes living outside the city centre very hard. On a day with pain and flare ups, not being able to find a bus, or it not showing up or being delayed without notice means that I am stuck and confined to my home.
- 7:22 South african (hence an immigrant and my dutch isn't good) , autistic (hence easily overwhelmed on public transport and might not realise a situation is dangerous until it's too late)
- 7:24 Yes, when coming back with lots of groceries or with a large item I bought or transporting my cat to the vet in a container. The buses especially around university are very full and they don't increase the number of buses around peak times often resulting in me struggling to run my errands as the bus is too full and I can't get on with my stuff. I have also seen many wheelchair users just get a friend to help their wheelchair instead of waiting for the ramp to lower for them as it takes very long. So the wheelchair accessibility seems barely accessible in my opinion, especially if it were peak time
- 7:34 yes - when on crutches due to an ankle injury. When it's very busy, there's not always space to sit down even when not able to stand on both feet.
- 7:80 but I believe it is hard to access the bus if you have most disabilities

12.2. Gender / Sexual Identity

- | ID | Quotation Content |
|-----------|--|
| 1:23 | Yes, yes, women need to feel safer. At this moment, things happen, and you never know what bad things could happen |
| 2:14 | I'm from Greece. We live here in Groningen for almost two years. I am a mother of two - six months and three years old. And yea, my husband works in Drachten, and that is why we live here. |
| 4:11 | I guess as a woman for me, you are always more careful, even with the position in the bus where you sit. I guess you want to be noticed by a bus driver, or someone in the bus, but yea, I think that's the feeling. |

- 5:6 I must always be aware of criminals, aware of pickpockets, or, as a woman with a hijab, sometimes Muslim women are threatened and judged.
- 6:2 I speak with a lot of these women in 'Jasmijn', they are speaking about how people actually have remarks about their religion, about their skin colour, bus drivers that do not stop, they just pass them by for example.
- 6:5 there was one that said that there was a guy also already on the bus stop, already in her face, coming really close to her and she assumed that she was going to be safe inside the bus, but also there he was very intimidating, nothing really happened in the sense that he touched her or anything, but she felt intimidated and she felt the need to file a complaint. So, these things we hear
- 6:6 we hear very often about girls that are scared when they go home in the night, even with the bus, or even going from the bus stop to their house.
- 6:7 it depends on the characteristics that you have as a woman with what kind of things you are confronted.
- 6:8 a woman of colour, that told us that she was bullied a lot, also where she lives, but then she took the bus, and the bus driver wouldn't open the door for her, so she could get out. She felt very, very threatened, and intimidated, people were laughing at her, young people in the bus. So, it was almost like they all worked together even, with the bus driver, because he wasn't opening the door. And he was also telling her very specifically, to go back to her country, so yea, that's not okay.
- 6:9 I have spoken to a lot of groups of young women, but also men, that I have not had one group where women did not take certain precautions to protect themselves while going home, especially in the evening of course. So, it's a real thing.
- 6:22 when you sit somewhere and there's a lot of space, but someone – a man – comes and sits right next to you, it just feels some type of way, even though nothing really happens in that moment, but the fact that there were so many other seats available, just brings up some type of feeling. Stuff like that.
- 7:1 Yes, my identity as a woman
- 7:23 es, specifically by drunk male dutch teens / young adult. Sexual or provocative remarks were made or they were very loud and hostile near me and made me worried they would suddenly target me
- 7:25 Yes, as a woman I feel a lot more unsafe around drunk young men on the bus. I feel safer sitting next to female presenting or nonbinary individuals in the bus.
- 7:35 i feel like it has mostly to do with gender and how safe one feels using the bus/public space at night as a woman
- 7:38 Being read female I do am careful when waiting at bus stops alone at night, but other than that not much
- 7:41 might also make sense to take trans women's opinion on the topic
- 7:42 I have felt unsafe but mostly due to unwanted looks or strange behaviour of other people (mostly men) on the bus

- 7:43 Yes, gender. Using the bus at night can be daunting as a female.
7:47 as a woman I avoid taking the bus at night, especially when it's dark outside. When something unsafe would happen in night transport, I feel like no one would be there to help you so taking the bicycle feels safer for me as you can cycle away when someone tries to come at you.
- 7:51 Yes. I feel like as a woman I am more aware while sitting in the bus. I have also received stares that made be quite uncomfortable while sitting in the bus - especially with more summery clothing - so I generally try to close my jacket or cover up more while being in the bus.
- 7:60 take trans women's opinion on the topic (don't know if you are, it's just not explicitly mentioned) because they are often more targeted than cis women
- 7:66 expressing my feminity and wearing for example out-going clothes make me more aware of my surroundings and safety.
- 7:68 If it's late at night and you are one of few women on the bus amongst a majority of men, it can be uncomfortable and can make me anxious.
- 7:73 yep, i've seen an intoxicated man follow a few girls onto a bus and be kicked off
- 7:78 Yes, I feel like old drunk men tend to target young women more.
- 7:81 Yes i believe so. I can imagine if you're visibly queer, you might get slurs thrown at you easily.
- 7:89 Yes, as a woman I am hyper aware of my safety while in public and especially when taking public transport, this is just based on my own experiences of public spaces from South Africa and not being able to push the thought out of my mind even while being in another country

