

Overlooked Mobility: Domestic workers commuting in Bogotá, Medellín, and Sao Paulo

Valentina Montoya-Robledo¹

1. Introduction

One in every twenty-five female wage workers worldwide is a domestic worker (International Labour Organization 2021). In Latin America, the percentage rises to 20%, accounting for approximately fourteen million people (International Labour Organization 2021). The vast majority are informal workers with limited or no access to social security protections such as proper healthcare, retirement pension, paid leaves and vacations, a legal minimum wage, or unemployment benefits. Data from the Colombian Ministry of Health suggests that more than 80% of domestic workers lack access to social security (Ministerio de Salud 2017). In 2014, 68% of domestic workers were informal in Brazil (International Labour Organization 2015). Informality negatively impacts domestic workers' livelihoods compared to formal workers.

Bogotá, Medellín, and Sao Paulo's public transportation systems severely underserve many highly vulnerable females paid domestic workers who commute daily to work. While some infrastructure recently built in Sao Paulo –i.e., the *lilas* line of the subway network- responds directly to the needs of some of them, domestic workers remain invisible to transportation planners. This chapter analyzes two main aspects of this under-service: 1) their very long commutes between separate low and high-income residential areas where they work, and 2) the significant transport-related expenditures through Finneman's "vulnerability theory" in the context of a Right to the City framework. Based on a mixed-methods approach, the chapter demonstrates the link between law, urbanization, and domestic workers. It uses the Right to Mobility as part of the Right to the City to inform the analysis of the legal frameworks in place.

2. Commuting patterns and financial accessibility for the urban poor

¹ Senior Researcher in Gender and Mobility, Transport Studies Unit, School of Geography and the Environment, University of Oxford, and member of the Law and Gender Research Group, Universidad de los Andes (Bogotá, Colombia). The Lee Schipper Memorial Scholarship sponsored some data collection for this chapter. Thanks to Heather Allen, Sam Zimmerman, Germán Escovar-Alvarez, and Segundo López for their insights and comments.

Transportation planners and scholars focused on the commuting patterns of the Global South² countries' urban poor and transport policies have explored the link between transportation, gender, and employment (Akyelken 2013; Salon and Gulyani 2010; Montes Calero et al. 2022). In these countries, low-income women face inaccessible and violent commutes every day. "Accessibility" means the number of opportunities (e.g., jobs, health care, or education facilities) available (or changes in them) for an individual or a group through the transportation system (Baltimore EJT Project and Transportation Equity Cooperative Research Program 2011). Mobility issues, quality, affordability, connectivity, and land use patterns, among others, affect accessibility (Litman 2022). These issues disturb users' livelihoods, resulting in social exclusion.

Regarding the commuting patterns of the urban poor, a study conducted in Mumbai reveals that transportation planning ignores jobs outside the Central Business District (CBD). Low-paid workers, especially informal workers, often hold these jobs (Baker et al. 2005). Urban poor walk more and use more public transportation than higher-income urban dwellers (Baker et al. 2005). Latin America follows Mumbai's reality, particularly for domestic workers who travel between separate low-income residential areas on city peripheries and distant high-income residential neighborhoods. Likewise, in Latin America, low-income populations living on the periphery of cities are "captive" to public transportation as they cannot afford costlier alternatives (Jirón 2011; Montoya-Robledo and Escovar-Álvarez 2020; Moscoso et al. 2020). However, low-quality and inefficient public transportation limits users from accessing opportunities concentrated in city cores (Keeling 2008; Oviedo Hernandez and Dávila 2016; Sohail, Maunder, and Cavill 2006; Vasconcellos 2010; 2001). Limited accessibility is worrisome for women who constitute more than 50% of public transportation users in Latin America (Jaimurzina, Muñoz, and Pérez 2017).

² "The regions of Latin America, Asia, Africa, and Oceania. It is one of a family of terms, [...] that denote regions outside Europe and North America, mostly (though not all) low-income and often politically or culturally marginalized". (Dados and Connell 2012)

Low-quality public transportation systems harm low-income women regarding health, time, and money (Sagaris, Tiznado-Aitken, and Steiniger 2017). Infrastructure investments in transportation to make public transport faster and safer for women could positively impact their employment outcomes and earnings in the labor market (Martínez et al. 2018). Efficient, good-quality transportation could improve female low-income commuters and pedestrians' access to opportunities and improve their social inclusion (Jaramillo, Lizárraga, and Grindlay 2012).

Scholars in Colombia have studied how gender, transportation, and employment, particularly domestic jobs, are interrelated for domestic workers. General data shows that worldwide women perform most care work (International Labour Organization 2021). Domestic work in this chapter is understood as paid care work. In Latin America, it is a highly feminized occupation: more than 90% of the more than 14 million domestic workers are women (International Labour Organization 2021). Ideological sex division of labor tied women to care work and men to productive work, valuing only the latter (Scott 1988). As paid care work, domestic work is deeply undervalued worldwide, which translates into a constant invisibility of the sector (Micolta León, n.d.; Arango and Molinier 2011; Pineda 2006).

Domestic workers lie at an intersection of inequalities (Crenshaw 1989) that disempower them at the urban level. Their invisibility as 1) women, ideologically linked to the private sphere; 2) informal workers in care-related jobs, outside of traditional planning schemes building transport to connect mostly formal workers; and 3) urban poor, living in the extreme peripheries of Latin American cities, produces their subsequent oblivion by those who plan and build cities. Qualitative studies for Cali showed that because of geography and regulation, public transportation routes disregard the needs of domestic workers commuting between far-flung residential areas differing significantly in income (Buchely & Castro, 2016: 250). In Bogotá, transportation scholars suggest that not all fares are integrated even within a supposedly integrated public transportation system, negatively impacting poor female domestic workers who travel daily to disparate neighborhoods (Oviedo Hernández & Titheridge, 2016: 159).

Based on the 2015 Mobility Survey, other scholars found that domestic workers, “captive” to public transportation in Bogotá, have the most extended travel times of any workers. They live and work in residential neighborhoods on opposite sides of the city, but the public transportation system neither serves the high-income areas where they work nor provides direct connections (Montoya-Robledo and Escovar-Álvarez 2020). Additional ethnographic studies have been conducted to follow specific domestic workers in their trajectories. A study in Bogotá on the subject illuminates how these women experience these trajectories and how social, economic, and spatial dimensions impact their lives and mobility (Fleischer and Marin 2019).

In Bogotá, in general terms, the extension of the BRT system, the increasing formalization of traditional bus routes, and the integration of operations have yielded increased employment and financial accessibility for the poor (Rodriguez et al. 2016). Moreover, while improved time-based accessibility results from the Bus Rapid Transit's (BRT) coverage expansion and higher speeds, financial accessibility has also improved (Rodriguez et al. 2016). Additionally, integrated fares have reduced travel costs for trips involving one or more transfers, such as for lower-income people living in the city's southern periphery (Rodriguez et al. 2016). Nevertheless, in some low-income neighborhoods, SITP zonal buses' expansion decreased employment accessibility (Rodriguez et al. 2016).³ Furthermore, domestic workers' extremely long commutes magnify their transport-related expenditures (Montoya-Robledo and Escovar-Álvarez 2020).

