



## Cycling through gendered lives: exploring the link between structural gender inequalities, gender norms and mobility practices in Japan and beyond

20 - 21 January 2022

10.00 - 12.45 (France) | 18.00 - 20.45 (Japan)

Online | In English

Registration: <https://forms.gle/XVuKka1SN8dHKq4s5>

Contact: [events\\_ffj@ehess.fr](mailto:events_ffj@ehess.fr)

Women remain strongly underrepresented among cyclists in Western cities (Pucher and Buehler, 2012). Past studies exploring barriers to women cycling have reached two conclusions. First, women would not cycle as much as men because they would be more risk-averse ; second, unequally shared domestic responsibilities would make their mobilities too complex to cycle (Ravensbergen et al, 2019). Women would thus be more likely to cycle where secured infrastructure is provided, and where domestic tasks are equally shared between men and women (Prati et al., 2019). However, these widely accepted results, based on concurring Western studies, do not hold in the context of Tokyo. In Tokyo, women represent the majority (57%) of cyclists (Goel et al., 2021) and cycling is overwhelmingly used for household-serving trips (TMATPC, 2018). Yet, Japan is marked by strong gender inequalities: Japanese women spend on average 23 hours per week on care and household chores, while men only spend 5 hours on these tasks (Cabinet Cabinet Office; Gender Equality Bureau 2016). Japanese women also face the largest wage gap in the world, and lack of welfare state support still encourages a lot of them to quit their job when they have a child (Shirahase, 2014). This case points to the complex links between women's mobilities and their position in society. This workshop will explore the link between structural gender inequalities, cultural gender norms, and women's bicycling practices. Research works from around the world will be confronted to the "critical case" (Flyvbjerg, Bent 2006) of Tokyo to identify ways forward for research on gender and cycling. To accommodate researchers from several different countries, and given the ongoing travel uncertainties associated with the COVID-19 pandemic, this workshop will be held online. Speakers will present for 30 minutes ; each presentation will be followed by 15 minutes of discussion.

# Programme

20<sup>th</sup> January 2022  
10.00-12.45 (France) | 18.00-20.45 (Japan)  
9.00-11.45 (United Kingdom)

10.00 | Opening Remarks

**Sébastien Lechevalier** (FFJ-EHESS), **Pierre-Édouard Sorel** (Michelin), **Marion Lagadic**  
(2021 FFJ/Michelin Foundation fellow, University of Oxford)

## Session 1

Moderator: **Marion Lagadic** (2021 FFJ/Michelin Foundation fellow, University of Oxford)

10.15 | Working 'through' urban transformations

**Dr. Nihan Akyelken** (University of Oxford)

11.00 | Local care loops and classed time disciplines

**Dr. Lena Näre** (University of Helsinki)

11.45 | Materialities of gendered cycling experiences in France and in Australia

**Margot Abord de Chatillon** (University of Lyon)

12.30 | Concluding Remarks

**Marion Lagadic** (2021 FFJ/Michelin Foundation fellow, University of Oxford)

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10.00-12.45 (France) | 18.00-20.45 (Japan)  
9.00-11.45 (United Kingdom)

10.00 | Opening Remarks

**Marion Lagadic** (2021 FFJ/Michelin Foundation fellow, University of Oxford)

Session 2

Moderator: **Marion Lagadic** (2021 FFJ/Michelin Foundation fellow, University of Oxford)

10.15 | Gendered Realms, Gendered Activities, and Gendered Norms in Japan

**Dr. Chigusa Yamaura** (University of Oxford)

11.00 | Planning Policies and Diverse Bicycle Needs in Japan: the vision and gap

**Dr. Kazuki Nakamura** (Meijo University)

11.45 | Tokyo's new stance towards cycling: a gender analysis

**Marion Lagadic** (2021 FFJ/Michelin Foundation fellow, University of Oxford)

12.30 | Concluding Remarks

**Sébastien Lechevalier** (FFJ-EHESS)

# Introductions and chair

(alphabetical order)



Marion Lagadic (DPhil candidate, University of Oxford/2021 FFJ/Michelin Foundation fellow)

Marion Lagadic is a doctoral student on the DPhil in Sustainable Urban Development at the University of Oxford, under the supervision of Dr. Nihan Akyelken. Her research explores the relations between cycling practices and gender in Japanese cities. In Western Europe and North America, sustainable mobility is far from gender-inclusive: the vast majority of urban cyclists are men. In Japan, the contrary is true: the vast majority of urban cyclists are women. Marion Lagadic's research tackles the gendering of cycling practices in Tokyo, and explores Jwomen's cycling practices in the context of their position in the Japanese society.

Title: Tokyo's new stance towards cycling: a gender analysis

In June 2018, the Japan Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism adopted the Bicycle Utilisation Promotion Plan (MLIT 2018), a new national framework to promote cycling and guide the development of local bicycle promotion plans. It was the first overarching bicycle promotion strategy adopted at the national level, encompassing all dimensions of the topic: infrastructure development, education, and safety. In 2019, the Tokyo Metropolitan Government adopted its own Bicycle Utilisation Promotion. These strategies were adopted in a country and city where women represent the vast majority of cyclist; yet, the gender dimension of this practice is not addressed in these policy documents. This presentation will discuss cycling policy in Tokyo from a gender perspective: how do Japanese policymakers imagine current cyclists, as well as the future of cycling? Where do cycling women fit into this strategy? What might be the gendered impact of this cycling promotion strategy?