12.3. Negative Safety

- | ID | Quotation Content |
|-----------|---|
| 1:16 | But I hear some places in Groningen, like Beijum outside the city, I heard that a bus driver had a robbery. Somebody robbed money from the bus driver, a few years ago. That's why we have to pay now with card, not with cash, for the safety of the bus. |
| 1:17 | Yeah, I don't feel safe at night. I feel safe at daytime, and maybe when it's not yet so late in the evening, maybe at eight or nine o'clock then I still feel safe. But after ten o'clock in the night, I feel a little bit afraid and scared that maybe something bad will happen. You never know what might happen so late at night. |
| 1:18 | Maybe they might rob you, and take your bag, cell phone or belongings, or something like that. |
| 1:20 | Researcher: Okay. And then if you had to choose places around Groningen, like you said at night, where you feel unsafe, is it all of the bus stops at night that you find scary? Or maybe only some? ^[P] _[SEP] Interviewee: Only in the city center. |

- 1:21 I prefer to go with somebody, it's much more safer but if I go alone, then I don't feel safe, at late at night especially like eleven or twelve o'clock in the evening.
- 1:23 Yes, yes, women need to feel safer. At this moment, things happen, and you never know what bad things could happen
- 2:21 But also, my network in Groningen is not very big, because also I just live here almost two years, but I never heard any experience. Like things, like to steal something, not mainly the bus, but in the city centre in general – yes that happened to me. Recently twice actually, my bag and my bike, but I was not threatened – I was just tired and forgot something, and of course it was gone. But I never experienced a threat, like somebody came to me, and I really need to protect myself or my kids.
- 3:15 Yea, yea. The place I know is always safer for me than the other place. Because I know the neighbourhood, I know the places, I use them, I feel safer waiting.
- 4:3 For me it depends on the hour I guess, if you go during the day, there was a lot of people, but if you talk about safety in the evening, for me it was – for me I don't know, I guess as a woman for me, you are always more careful, even with the position in the bus where you sit. I guess you want to be noticed by a bus driver, or someone in the bus, but yea, I think that's the feeling.
- 4:4 I don't think I have. I do think that I did see some bullying in the bus once, but that was a girl with, a mental disability, I don't know for sure, but it definitely felt like they were bullying her from a distance... I don't think she noticed but I saw it, it was a feeling I had.
- 4:8 I think because I had one experience, not in the Netherlands, but in a different country, it made me feel aware of where I'm sitting, and I also keep my phone close to my hand. So when something happens I can just, I don't know what the person would do when I'm on the bus, but it makes me feel not alone, at night also, so yeah that's what I'm doing.
- 4:9 I think, well maybe because I haven't seen it that much so maybe I don't know exactly what there should be happening, but I do think since corona there is this glass, that the bus driver is less approachable, I think. That makes me feel that he is sitting there doing his job and we are just sitting, and of course you say thank you when you get off the bus, ahm, yea it makes me feel like maybe you are still a little bit alone maybe.
- 5:3 I think it is safer at daytime.
- 5:5 I agree with more cameras in the bus. Yes, that would be much better. When I am home, I do not go out at night, I do not feel so safe.
- 5:6 I must always be aware of criminals, aware of pickpockets, or, as a woman with a hijab, sometimes Muslim women are threatened and judged.

- 5:7 but I am afraid for the future. In this time, extreme right-wing and radical thinking is on the rise. It panics me, and it is more and more and more. People should accept, tolerate, and respect everyone, but at this moment that is not the case.
- 5:8 I do not immediately trust someone.
- 6:1 a Muslim woman that was wearing a hijab, and she got certain remarks from the bus driver, a female bus driver, about Muslims in general, but also about the hijab, and she felt very insulted, she was crying and calling her boyfriend, he filed the complaint with us
- 6:2 I speak with a lot of these women in 'Jasmijn', they are speaking about how people actually have remarks about their religion, about their skin colour, bus drivers that do not stop, they just pass them by for example.
- 6:3 two years ago, a bus driver that didn't stop for a Muslim younger girl, and also stuck up his middle finger, so, the father contacted us, as well as the bus company
- 6:4 There was one who said that the bus driver hung up a piece of paper in the bus, that said that you cannot speak any other languages other than Dutch in the bus.
- 6:5 there was one that said that there was a guy also already on the bus stop, already in her face, coming really close to her and she assumed that she was going to be safe inside the bus, but also there he was very intimidating, nothing really happened in the sense that he touched her or anything, but she felt intimidated and she felt the need to file a complaint. So, these things we hear
- 6:6 we hear very often about girls that are scared when they go home in the night, even with the bus, or even going from the bus stop to their house.
- 6:8 a woman of colour, that told us that she was bullied a lot, also where she lives, but then she took the bus, and the bus driver wouldn't open the door for her, so she could get out. She felt very, very threatened, and intimidated, people were laughing at her, young people in the bus. So, it was almost like they all worked together even, with the bus driver, because he wasn't opening the door. And he was also telling her very specifically, to go back to her country, so yea, that's not okay.
- 6:10 The complaints that we formally get are not too many about public transport, the talk that I have, because of the education that I do, that's where I hear a lot about it.