3. Vulnerability theory, the Right to the City and the Right to Mobility

Martha Fineman poses the significance, universality, and persistence of vulnerability that must be addressed to meet the needs of real-life human beings (Fineman 2008). Currently, as in the case of public transportation systems, the dominant political and legal theories revolve around a “neutral” or universal human characterized by self-sufficiency, autonomy, personal responsibility, independence, and capability. Nevertheless, this “neutral” subject created by the liberal tradition is far from

³ This change could have impacted Bogotá's quantitative data from 2015 to 2018.

reality, while “the vulnerable subject is more accurate and complete universal figure to place at the heart of social policy” (Fineman, 2008:11). Vulnerability is a state of constant, unavoidable, and undeniable possibility of harm over the lifespan. Since we are all vulnerable, we are interdependent, and thus, we must structure institutions to respond to this human fact.

Social organizations and institutions provide three types of assets: physical, human, and social assets, which provide resilience to individuals who face vulnerability (Kirby 2006). For the case in point, physical assets such as infrastructure, vehicles, stations, and financial resources, impart material goods by distributing wealth and property (Fineman, 2008:14). These assets provide the material basis to accumulate additional resources and determine our current quality of life (Fineman, 2008:14). Human assets are abilities to make the most of a particular situation, one example being employment. It is precisely their job for domestic workers, despite how precarious they are. Finally, institutions confer assets; therefore, the State should ensure equitable and fair asset distribution (Fineman, 2008:15).

Fineman explains that inevitable dependency (arising from the body) and derivative dependency (for those who care for others) are essential for vulnerability theory. The latter is crucial for domestic workers because “those who care for others are then rendered reliant or dependent on access to sufficient material, institutional, and physical resources in order to accomplish that care successfully” (Martha Fineman, 2019:24). Moreover, States and institutions play a crucial role in creating these resources.

A city is a place of encounters, opportunities, and interaction among multiple types of persons, in which vulnerability is always present. Hence, it is a vital space to promote or violate people’s rights (Correa Montoya 2011). Henri Lefebvre coined the term Right to the City to foreground citizens’ claims (Lefebvre 1968). It is a bundle of rights exercised in the urban landscape. The World Charter for the Right to the City (2004) defines it in article 1:

“[...] the equitable enjoyment of the cities while respecting the principles of sustainability, democracy, and social justice, and is a collective right of all city inhabitants especially the vulnerable and disfavoured on whom is further conferred legality for such actions and organisation as their culture and

custom suggests as a means of achieving the complete enjoyment of the right to an adequate standard of living. The Right to the City is interdependent to all recognised international human rights; and its conception is based on an integral view, which includes civil, political, economic, social, cultural and environmental rights enshrined in the international Human Rights Treaties. It includes also the right to liberty of association and organisation; the respect for minorities and racial, ethnic, sexual and cultural plurality; respect for immigrants; and the guarantee of preservation of historical and cultural heritages.” (World Social Forum 2004)

The Right to the City includes the right to transport and public mobility (Art. 13), hereafter the Right to Mobility. It states that “Cities should guarantee for all persons the right to mobility and circulation in the city, in accordance with an urban and interurban circulation plan and through an accessible public transportation system, provided at a reasonable cost and adequate for different environmental and social needs (gender, age, capacity, etc.)”. The Charter explicitly comprehends the vulnerability dimension when it establishes that public transportation systems must be accessible to every person, considering particular social needs such as "gender, age, and incapacities". It also includes different dimensions of accessibility including quality mobility, affordability, physical access, and differentiation for specific social needs.

Along the same line, The New Urban Agenda (NUA) envisions urban settlements that explicitly “Promote age- and gender-responsive planning and investment for sustainable, safe and accessible urban mobility for all and resource-efficient transport systems for passengers and freight, effectively linking people, places, goods, services, and economic opportunities” (United Nations 2017: par. 13). NUA also considers the content of the vulnerability theory by committing to promote accessible public transportation for people with disabilities (par. 36), as well as "safe, age- and gender-responsive, affordable, accessible and sustainable urban mobility” (par. 114).

The Right to Mobility is of paramount importance because it is both literally and figuratively a vehicle through which other rights, especially socio-economic rights, are exercised. As Coggin and Pieterse have described for the South African case, public transport “...is central to accessing the objects of most constitutionally seconded socio-economic rights, and is also an integral element of exercising various civil and political rights” (Coggin and Pieterse 2015). In particular, NUA could include domestic workers’

extreme vulnerability in the urban landscape when it considers that informal workers should access all economic and productive resources and opportunities (Par. 15). The Right to the City that privileges the social function of cities (Idiculla and Madhav 2021) encompasses the Right to Mobility. By enabling access to quality transport for this group of women, States can respond to their derivative vulnerability.

4. Material and Methods

The chapter builds on a mixed-method approach to bring in both the voices of domestic workers, the observation of commutes, and the quantitative data that shows general trends. Qualitative methods included 49 semi-structured interviews conducted with domestic workers and participant observation of their commuting routes. Based on a snowball methodology, only domestic workers traveling back and forth daily were included. Participants in the three cities were contacted via Whatsapp and phone calls. They were told about the study's purpose and they decided whether to participate. After the meeting, they signed an informed consent form accepted by the Harvard Ethics Committee. Fieldwork was conducted between May 2017 and November 2019 in Medellín, Bogotá, and Sao Paulo until the saturation point was reached. It delved into domestic workers' commuting routes, times, schedules, patterns, modes of transportation, and situations encountered inside public vehicles. They could refrain from answering any question when deemed necessary. Data was systematized using Atlas.ti software. The chapter uses pseudonyms to respect their anonymity.

After qualitative data was analyzed, time and costs became important variables that required data triangulation through quantitative data collection and geographic analysis. Quantitative data came from several sources. First, GPS data from the private application HogarU⁴ correspond to registered trips for domestic workers in Bogotá and Medellín. In total, there were 27,726 registered trips, 18,083 corresponded to Bogotá and 9,643 to Medellín by 614 domestic workers; 404 of these workers were in Bogotá and 210 in Medellín. The period for this data is from February to April 2018. The data includes the starting time and GPS coordinates of the trip -when domestic workers leave their homes and the ending time and GPS coordinates -when they reach the house of

⁴ All the GPS data from HogarU belongs to Vosavos S.A.S.

their employers-. Data also includes an identifying number of each domestic worker. Personal data of the domestic worker includes age, marital status, and the number of kids. This data is included for some of them.

Data analysis comprised all domestic workers' trips in each city, and the Kernel density was calculated. The density in the origin and destination of the trips was calculated too. The density values are relative to each city. The distance of every trip was obtained by multiplying the registered geographical coordinates by a factor of 1.3. This factor is similar to the "Manhattan distance." In the distance calculations, the atypical values higher than 100 km were eliminated, considering the geographic scale of the two metropolitan areas. The average speed of each trip was estimated based on the traveled distance and the trip's total time. The atypical values of average speeds over 60 km/hr and the atypical time values corresponding to those above percentile 99 (2.75 hours per trip) were eliminated.

For the mobility surveys in the three cities, data was analyzed based on the trips of low-income men and women for work purposes as follows.⁵ Bogotá conducted its Mobility Survey in 2015. It has a sample of 150,000 trips. To have a geographic level that was useful for statistically significant analysis, clusters were made based on income levels in the metropolitan zone. Within Bogotá, the Zonal Planning Units (UPZ in Spanish) were used - the zoning mechanism used for sampling-. Although this survey has the occupation variable that includes domestic work, it was excluded because it was not comparable to Medellín and Sao Paulo's surveys which lacked this variable.