- 6:20 We notice that people have a difficulty with, they feel like they cannot 'say whatever they want' anymore, because they are now being held responsible for what they say, which I think is very positive. But we do hear that a lot, and I think the fact that the PVV, Geert Wilders, won basically, does not help. I think that it gives people some kind of like free ticket to just speak on these subjects in a way that he does, because he does it and its accepted, he's even a politician, so 'why not'. So, I think that doesn't help the case for sure, we also see that more than half of our complaints are about racism, so background, where you come from, languages you speak, colour of your skin, and this is consistent throughout the years.
- 6:21 I do have the privilege of my colour, and the fact that I do not wear a headscarf or anything like that, so in that way, I have never dealt with certain things. I think, because of that I have dealt with it a lot less, but its not that I always felt safe
- 6:22 when you sit somewhere and there's a lot of space, but someone – a man – comes and sits right next to you, it just feels some type of way, even though nothing really happens in that moment, but the fact that there were so many other seats available, just brings up some type of feeling. Stuff like that.
- 6:23 I think its also certain buses, for example a bus that goes to the South, so Wijert, Corpus, I felt different than the bus that goes to Beijum, maybe because there are just certain types of people on the bus, there are a lot of different people living in Beijum than there are in Zuid, so maybe it has something to do with that. But I do have to say that this is when I was younger, because now I just don't really go on the bus at those times anymore. I also never had any problems when I was travelling from Groningen to another city for example, or village, so the Q-Liner, I never experienced anything bad in a Q-Liner, I don't know if that says anything.
- 6:26 For example, the one at the Pop Dijkemaweg, close to the one before Kardinge, so when you go from here before the bridge, towards Kardinge, its one bus stop before. Its just not a lot of people, I think I would probably never get out there, after a certain time, I would feel like a lot of things can happen there.
- 7:2 Yes, unwanted looks
- 7:10 Slightly, being alone in the dark with only a few men on the bus is never fully comfortable, but other than that not really
- 7:12 When dressed less casual (in the sense that when wearing pieces of clothing or accessories that were more luxurious or chic), I would feel uncomfortable and like people were staring at me. Like this was judged or unaccepted
- 7:13 I haven't experienced a lack of safety in Groningen, compared to my home country where females safety on public transportation is a big issue.
- 7:18 I have very narrowly avoided some creepy men when it is dark outside.

- 7:23 es, specifically by drunk male dutch teens / young adult. Sexual or provocative remarks were made or they were very loud and hostile near me and made me worried they would suddenly target me
- 7:28 There was a drunk men screaming and cursing in the bus. And lots of people where uncomfortable
- 7:42 I have felt unsafe but mostly due to unwanted looks or strange behaviour of other people (mostly men) on the bus
- 7:47 as a woman I avoid taking the bus at night, especially when it's dark outside. When something unsafe would happen in night transport, I feel like no one would be there to help you so taking the bicycle feels safer for me as you can cycle away when someone tries to come at you.
- 7:51 Yes. I feel like as a woman I am more aware while sitting in the bus. I have also received stares that made be quite uncomfortable while sitting in the bus - especially with more summery clothing - so I generally try to close my jacket or cover up more while being in the bus.
- 7:66 expressing my feminity and wearing for example out-going clothes make me more aware of my surroundings and safety.
- 7:67 Unwanted looks and uncomfortable conversations with drunk men. Once bus driver was jokingly pretending to not let me out unless I paid 5€ to him. As he thought of it a light joke, it didn't feel like one for me and I was humiliated.
- 7:68 If it's late at night and you are one of few women on the bus amongst a majority of men, it can be uncomfortable and can make me anxious.
- 7:73 yep, i've seen an intoxicated man follow a few girls onto a bus and be kicked off
- 7:75 harassment shouting and pointing and not giving up on trying to start conversations from drunk men (not students like drunk adult men) by the zuiderdiep bus stops at literally all times of the day
- 7:76 I've had a few bad experiences with old druk men that would not stop talking to me at night. Yet, buschauffeurs helped me in a couple of those experiences.
- 7:79 I have realized that the street lights in Groningen are only bright enough for bike riders and car drivers. When I rarely walk around to the bus stops during evening, I feel very uneasy
- 7:83 i don't feel like the bus itself is unsafe but the lack of light by the bus stops makes it feel unsafe. Also, the bus often takes longer than walking in Groningen with some journeys including 8-14 minutes of walking. It's fine during the day but I'd rather not deal with it at night.
- 7:85 I was screamed at twice (different times)
- 7:88 Yes, there have been a few instances with guys not taking no for an answer, they've either ignored my no and still changed seats to talk to me despite me not engaging. I have also experiences young Dutch girls making rude comments about my curls (while they spoke Dutch, I understand the language and therefore understood what was being said)