The household survey conducted in 2017 in the Metropolitan Area of the Aburrá Valley (MAVA), where the city of Medellín is located, has a sample of 16,000 households and 88,000 reported trips. The database is open to the public, but it excludes the expansion factors or the primary mode for each trip. These two variables were reconstructed through online information from the survey. The principal mode was assumed based on the chain trip and gave more weight to transportation modes that were part of the chain. The expansion factors' values for each trip were estimated based

⁵ The conclusions of the chapter use low-income women who travel from low to high-income residential sites as a proxy for domestic workers' trips. Women besides domestic workers follow these travel paths. Using this approach ensures that laws and decisions implemented serve women beyond the group of domestic workers. However, some of the data used might not precisely match domestic workers' situations.

on the quantity and distribution of trips on each mode by gender and socio-economic stratum. These variables were chosen to minimize the error when analyzing low-income women's trips. The survey reports the variable "time" in multiples of thirty minutes, probably due to how the city conducted the survey. Therefore, this variable is less precise than in Sao Paulo and Bogotá. Based on income levels and geographic location similarities, cluster analysis in the survey zones was conducted to diminish calculation errors and triangulate the data. In all the metropolitan areas, 100 clusters of similar income levels were calculated and used as zones of analysis.

The Mobility Survey of Sao Paulo was conducted in 2017.⁶ It has a sample of 180,000 trips in 39 municipalities of the State of Sao Paulo. The analysis used a scale of 136 districts according to the distribution of Sao Paulo and its metropolitan area. The survey has a "criterion of economic classification" used to proxy income level, similar to the "stratum" in Colombia.

The criterion used to define the income level in Colombian cities was the predominant socio-economic strata. It is a proxy for the income level that the National Administrative Department of Statistics (DANE in Spanish) uses to differentiate households according to their housing conditions. For Sao Paulo, the Criteria for Economic Classification Brazil (CCEB) were used to differentiate households according to their income level. For the cases of Medellín and Bogotá, low-income households are stratum 1 and 2, while high-income households are stratum 5 and 6. In Sao Paulo, zones with CCEB 1 and 2 are high-income households, while zones with CCEB 4, 5, and 6 are low-income. For the three cities, the job posts were estimated based on the density of the trips attracted due to work. In order to choose them, clusters that grouped zones with a high density of attracted trips for work were made. The clusters were built in a statistically significant manner and relative to each city. For the three cities, time is calculated for men on trips with a destination in the CBD and women only on trips with a destination in high-income neighborhoods.

⁶ Although the three mobility surveys were conducted in different years, they were used in comparative ways using geographic tools, because they reveal general trends in low-income women's commutes.

Moreover, legal analyses of national and local norms related to gender and public transportation were conducted for the three cities. A revision of secondary literature complemented data collection.

5. Discussion: Transportation infrastructure and costs from a Right to the City framework

5.1 Transportation infrastructure planning: domestic workers remain vulnerable

The Right to the City and the Right to Mobility encompass quality transportation for all, that is physically accessible, with proper routes and frequencies, between interurban routes, and that prioritizes gender. Colombian and Brazilian Constitutions lack explicit provisions on both of these rights but include others that are part of this bundle. Local legal provisions ensure the Right to Mobility for all on paper. However, in practice, legally constituted transportation systems benefit primarily formal workers in traditional sectors, excluding the highly-gendered care work. Experts and technocrats working at the transportation authority's offices plan public transportation systems connecting low-income workers from peripheral neighborhoods to the CBD for work – where most formal jobs are located. They respond mainly to 1) economic reasons, ignoring that transport is an essential social service and part of the Right to Mobility, which enables other rights, and 2) ideological underpinnings undervaluing care work, and obviating that this type of work requires proper mobility. Hence, they violate the Right to the City and the Right to Mobility of many informal workers particularly those in feminized occupations. This transportation scheme results in the poor being 'held to ransom as it were,' especially women domestic workers, as the transit services deficiently connect their homes and their jobs. The State is not guaranteeing domestic workers the Right to the City by failing to address their dependency since they lack material resources -proper transport routes and frequencies- to access their jobs daily.

On paper, the Colombian Constitution guarantees the Right to Mobility as part of the Right to the City by recognizing freedom of movement (Art. 24). Together with other laws, the Constitution establishes that transportation is a public service and that the

State should ensure everyone has efficient access to it (Art. 365, *Law 105* 1993; *Law 310* 1996). Law in the books recognize these rights at the local level in Bogotá and Medellín through the two legally constituted transportation systems: the mass transportation system (National Decree 3109, 1997, Art. 3)⁷ and the traditional public collective system (TCP). In Bogotá, Transmilenio S.A., and in Medellín, the Metropolitan Area of the Aburrá Valley (MAVA), hold public authority over mass transit. The second system, the TCP, falls under the authority of mobility secretariats (*Law 1625* 2013; *Metropolitan Agreement 0042* 2007; *Law 336* 1996; *Decree 1558* 1998; *Decree 170* 2001). They authorize private companies to operate buses on particular routes often traveling between the peripheries and the CBD. Although the local or metropolitan authorities establish the fares and routes, private companies hold *de facto* control over buses' operation. There is no integrated fare, infrastructure, or operation (National Decree 1079, 2015 Art. 2.2.1.3.1 and 2.2.1.3.2).

Although these public transportation systems supposedly ensure the Right to Mobility for all, in practice, high and middle-income residential sites where many domestic workers find their jobs are disconnected from public transportation. Particularly, TCP's lack of integrated fares and routes further expands domestic workers' commuting times and transport-related expenditures. Therefore, the State is not supplying the physical assets to address these highly gendered commutes, exacerbating domestic workers' vulnerability, and violating their Right to Mobility.

Nevertheless, what the implications in terms of commuting times? In Bogotá, figure 1 shows the low-income residential areas, the high-income residential areas, and the CBD in the city. Figure 2 compares the times that low-income men and women take to commute for work purposes using isochrones.

⁷ Includes interconnected transportation modes –ie. Bus Rapid Transit (BRT), zonal buses, aerial cables, subway-, integrated fares, and central coordination under a public company.

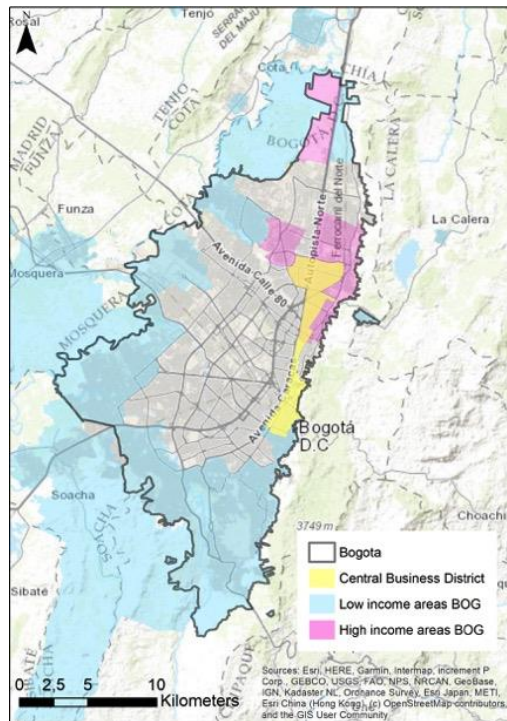


Figure 1: Central business district, low and high-income areas in Bogotá.