7:89 Yes, as a woman I am hyper aware of my safety while in public and especially when taking public transport, this is just based on my own experiences of public spaces from South Africa and not being able to push the thought out of my mind even while being in another country

12.4. Negative Accessibility

ID	Quotation Content
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2:16	but I felt like when the bus is full, especially with students, they do not really pay attention. They were not even moving out of the area that you put your stroller, you know, for safety, and they were not even standing to have a seat, as I also had the baby here (she gestured to her youngest child who she had in a wrap baby carrier around herself). It was like, pros and cons always, but considering the timing, and that you can always check on your phone
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2:22	I think maybe with extra cameras, or maybe the drivers, they need to pay more attention, because indeed sometimes the driver is just like – okay, I just drive the bus, sometimes they don't pay attention to what's going on, or like they go and driver very fast, so also sometimes they don't pay attention to someone with a stroller, or wheelchair because of that – these things, maybe. So drivers should be a little bit more aware.
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4:4	I don't think I have. I do think that I did see some bullying in the bus once, but that was a girl with, a mental disability, I don't know for sure, but it definitely felt like they were bullying her from a distance... I don't think she noticed but I saw it, it was a feeling I had.
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4:5	I felt a bit awkward on my own, but I think it's just a feeling that I had, with people around me there was a lot who wanted to help me get the stroller on or off the bus – so I think it was just my own feeling.
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4:6	Well, I once saw a girl who wanted to take off the stroller, but the bus was very far from the platform and it was a difficult, because if you are on your own and nobody helps you, its also dangerous for the child who can fall into the gap of course.
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4:9	I think, well maybe because I haven't seen it that much so maybe I don't know exactly what there should be happening, but I do think since corona there is this glass, that the bus driver is less approachable, I think. That makes me feel that he is sitting there doing his job and we are just sitting, and of course you say thank you when you get off the bus, ahm, yea it makes me feel like maybe you are still a little bit alone maybe.
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5:7	but I am afraid for the future. In this time, extreme right-wing and radical thinking is on the rise. It panics me, and it is more and more and more. People should accept, tolerate, and respect everyone, but at this moment that is not the case.
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- 6:1 a Muslim woman that was wearing a hijab, and she got certain remarks from the bus driver, a female bus driver, about Muslims in general, but also about the hijab, and she felt very insulted, she was crying and calling her boyfriend, he filed the complaint with us
- 6:2 I speak with a lot of these women in 'Jasmijn', they are speaking about how people actually have remarks about their religion, about their skin colour, bus drivers that do not stop, they just pass them by for example.
- 6:3 two years ago, a bus driver that didn't stop for a Muslim younger girl, and also stuck up his middle finger, so, the father contacted us, as well as the bus company
- 6:4 There was one who said that the bus driver hung up a piece of paper in the bus, that said that you cannot speak any other languages other than Dutch in the bus.
- 6:5 there was one that said that there was a guy also already on the bus stop, already in her face, coming really close to her and she assumed that she was going to be safe inside the bus, but also there he was very intimidating, nothing really happened in the sense that he touched her or anything, but she felt intimidated and she felt the need to file a complaint. So, these things we hear
- 6:6 we hear very often about girls that are scared when they go home in the night, even with the bus, or even going from the bus stop to their house.
- 6:8 a woman of colour, that told us that she was bullied a lot, also where she lives, but then she took the bus, and the bus driver wouldn't open the door for her, so she could get out. She felt very, very threatened, and intimidated, people were laughing at her, young people in the bus. So, it was almost like they all worked together even, with the bus driver, because he wasn't opening the door. And he was also telling her very specifically, to go back to her country, so yea, that's not okay.
- 6:10 The complaints that we formally get are not too many about public transport, the talk that I have, because of the education that I do, that's where I hear a lot about it.
- 6:20 We notice that people have a difficulty with, they feel like they cannot 'say whatever they want' anymore, because they are now being held responsible for what they say, which I think is very positive. But we do hear that a lot, and I think the fact that the PVV, Geert Wilders, won basically, does not help. I think that it gives people some kind of like free ticket to just speak on these subjects in a way that he does, because he does it and its accepted, he's even a politician, so 'why not'. So, I think that doesn't help the case for sure, we also see that more than half of our complaints are about racism, so background, where you come from, languages you speak, colour of your skin, and this is consistent throughout the years.

- 6:23 I think its also certain buses, for example a bus that goes to the South, so Wijert, Corpus, I felt different than the bus that goes to Beijum, maybe because there are just certain types of people on the bus, there are a lot of different people living in Beijum than there are in Zuid, so maybe it has something to do with that. But I do have to say that this is when I was younger, because now I just don't really go on the bus at those times anymore. I also never had any problems when I was travelling from Groningen to another city for example, or village, so the Q-Liner, I never experienced anything bad in a Q-Liner, I don't know if that says anything.
- 7:4 I've seen occasions in which the stuff that's supposed to help disabled people enter and exit the bus doesn't work, and people had to be carried out.
- 7:6 don't use a wheelchair but with traveling with heavy luggage it has been quite difficult so I can only imagine how difficult it is for people with a wheelchair or other walking aids. I've also seen parents struggle with strollers due to no ramps being available and the smaller curvy entrance into the bus
- 7:9 Yes, buses are often full, iften unable to sit, I don't look disabled so it is often hard to access seating
- 7:19 Placement of stops is definitely a big factor, I often cannot walk much and I struggle to find buses that get me where I need to be. A lot of bus routes are often redundant based on your residential location and it makes living outside the city centre very hard. On a day with pain and flare ups, not being able to find a bus, or it not showing up or being delayed without notice means that I am stuck and confined to my home.
- 7:24 Yes, when coming back with lots of groceries or with a large item I bought or transporting my cat to the vet in a container. The buses especially around university are very full and they dont increase the number of buses around peak times often resulting in me struggling to run my errands as the bus is too full and I cant get on with my stuff. i have also seen many wheelchair users just get a friend to help their wheelchair in instead of waiting for the ramp to lower for them as it takes very long. So the wheelchair accessibility seems barely accessible in my opinion, especially if it were peak time
- 7:29 There isn't a bus stop close to my house. I have to walk 10 minutes out of the way sometimes. So it's easier to cycle
- 7:33 The bus driver closed the door way to early, before I could go of and drove a way. So I was still in the bus and had already checkt out... had to walk a long way to get home.
- 7:37 Not in the bus itself, but at one of the stops where I was sitting and someone came up to me and didn't leave me alone even after asking repeatedly
- 7:74 not in my own personal mobility but when i was using the bus to move lots of my stuff when moving houses i realised how little ramps and stuff there are

7:77 When my knee was in a cast, I found it annoying that the busses to zernike are often full, because then I had to stand without a railing to hold on to comfortably. In addition, because the busstop at the Grote Markt is gone it is hard to reach the city center when you are unable to bike.

7:80 but I believe it is hard to access the bus if you have most disabilities

12.5. Policy Suggestions

ID	Quotation Content
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1:22	Yes, maybe that is much better, if there is a camera right in the bus
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2:22	I think maybe with extra cameras, or maybe the drivers, they need to pay more attention, because indeed sometimes the driver is just like – okay, I just drive the bus, sometimes they don't pay attention to what's going on, or like they go and driver very fast, so also sometimes they don't pay attention to someone with a stroller, or wheelchair because of that – these things, maybe. So drivers should be a little bit more aware.
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3:13	More lighting, extra lighting on the bus stops and streets, more cameras for security are useful, for children, women, and also for men. Maybe, emergency telephone number are also good.
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4:9	I think, well maybe because I haven't seen it that much so maybe I don't know exactly what there should be happening, but I do think since corona there is this glass, that the bus driver is less approachable, I think. That makes me feel that he is sitting there doing his job and we are just sitting, and of course you say thank you when you get off the bus, ahm, yea it makes me feel like maybe you are still a little bit alone maybe.
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4:10	And maybe on the bus stops there should be – when you're alone in the dark at the bus stop it feels very uneasy of course, maybe surveillance, I don't know.
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5:5	I agree with more cameras in the bus. Yes, that would be much better. When I am home, I do not go out at night, I do not feel so safe.
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6:12	They do not really report it back to us, but for example, if they do get a lot of reports about, let's say, the central station, a lot of women have been harassed there for example, they might choose up more cameras or to have police drive by more often, go check the situation you know, being more available there. So, this is what is possible, but we don't get a report back on what they exactly do with the numbers, no.
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- 6:13 I think there should be more training, in any case I am always for more education and awareness. I think that bus drivers should have some kind of protocol on what is acceptable on the bus and what is not. Maybe there could also be some kind of a signal or a button to push. To be more aware of when women in particular do not feel safe anymore, so that they can quite literally, kick someone out of the bus if that's necessary. So, I think its also starts with that, bus drivers need to be aware of it. Also, since us drivers are sometimes the ones doing it, they should also get some training in this, first training to be more open towards different cultures and backgrounds, but also that they have a clear protocol onto what will happen if you do something like that.
- 6:14 I think the bus company can definitely do something about this, they can take responsibility for this, because they are responsible in the end. I don't think necessarily it would hurt to hang more cameras and stuff like that, but that doesn't really prevent, maybe it will prevent some things from happening, but I think the awareness is more important.
- 6:15 If the bus company notices that there are a couple of complaints about the same subject, about the same bus driver, act on it. Like set an example.
- 6:16 Yes, because in our work, we see many, many times that it works so much better if you have managers that are an example, who take the lead on things, who are showing what is the norm within a company, what do we accept, and what we do not accept. So that helps a lot at least, that's what research shows.
- 6:18 I think maybe it could also help if bus companies could be more diverse, if there are more different people working there. Because it is often white people, a lot of men. We had one complainer that said – a male with an Arab background – that said that he was bullied a lot, treated a certain way by colleagues so, based on the background, so I think it probably would help if they were more diverse, so that they could relate to the diverse society that we live in, but if that doesn't happen.
- 7:17 The increased surveillance might be a good option for ensure safety.
- 7:53 I know that in trains, they advertise a phone number you can call if something's wrong. They could do something similar in buses.
- 7:54 Awareness and surveillance
- 7:56 increased surveillance and higher legal measures, as well as bringing awareness to bus staff
- 7:57 I know there is some surveillance and there is a place to complain if you had a bad experience. I also know that there are often female drivers on the buses I take. This helps me feel safer. I also appreciate the buses being well-lit (even if the lights can give me a headache). I think training bus staff to be aware of hand signs women may use if they feel unsafe or training them on how to handle a situation if a minority/female/lgbtq individual experiences harassment on the bus that would be nice.
- 7:58 maybe having a code with the staff if you feel uncomfortable