Source: Own elaboration with the Mobility Secretariat data.

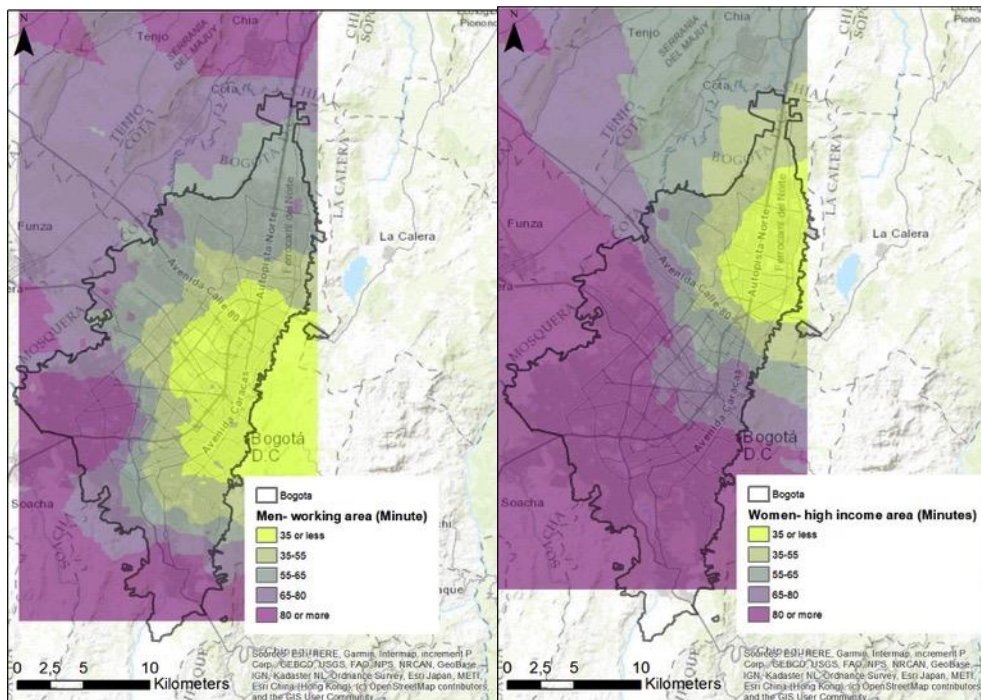


Figure 2: Isochrones for work-related trips made by low-income men (left) and women (right) inhabiting low-income households traveling to high-income residential areas in Bogotá. Source: Own elaboration with the Mobility Secretariat data.

Since high-income residential areas -where many domestic workers work- are not efficiently connected to public transit, the commuting times of low-income women are much longer than those of low-income men. Figure 3 below specifies these commuting times and distances in both transportation systems for men and women by income level in Bogotá. Although both low and middle-income men and women travel similar distances, women travel longer than equivalent men. This is noticeably higher (+7 mins and + 6 mins) for both low- and middle-income groups. Low-income women spend 10% more time than low-income men traveling for work in Bogotá. Data from HogarU shows that domestic workers take 86 minutes on average from their home to their work (See figure 4).

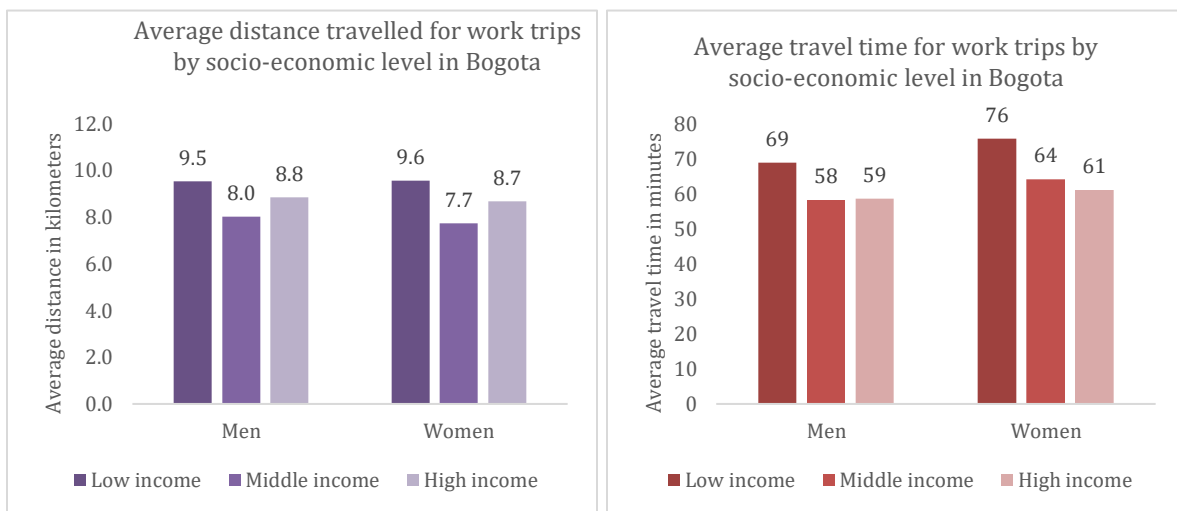


Figure 3. Average travel time and distance traveled for work trips by socio-economic level in Bogotá.

Source Own elaboration with the Mobility Secretariat data.

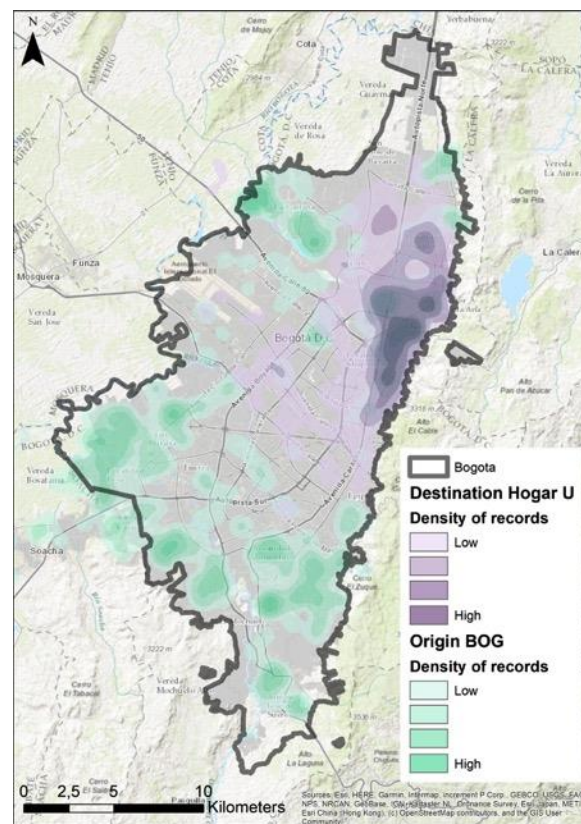


Figure 4. Density of origins and destinations of HogarU trips in Bogotá, Colombia. Source: Own elaboration with HogarU data.