- 7:59 All of the examples but what I've recently heard of is a telephone hotline you can call at night that stays on the phone with you until you're home, so that you can feel a little more safe. You can also send them your location so that they know where you are in case something happens.
- 7:62 Yeah, awareness training and more street lights in dark areas. Furthermore bus staff needs to be protected more and should have the right to give people who appear drunk/stoned a breathalyzer test.
- 7:63 public awareness campaign might help
- 7:64 Increased surveillance
- 7:70 Increased surveillance
- 7:71 better lighting at bus stops
- 7:82 Increased surveillance would be helpful
- 7:87 Free public transport

12.6. Positive Accessibility

ID Quotation Content

- 2:15 Because in this neighbourhood, and for my house, it was really convenient by bus and I was like, wow. So just walking two minutes out of my house, and I was taking the bus to the city center, so I really enjoyed it, mainly it was always on time. And because of the situation, most of the time I had the stroller and a carrier, people were very – like the driver also was – very concerned, you know, waiting for m
- 2:17 because I'm coming from Greece, this is not a very nice option – to move or commute by bus, especially with kids and a stroller, I think it's impossible. So for me, this is very luxury here.
- 2:18 Amm... No, I think most of the time, I never really had many problems to be honest. In my area where I commute from Selwerd to Groningen city centre – no.
- 3:14 So far, we always have had seats for both me and my children. If I ever don't find a seat, that is always okay too.
- 4:7 but normally I see them getting help or just doing it on their own, strong womenahaha.
- 5:4 Researcher: Do you always find it easy to use the bus, is it accessible? For example, is it always easy to get on and off, do people help?^[SEP]Interviewee: All has been good!
- 6:11 And that is a general problem with these things, because I don't know if people just don't have a lot of faith in what will be done with it, or they just don't know we exist in some cases. Or I don't know what it is, but it just doesn't go reported. I am one hundred percent sure that there is much, much more that we do not hear, because in any group that I go to, and where I speak to women, and I hear things, for example about travelling, so yea, we don't hear even ten percent, I think.

6:17 If I just look at the last, well let's say two years, because this year doesn't really count yet, ahm, in those two years I see a decrease, as in 2022 there were five, and then last year there were three, and then this year we are at one still. So, I'm not sure what this will say. Our registrations don't go that far back, I think there's maybe 2021, but I'm not sure. I think that there will not be a big increase, but not because it doesn't happen. It really goes back to unreported cases, and we see that with many, many subjects, that we know happen much more. I can imagine that in Amsterdam it will be maybe different, but people just don't report. SO, based on the conversations that I'm having, I think that's its not decreasing.

12.7. Positive Safety

ID	Quotation Content
1:15	in the Philippines we have a lot of traffic rules with public transportation, but there they do not follow the rules, they go their own speed, and that's why I think it is more dangerous than here.
1:19	Has anyone every said or done anything on the bus that made you feel that you were being discriminated against?Interviewee: No, luckily not. Until now not.
1:22	Yes, maybe that is much better, if there is a camera right in the bus
2:19	I felt 100% safe. I never had any problems... But I commute also like you know, mornings, in the day, not like 'weird' hours, or like late at night, or not even evenings... so I don't know that part at all.
2:20	So no, I never experienced this unsafety.
2:21	But also, my network in Groningen is not very big, because also I just live here almost two years, but I never heard any experience. Like things, like to steal something, not mainly the bus, but in the city centre in general – yes that happened to me. Recently twice actually, my bag and my bike, but I was not threatened – I was just tired and forgot something, and of course it was gone. But I never experienced a threat, like somebody came to me, and I really need to protect myself or my kids.
3:10	Eh, yes, I find it safe. I don't think that something is difficult or that someone will do something bad, or that its not good. 'Overdag' (asking third party to help phrase), I think all over the day it is not a problem for me. In the evening also its not a problem, its good with me. Frankly, I don't experience the bus at night usually.
3:11	No, I don't really know the problems at night too much.
3:12	No, frankly I don't really hear that much from anyone. Here in the Netherlands, I think that... in my country, that happens a lot, all times of the day. Here not really.
3:15	Yea, yea. The place I know is always safer for me than the other place. Because I know the neighbourhood, I know the places, I use them, I feel safer waiting.
5:2	For the thirty-four years that I am here, everything has been good. All good.