For Argelia*, who inhabits the dormitory city of Soacha, commutes to Bogotá can take up to six hours round-trip. While in the mornings, she usually spends 2.5 hours, “when I go back home, I usually leave my job at 5 pm and arrive home between 8 and 8:30 pm. It means that I take 3 to 3.5 hours to return. At night, there are more people, more traffic, and the buses are more overcrowded” (Argelia**, 2018). The extremely long commutes show public transportation's inadequacy in connecting domestic workers to economic opportunities, disregarding NUA's vision of gender-responsive urban mobility and violating their Right to the City. Likewise, the Right to Mobility requires interurban circulation which is absent here, because Argelia* lives in a dormitory city inefficiently connected to her job in Bogotá.

In Medellín, Figure 5 shows the low-income residential areas, the high-income residential areas, and the CBD in the city. Using isochrones, Figure 6 compares the

commuting times of low-income men and women. No low-income woman traveling for work to a high-income neighborhood spends thirty minutes or less.

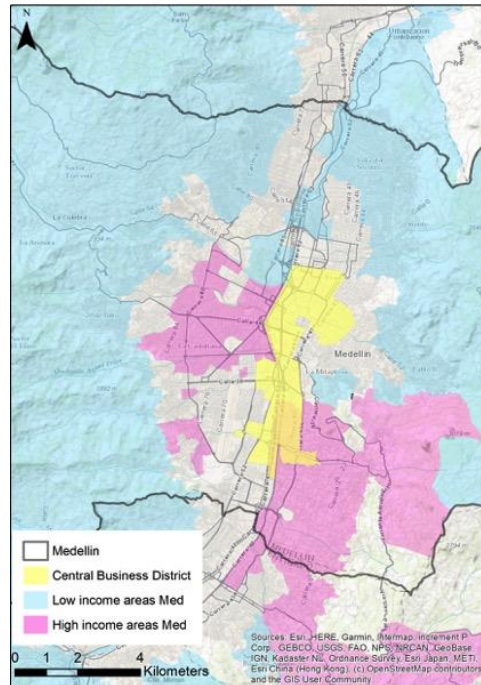


Figure 5: CBD, low and high-income areas in Medellín. Source: Own elaboration with MAVA data.

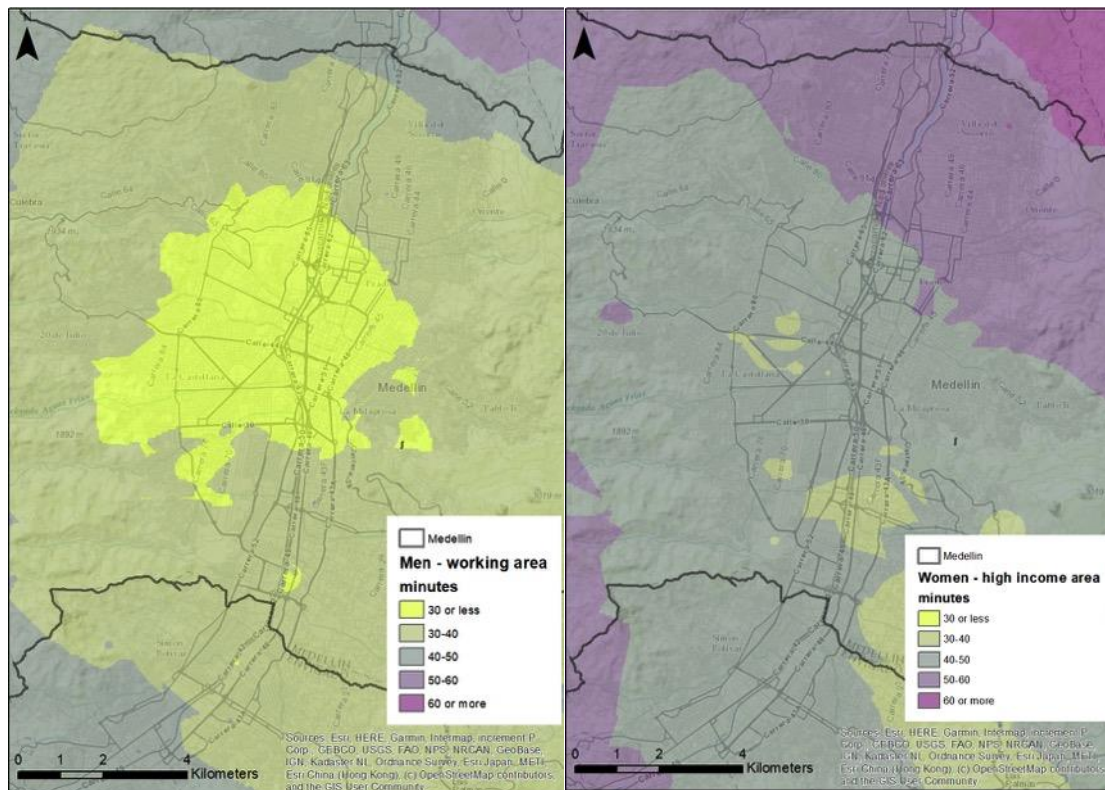


Figure 6: Isochrones for work-related trips made by low-income men (left) and women (right) inhabiting low-income households traveling to high-income residential areas in Medellín. Source: Own elaboration with MAVA data.

Figure 7 specifies the commuting times and distances by income level for men and women in Medellín, showing that the average commute for low-income women is 3 minutes more than that of men, although the distance that women travel is shorter by 0.4 kilometers. Figure 8 depicts domestic workers' commutes from low to high-income residential areas, which matches the map in Figure 5. According to HogarU data, domestic workers in Medellín take an average of 68 minutes in one-way commutes. They travel for approximately 10.1 kilometers at 8.8 kilometers per hour. Compared to Bogotá's data, Medellín's data suggests that the speed of their trips is 19% less, which can be explained by a worse connection between low and high-income residential sites. It is particularly strenuous considering that Medellín is denser and smaller than Bogotá.

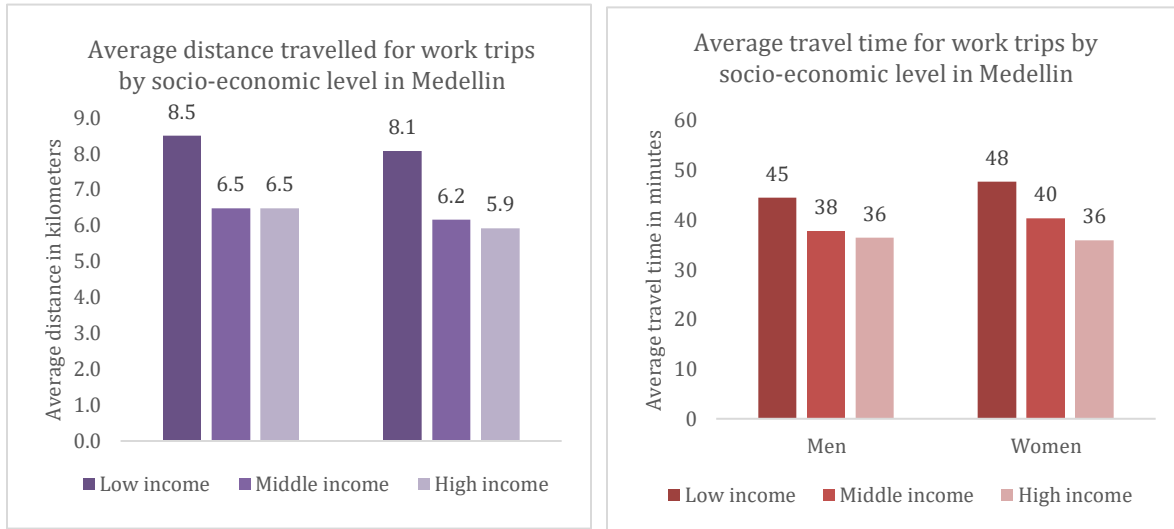


Figure 7. Average travel time and distance traveled for work trips by socio-economic level in Medellín.

Source: Own elaboration with MAVA data.

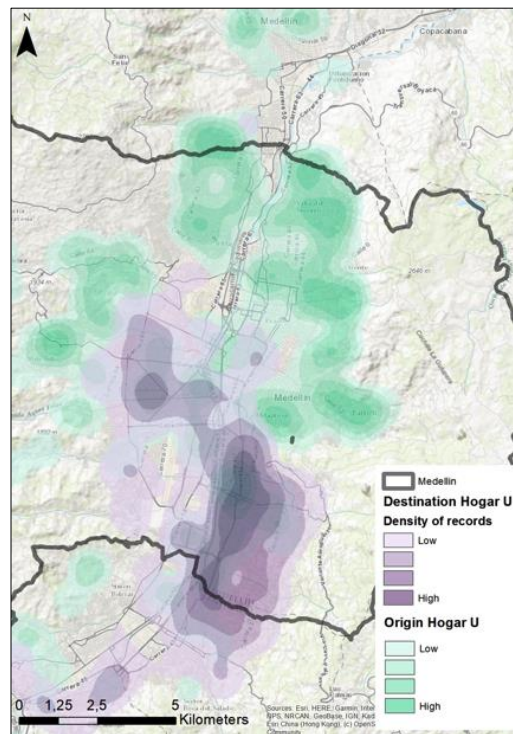


Figure 8. The density of origins and destinations of HogarU trips in Medellín, Colombia. Source: Own elaboration with HogarU data.

Rosa*, a domestic worker, described: " *In total, I take around four and a half hours in public transportation every day*" (Rosa*, 2017). In Medellín, as in Bogotá, the

right to efficient, equitable, sustainable, and gender-responsive urban mobility, essential to ensure the Right to the City and the Right to Mobility for domestic workers, is a distant utopia.

Similar to Colombia, Brazil's Political Constitution implicitly protects the Right to the City. As a Federal State, states have great authority over their jurisdictions. In Sao Paulo, there is a gap between people who inhabit the city of Sao Paulo and those that inhabit peripheral conurbated cities. The Strategic Master Plan guides the mobility planning for urban commuters (Prefeitura da Cidade de Sao Paulo, n.d.). The model divides the city into operation areas, each granted to a consortium to operate the lines of a structural subsystem. Each is also licensed to a cooperative (later on a company) of autonomous operators to operate the local subsystems lines. The structure of public transport in Sao Paulo follows Bogotá and Medellín, connecting low-income people to the CBD, and leaving high-income residential areas more disconnected. Neighboring cities connect with Sao Paulo via commuter rail and interurban buses that link to either inter-city buses or subway stations.

Figure 9 below shows the low-income residential areas, the high-income residential areas, and the CBD in the city. Figure 10 compares the times that low-income men and women take to commute in Sao Paulo. Since high-income residential areas - where many domestic workers find their jobs posts- are not efficiently connected to the public transportation system, particularly to the subway or train, the commuting times of low-income women are much longer than those of low-income men, who often manage to take a rail system to work. The data suggests that the average commute for low-income women is 7 minutes more than that of men, although women's travel distance is shorter by 0.3 kilometers. Low-income women take 16% more time commuting than low-income men. For Kelly*, a *diarista*⁸ domestic worker "*Santo Amaro is very far from my house; I spend approximately two hours to arrive there. In the case of Lapa, it is also very far, and I take more time depending on the traffic jam... I leave work around 4:30... and usually arrive home at 7:30 or 20 minutes before 8 pm... the afternoon is worse*" (Kelly*, 2019).

⁸ Legal category: A domestic worker works less than three days per week with one employer as an independent worker with no social security benefits.

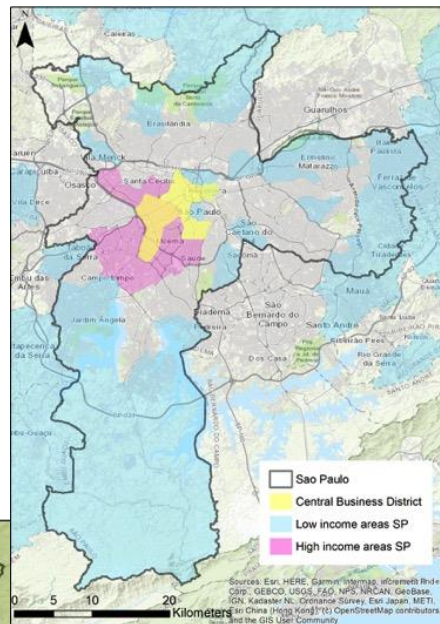


Figure 9: CBD, low and high-income residential areas in Sao Paulo. Source:

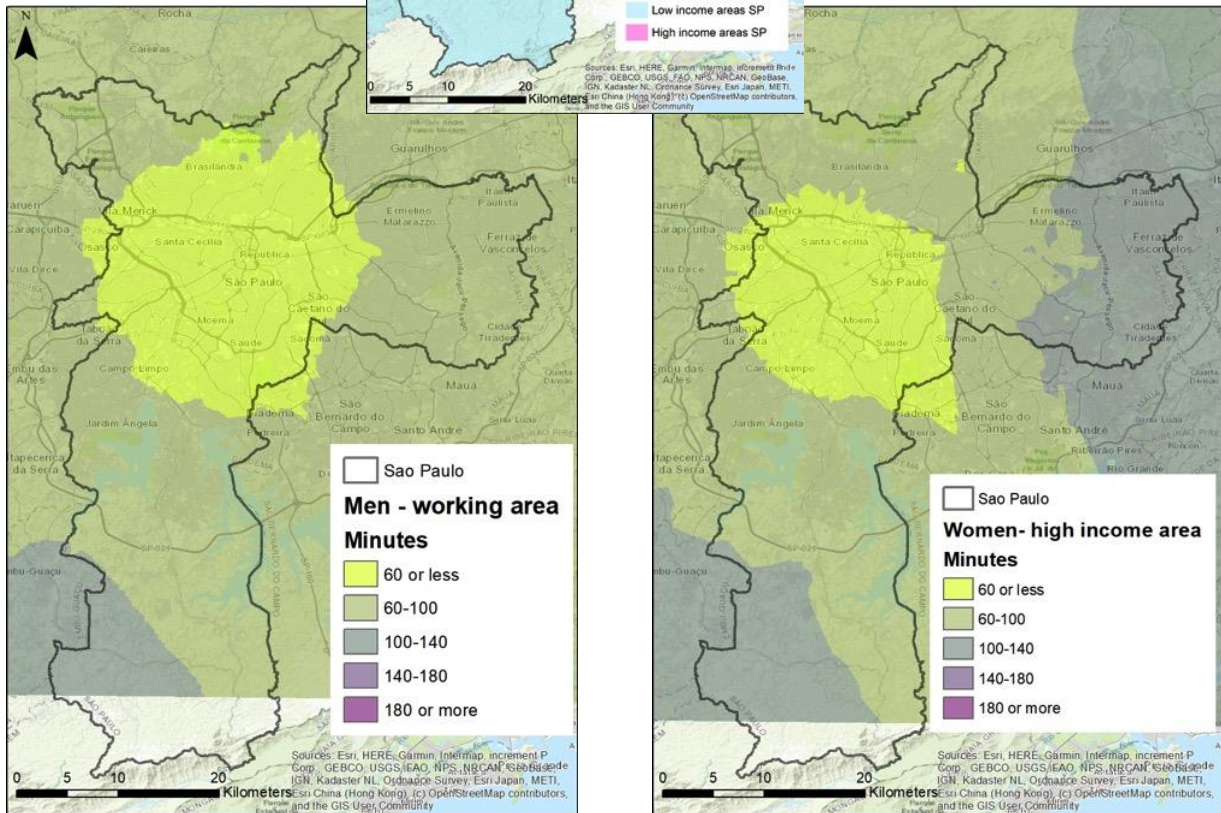


Figure 10. Average travel time and distance traveled for work trips by socio-economic level in Sao Paulo.

Source: Own elaboration with CET data.

Despite this broad picture, in April 2019, the subway line *lilás* that connects *Campo Limpo*, a low-income residential neighborhood, with high-income residential neighborhoods, was completed. The mobility survey does not capture the change that domestic workers experienced with this newly finished line. However, interviewees

revealed that this direct line diminished domestic workers' daily commuting times by up to two hours round-trip. Domestic worker Lucia* explains: *"Now I spend one hour and a half to go from my house because I take the metro in Campo Limpo Station to Brooklin... before I used to take a metro, then a bus until there, and then I walked. I used to take two hours. Now it is half an hour less on that trip"* (Lucia* 2018). Domestic worker Claudia*'s commute diminished from two hours and a half to one hour and a half on a one-way trip (Claudia* 2019). These testimonies evidence a particular legal rule that produced an infrastructure development responding to domestic workers' derivative dependency in the city, enhancing their Right to Mobility and thus their Right to the City.

5.2 Financial accessibility legal measures

The three cities have developed financial accessibility legal measures responding to the needs of targeted users, which could include domestic workers. These measures materialize some of the Charter's provisions towards an effective Right to Mobility and Right to the City as they consider that transportation should be provided at reasonable costs, considering particular social needs related to gender, age and capacity. They also target their inevitable and derivative dependency.

However, in practice, many domestic workers do not attain any financial relief for transportation. First, these legal provisions do not directly target domestic workers. They obviate that these women have particular social needs because of the intersectional disempowerment they face, but also because their commutes are extremely long and therefore very expensive. This is aggravated by the fact that as informal workers their earnings are often reduced. Local lawmakers and planners ignore their inevitable and derivative vulnerability. Moreover, the arduous bureaucracy to attain reduced fares in Sao Paulo, and the lack of inter-city coordination in Bogotá and Sao Paulo, particularly affecting those lower-income domestic workers tethered to inhabit dormitory cities, further restricts them from accessing affordable transportation. The practical dimension of these urban policies demonstrates that gender-responsive planning and interurban circulation plans, essential dimensions of the Charter and NUA, are missing for this massive group of informal commuters.

While Colombia's Ministry of Transportation has the authority to formulate the policy and determine the criteria to establish fares, the metropolitan, district, and municipal governments have the authority to define the actual value (Law 105, 1993 Art. 1; Law 336, 1996, Art. 29). In Bogotá, three local legal measures tackle the financial accessibility of targeted users, in line with the Charter and NUA's vision of age and capacity-responsive planning. First, subsidies for people beyond 62 years of age, low-income people, and people with disabilities for using the integrated system or SITP (*District Decree 603 2013; District Decree 442 2014; District Decree 329 2015; Decree 429 2012; Decree 131 2017; Veeduría Distrital 2018*). There is no targeted subsidy related to gender, opposing the Charter and NUA's vision. Domestic workers who legally qualify as low-income, were elders or had a disability had access to the subsidy. However, the new subsidy requirements have decreased the number of beneficiaries, excluding many domestic workers. As domestic worker Marcela* explains, "*People always complain [about Transmilenio] because it is expensive and bad quality. I personalized my card, and due to my age, the fare was reduced; I received the subsidy on the card. Unfortunately, Peñalosa diminished the subsidy*" (Marcela* 2018).

Second, an integrated fare from March 2020 established that passengers inhabiting the periphery (often lower-income users) can switch up to two times between different types of integrated buses within 110 minutes, without paying for a full additional fare, using the smart card *TuLlave* (200 COP/0.06 USD to change from zone to trunk system). Low-income domestic workers living in the periphery could benefit from this financial aid. However, many of them in the extreme periphery remain excluded because their commutes' duration overpasses the integrated time-window (Montoya-Robledo and Escovar-Álvarez 2020).

Two domestic workers interviewed in Bogotá, inhabiting the neighborhood of *Bolonia* in *Usme*⁹ had to pay for an additional ticket because the time-window did not cover their commutes. In January 2018, they spent 6400 pesos (Bolena* 2018; Yolima* 2018), 30% more than other domestic workers inhabiting better-connected areas. This transportation expenditure accounts for more than 20% of their daily income if they

⁹ Extremely peripheral urban area lacking an exclusive lane from the Molinos Station to the Transmilenio terminal.

earned the legal minimum wage. Again, the physical assets that could promote their resilience against vulnerability are absent for them, compromising their Right to the City.

For commuters living in the dormitory city of Soacha, there are no targeted subsidies, credit, or integrated fares because: 1) they are beyond Bogota's jurisdiction; and 2) Soacha lacks financial resources to provide integrated buses (Montoya-Robledo 2020). Hence, Soacha domestic workers lack access to these financial measures meaning less resilience against vulnerability and a restricted Right to Mobility due to a deficient interurban circulation plan.

Third, people who personalize their smart card *TuLlave* to access mass transit can obtain credit for trips on zonal buses. If the commuter falls short of credit on her smart card, the system provides her credit equivalent to the cost of two trips and discount the owed value in the following recharge (Transmilenio S.A. 2020). This measure benefits domestic workers lacking financial resources to start their commute by providing physical assets and ensuring their Right to Mobility. Again, this subsidy excludes domestic workers inhabiting Soacha.

In 2015, the MAVA board created different fares according to users' profiles in Medellín. The MAVA gave discounts to people with disabilities, students of public schools and universities, and elders. These measures constitute physical assets to build these targeted users' resilience and follow the Charter and NUA. Rosario*, a domestic worker, explained: *"I have a special fare because I am part of a plan for limited mobility due to my cancer. I have access to chairs, and the elevator, and I pay less. All I had to do was take my medical diagnosis to the place where you get the Civica [card], and I got a card for people with disabilities"* (Rosario* 2017). It entailed a State response to her inevitable dependency. It also established a 90-minute time-window to switch between vehicles to avoid paying a double fare (Metropolitan Agreement 22, 2015, Art. 1 & 2).