- 6:11 And that is a general problem with these things, because I don't know if people just don't have a lot of faith in what will be done with it, or they just don't know we exist in some cases. Or I don't know what it is, but it just doesn't go reported. I am one hundred percent sure that there is much, much more that we do not hear, because in any group that I go to, and where I speak to women, and I hear things, for example about travelling, so yea, we don't hear even ten percent, I think.
- 6:17 If I just look at the last, well let's say two years, because this year doesn't really count yet, ahm, in those two years I see a decrease, as in 2022 there were five, and then last year there were three, and then this year we are at one still. So, I'm not sure what this will say. Our registrations don't go that far back, I think there's maybe 2021, but I'm not sure. I think that there will not be a big increase, but not because it doesn't happen. It really goes back to unreported cases, and we see that with many, many subjects, that we know happen much more. I can imagine that in Amsterdam it will be maybe different, but people just don't report. SO, based on the conversations that I'm having, I think that's its not decreasing.
- 7:13 I haven't experienced a lack of safety in Groningen, compared to my home country where females safety on public transportation is a big issue.
- 7:83 i don't feel like the bus itself is unsafe but the lack of light by the bus stops makes it feel unsafe. Also, the bus often takes longer than walking in Groningen with some journeys including 8-14 minutes of walking. It's fine during the day but I'd rather not deal with it at night.
- 7:91 The public transport in Groningen is general very safe and reliable but I have notices as the residence or Dutch natives get more and more fed up with internationals and expats, there is a growing sense of hostility present in public spaces

12.8. Race/Ethnicity

- | ID | Quotation Content |
|------|---|
| 1:15 | in the Philippines we have a lot of traffic rules with public transportation, but there they do not follow the rules, they go their own speed, and that's why I think it is more dangerous than here. |
| 2:14 | I'm from Greece. We live here in Groningen for almost two years. I am a mother of two - six months and three years old. And yea, my husband works in Drachten, and that is why we live here. |
| 3:9 | I'm from Syria, I am a mother of three children. We came together from Syria, with my 'man', my husband, and we live in Groningen since 1 year ago – 1 and a half years actually. I am learning Dutch, and my children go to school here. |
| 4:2 | actually I lived in Hoogeveen, but I was born in Colombia, but I have Dutch parents, so I feel very Dutch – with a Latin vibe. |
| 5:1 | I'm a Kurdish woman from Kurdistan, I live here in the Netherlands for thirty-four years. |

- 5:6 I must always be aware of criminals, aware of pickpockets, or, as a woman with a hijab, sometimes Muslim women are threatened and judged.
- 5:7 but I am afraid for the future. In this time, extreme right-wing and radical thinking is on the rise. It panics me, and it is more and more and more. People should accept, tolerate, and respect everyone, but at this moment that is not the case.
- 6:1 a Muslim woman that was wearing a hijab, and she got certain remarks from the bus driver, a female bus driver, about Muslims in general, but also about the hijab, and she felt very insulted, she was crying and calling her boyfriend, he filed the complaint with us
- 6:2 I speak with a lot of these women in 'Jasmijn', they are speaking about how people actually have remarks about their religion, about their skin colour, bus drivers that do not stop, they just pass them by for example.
- 6:3 two years ago, a bus driver that didn't stop for a Muslim younger girl, and also stuck up his middle finger, so, the father contacted us, as well as the bus company
- 6:4 There was one who said that the bus driver hung up a piece of paper in the bus, that said that you cannot speak any other languages other than Dutch in the bus.
- 6:7 it depends on the characteristics that you have as a woman with what kind of things you are confronted.
- 6:8 a woman of colour, that told us that she was bullied a lot, also where she lives, but then she took the bus, and the bus driver wouldn't open the door for her, so she could get out. She felt very, very threatened, and intimidated, people were laughing at her, young people in the bus. So, it was almost like they all worked together even, with the bus driver, because he wasn't opening the door. And he was also telling her very specifically, to go back to her country, so yea, that's not okay.
- 6:19 We had one complainer that said – a male with an Arab background – that said that he was bullied a lot, treated a certain way by colleagues so, based on the background, so I think it probably would help if they were more diverse
- 6:20 We notice that people have a difficulty with, they feel like they cannot 'say whatever they want' anymore, because they are now being held responsible for what they say, which I think is very positive. But we do hear that a lot, and I think the fact that the PVV, Geert Wilders, won basically, does not help. I think that it gives people some kind of like free ticket to just speak on these subjects in a way that he does, because he does it and its accepted, he's even a politician, so 'why not'. So, I think that doesn't help the case for sure, we also see that more than half of our complaints are about racism, so background, where you come from, languages you speak, colour of your skin, and this is consistent throughout the years.
- 7:3 Yes- islamophobia and xenophobia
- 7:20 I am a brown woman minority in Groningen so it definitely does affect it too. I try my best to dress conservatively and not wear South-Asian clothes or jewellery visibly so that no one bothers me.