Additionally, users with a personalized *Civica* smart card access credit for one trip if they run out of balance, a physical asset to build their resilience (Noticias Caracol 2019). Albeit, those domestic workers who either live very far away and thus cannot benefit from the 90-minute time-window or those who live afar from the mass transit

have to take four buses every day -more than 8000 COP- spending close to 27% of their daily income based on the 2017 legal minimum wage (Montoya-Robledo 2020).

Therefore, the State does not provide them with physical assets to build their resilience, remains unresponsive to their derivative dependency status, and further violates their Right to Mobility.

Sao Paulo issued municipal Law 11.216/92 establishing that women beyond their fifth gestational month and holding a gestation card have free access to public transportation (*Mae Paulistana* discount). This measure significantly improves pregnant domestic workers' financial situation for several months, responding to their inevitable and derivative dependency. However, the benefit excludes domestic workers outside Sao Paulo's jurisdiction. Domestic worker Claudia* explained: "*I could have gotten the Mae Paulistana discount, but I was not living within the city of Sao Paulo at the time. Then, when I finally started living there, my child was too old for me to get the discount*" (Claudia* 2019). The rest of the domestic workers interviewed were unaware of this discount. Deficient intercity coordination results in a limited Right to Mobility for this highly vulnerable group of commuters.

Sao Paulo targets financial aid for specific commuters who present a Unique Special Ticket (*Bilhete Unico Especial*). The mayor issued Decree 58.639/19 to unify all the legal provisions related to the *Bilhete Unico* and established new provisions on technological tools to access the system. Accordingly, elders, people with disabilities, pregnant women, obese people, and mothers (*Mae Paulistana*) belong to commuters' special and differential categories (Art. 3). Elders 60 years or older (Art. 36), people with disabilities (Art. 38 and 39), those who accompany them to an educational institution (Art. 41), pregnant women (Art. 52), and women part of the program *Mae Paulistana* (Art. 55 to 57) are not obliged to pay for the ticket. Meanwhile, obese people have a discount (Art. 54). Thus, if domestic workers duly certify fitting into any of these categories, they can either pay a percentage of the total fare or not pay at all. Therefore, the government provides them with physical assets responding to inevitable and derivative dependency and promoting their Right to the City.

Nonetheless, bureaucratic procedures limit adequate access to these discounts. Domestic worker Lucía * explained:

“The bureaucracy required to get the free trip for accompanying my mother, a person with a disability because of her Alzheimer's, made it impossible for me [...] They requested a certification from the doctor [...] but every time I went to get it, the doctor had forgotten about my case and did not give me the certificate. [...] I avoid going out with her because I would have to pay [more]” (Lucia 2018).*

This practical reality reveals how members of the bureaucracy ignore this inevitable and derivative vulnerability. A Right to Mobility is missing for domestic workers like Lucía and her mother.

People with a normal *Bilhete Unico* also hold an integrated ticket. With one fare, the person can switch up to four times between buses of the Collective Public Service within the boundaries of the city of Sao Paulo for three hours (Art. 7). Since 2006, the integrated fare also includes Sao Paulo's metro and suburban railways for an additional cost, partially signaling interurban circulation described in the Charter. The integrated fare excludes some zones outside Sao Paulo's jurisdiction and inter-municipal buses. Some domestic workers living beyond the city boundaries, who usually are more economically disadvantaged, often pay for an additional reduced fare to take an inter-municipal bus that takes them to a stop from which they have to walk back home. Claudia* spends seven *reales* roundtrip due to the integration, while Kelly* spends around 20 *reales* every day in public transportation because she takes four buses. She would have to spend more money if she used the metro because she is required to take two non-integrated buses beside the metro (Kelly* 2019). The governmental boundaries and the restricted financial aid augment these women's precarious economic situation, diminish their resilience in the face of vulnerability, and violate their Right to Mobility and their Right to the City.

Regular users can switch once with the State System of Metropolitan Train within two hours after first entering the system. Furthermore, users can pay one fare with the right to change between metro lines as much as they want for two hours. This integration connects to the higher goal established in article 83 of the Strategic Directive Plan of Sao Paulo, aiming to articulate all transportation means in the city within a

unique network with metropolitan reach, physically and operationally integrated.¹⁰

Domestic workers who do not fit special categories, still have access to integrated tickets. However, when they live further out or have to switch more times than is legally allowed, they must pay for additional tickets, making them more vulnerable and restricting their Right to Mobility.

6. Conclusions

Law, urbanization, and informal work lie at the core of the limitations that domestic workers face while commuting in Bogotá, Medellín, and Sao Paulo. The high-income areas where they work and the low-income areas they inhabit, inadequately connect to the public transportation network, making domestic workers commutes extremely long compared to low-income male workers. Likewise, most of them spend a large percentage of their limited income commuting.

The three cities have taken some steps toward building institutions that incrementally create resilience against vulnerability. They have issued legal provisions to provide accessible and affordable transport for all. The black letter law aims to ensure the Right to Mobility as part of the Right to the City. However, the limited recognition of domestic workers as a massive social group facing intersectional sources of disempowerment, both in terms of physical and financial accessibility, is far from the vision of NUA and the Charter, especially regarding gender-sensitive planning.

Despite constitutional and legal provisions that recognize the Right to the City and the Right to Mobility in Colombia and Brazil, in practice, domestic workers remain invisible to local government lawmakers and transportation planners. They continue to plan public transportation mostly to connect the job sites where formal workers work in the CBD. By not providing proper transport in high-income residential sites, they ignore that care work, which is highly feminized and informal, requires proper transport connections. They oblivate domestic workers' inevitable and derivative dependency, thus affecting their livelihoods. The positive exception of Sao Paulo's *lilas* metro line is a

¹⁰ Resolutions STM 037, 041, 048, 050, and 51/19 include other metropolitan integrations of the transportation system authorizing the physical and financial integration of metropolitan systems managed by the Metropolitan Company of Urban Transportation of Sao Paulo, issued by the Metropolitan Transportation Secretary.

good practice to ensure direct connections between low and high-income residential sites, addressing domestic workers' derivative and inevitable dependency. It can be replicated in other cities diminishing domestic workers' commuting times and giving them time to enhance their capabilities while taking care of their own families, experiencing leisure, or even engaging in political participation (Montoya 2019), fundamental aspects of their Right to the City.

By giving subsidies to elders, people with disabilities, students, low-income people, transportation planners, and lawmakers grant financial accessibility measures that can tangentially benefit domestic workers, but without considering the gender dimension. Only in Sao Paulo do they grant the *Mae Paulistana* discount. However, limited inter-city coordination and extreme bureaucracy limit access to these measures. Time-based subsidies often leave many domestic workers aside, because planners and lawmakers obviate that their extremely long commutes misfit these integrated time-windows. Therefore, adequate mobility for specific social groups described in the Charter is not implemented for millions of domestic workers in Latin America.

To ensure the Right to Mobility as part of the Right to the City, planners and lawmakers should adopt a vulnerability approach. First, recognizing domestic workers' derivative dependency through sensitive data collection that allows for legal creation and implementation of transportation addressing their mobility needs. Second, recognizing and collecting data on their inevitable dependency as low-income women who are often racialized, as many other commuters in the three cities, to understand intersectional sources of vulnerability. Based on this vast data they should follow NUA's gender-sensitive planning approach, and the Charter's provision on adequate transportation for specific social groups and interurban circulation to practically ensure the Right to Mobility for all.

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