- 7:22 South african (hence an immigrant and my dutch isnt good) , autistic (hence easily overwhelmed on public transport and might not realise a situation is dangerous until its too late)
- 7:88 Yes, there have been a few instances with guys not taking no for an answer, they've either ignored my no and still changed seats to talk to me despite me not engaging. I have also experiences young Dutch girls making rude comments about my curls (while they spoke Dutch, I understand the language and therefore understood what was being said)
- 7:91 The public transport in Groningen is general very safe and reliable but I have notices as the residence or Duthc natives get more and more fed up with internationals and expats, there is a growing sense of hostility present in public spaces

12.9. Religious Expression

- | ID | Quotation Content |
|-----------|---|
| 5:6 | I must always be aware of criminals, aware of pickpockets, or, as a woman with a hijab, sometimes Muslim women are threatened and judged. |
| 5:7 | but I am afraid for the future. In this time, extreme right-wing and radical thinking is on the rise. It panics me, and it is more and more and more. People should accept, tolerate, and respect everyone, but at this moment that is not the case. |
| 6:1 | a Muslim woman that was wearing a hijab, and she got certain remarks from the bus driver, a female bus driver, about Muslims in general, but also about the hijab, and she felt very insulted, she was crying and calling her boyfriend, he filed the complaint with us |
| 6:2 | I speak with a lot of these women in 'Jasmijn', they are speaking about how people actually have remarks about their religion, about their skin colour, bus drivers that do not stop, they just pass them by for example. |
| 6:3 | two years ago, a bus driver that didn't stop for a Muslim younger girl, and also stuck up his middle finger, so, the father contacted us, as well as the bus company |
| 6:7 | it depends on the characteristics that you have as a woman with what kind of things you are confronted. |
| 7:3 | Yes- islamophobia and xenophobia |

12.10. Single Parent

- | ID | Quotation Content |
|-----------|---|
| 4:1 | I'm a single mum and I studied art in holistic medicines and massages, now I am staying at home, but I'm trying to get to work, to make more drawings again, get a new portfolio. |
| 6:7 | it depends on the characteristics that you have as a woman with what kind of things you are confronted. |

12.11. Strategies

ID	Quotation Content
1:21	I prefer to go with somebody, it's much more safer but if I go alone, then I don't feel safe, at late at night especially like eleven or twelve o'clock in the evening.
4:8	I think because I had one experience, not in the Netherlands, but in a different country, it made me feel aware of where I'm sitting, and I also keep my phone close to my hand. So when something happens I can just, I don't know what the person would do when I'm on the bus, but it makes me feel not alone, at night also, so yeah that's what I'm doing.
5:5	I agree with more cameras in the bus. Yes, that would be much better. When I am home, I do not go out at night, I do not feel so safe.
6:9	I have spoken to a lot of groups of young women, but also men, that I have not had one group where women did not take certain precautions to protect themselves while going home, especially in the evening of course. So, it's a real thing.
6:24	still till this day, and not just in the bus. I also used the phone, I held my keys, one time someone gave me this keyring that was like hard, round thing hanging from my keys, and you could really hit someone hard with it.
6:25	I tried to not travel alone, especially also when going for example, with taxis. I would never go alone, because I would go to the city at night you know, the last bus has left, and I would take the taxi, but also only if there was a friend there. Yeah, I do still take a lot of things into account and try to protect myself still, consciously for me.
7:11	I try to go earlier
7:14	avoiding eye contact with male passengers
7:16	Putting my bag next to me so nobody would invade my personal space.
7:17	The increased surveillance might be a good option for ensure safety.
7:21	Sometimes, I stay over at a friend's place over opting to take the bus at night or even considering walking an easier alternative just because the buses are extremely unreliable and infrequent.
7:26	Avoid night travel, prefer well-lit bus stops, sit near the exit/entrance or near the bus driver. I listen to music to calm me down but only in one ear so I can stay aware of my surroundings. I always look at when someone gets on or off.
7:30	well lit stops and make sure someone is waiting for me
7:32	Travelling with a friend.
7:36	i text a friend that im in the bus and when i arrive
7:39	When I don't have to I don't travel by bus at night or when I notice I am alone with the bus driver I try to get out quickly
7:44	Travelling with a friend, trying to avoid day time.
7:46	Go on my phone either text or call someone, not sitting in the end of the bus if it's empty but rather sitting somewhere closer to other people that don't look threatening to me
7:48	Avoiding night-time travel, seating in the middle/front, reading

- 7:51 Yes. I feel like as a woman I am more aware while sitting in the bus. I have also received stares that made be quite uncomfortable while sitting in the bus - especially with more summery clothing - so I generally try to close my jacket or cover up more while being in the bus.
- 7:52 letting my boyfriend/my mom know when I enter and exit the bus (especially at night), covering myself (eg closing a jacket)
- 7:55 Avoiding night time travel
- 7:61 Increased surveillance
- 7:65 Avoiding night time travel, not wearing revealing clothes
- 7:69 Avoiding night time travel
- 7:72 well lit or bus stops on main streets with more of foot traffic, not playing music too loud in my headphones so i can listen out
- 7:84 I go w bus only when I really have to (avoidance)
- 7:86 Sitting near exit
- 7:90 well-lit bus stops but also more streetlights around the bus stops, travelling with friends