Sébastien Lechevalier (Professor at EHESS/President of the Fondation France-Japon de l'EHESS)

Sébastien Lechevalier is an Economist and a Professor at EHESS (School of Advanced Studies in the Social Sciences, Paris), specialised in Japanese economy and Asian Capitalisms. He is also founder and president of the Fondation France-Japon de l'EHESS (FFJ). He has been a Visiting Professor at the University of Tokyo, Kyoto University, Hitotsubashi University, Waseda University and Doshisha University.



Pierre-Édouard Sorel (Director of Movin'On Development, Michelin)

Pierre-Édouard Sorel started his career with the Renault car company in Istanbul, Turkey, before joining in various product marketing positions in France. He has been working for Michelin for the last 15 years, in the areas of sales, market intelligence, and marketing as a segment manager and entrepreneur to bring new innovations to the market. Since June 2020, he has joined the Movin'On Ecosystem within Michelin to promote sustainable mobility and ecosystem innovations. He received his master's degree in management with a specialization in marketing from the *École des hautes études commerciales de Paris* (HEC Paris) in 1998.

# Speakers

(alphabetical order)



Nihan Akyelken (Associate Professor in Sustainable Urban Development, University of Oxford)

Nihan Akyelken joined the University of Oxford as a Research Fellow at the Transport Studies Unit in the School of Geography and the Environment in October 2008. In February 2015, she started working as a Departmental Lecturer on the Sustainable Urban Development programme and in January 2017 was appointed as Associate Professor in Sustainable Urban Development. Previously, she worked at the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE) Public Policy Group. She obtained her doctorate in Economic Geography from the University of Oxford. Nihan Akyelken is an economic and social geographer, specialising in mobility of people and goods, inequalities and access, infrastructure, labour and work. Her research is based on both

qualitative and quantitative methodologies and to date has addressed the following concerns: Infrastructure, work and labour; Work, gender and mobility; Governance and social implications of low-carbon mobility innovations; Mobility of goods, globalisation and sustainability.

Title: Working 'through' urban transformations

The process of urban transformation in terms of built environment, human experiences and metabolisms and flows (of financial, social and cultural capital) alter the nature of work with implications for everyday life. Whether lived or perceived, transformed patterns of everyday life in urban space reconstitute labour agency either by constricting or strengthening at different points in their lives. In this paper, Nihan Akyelken looks at the gendered mobilities within the low-paid service sector in Istanbul by bringing the role of urban interventions. The empirical investigation goes beyond the journey-to-work approach and shows the non-infrastructure aspects of urban transformations demonstrating mobility as a reworking practice by politicizing the mobility space (everyday commuting) and using it to organize life (planning for residential mobility in line with life aspirations).



Margot Abord de Chatillon (Doctoral candidate, University of Lyon)

Margot Abord de Chatillon is a doctoral candidate at the LAET-ENTPE (University of Lyon). After researching urban public spaces at the University of Amsterdam, she moved on to exploring urban cycling at the LAET-ENTPE. Through a comparative study of bicycle repair practices in Melbourne and Lyon, she questions the relationship between cyclists and their vehicles. Her research brings some understanding to repair and maintenance practices, to the bicycle repair urban ecosystem, and associated issues of agency, autonomy and socio-economic inequalities within mobility. Furthermore, she takes a unique approach to cycling by shedding light on

the consumption practices associated with this form of mobility.

Title: Materialities of gendered cycling experiences in France and in Australia

One way to apprehend the gender inequalities occurring within mobility, and more specifically within cycling, is by focusing on material culture. Indeed, gender norms are strongly embedded in our everyday interactions with material objects. This presentation dwells on fieldwork conducted among cyclists, community workshop volunteers and cycle mechanics in the cities of Lyon (France) and Melbourne (Australia) in order to investigate gender norms as they structure both cycling and bicycle repair and maintenance practices. Margot Abord de Chatillon shows that women are inhibited in their material interactions with bicycles by a patriarchal environment in many ways. She also discusses some forms taken by feminist attempts to reappropriate bicycles, both in the course of cycling and of repair and maintenance.





Kazuki Nakamura (Associate Professor in Urban Studies, Meijo University)

Kazuki Nakamura specialises in transport planning and urban design, and works within the Department of Civil Engineering at Meijo University. His work explores how sustainable urban systems should be designed to respond to future medium and long-term social changes, including population decline and aging. His work specifically tackles the role of active modes such as walking and cycling, with a specific attention to inclusiveness. He conducts cross-disciplinary research influenced by both the fields of engineering and urban planning, and uses a wide range of methods, from econometrics to environmental psychology.

### Title: Planning Policies and Diverse Bicycle Needs in Japan: the vision and gap

Bicycle has been a popular travel mode in Japan, particularly for women and children, but it is only recently that planning policies strategically promote bicycle use in the context of sustainable transport, active travel, resilient transport, and sports tourism. This presentation consists of the overviews of planning policy and bicycle needs in Japan. The bicycle policy part shows the policy transition from the control of excessive private bicycle use through controlling bicycle parking to the promotion of strategic bicycle use through developing bicycle sharing schemes and cycle lane networks. However, these policies are more about infrastructure and lacks attention to usability for diverse users, including gender. The bicycle use part accounts for the needs of bicycle use in Japan in the cultural background, using the national travel data of bicycle use by gender, age, purpose, city, and year. It also takes account of the COVID impacts on bicycle use in Japan. In the end, inclusive planning policies for diverse bicycle needs will be discussed.



Lena Näre (Associate Professor of Sociology, University of Helsinki)

Lena Näre is an Associate Professor (Tenure Track) of Sociology at the University of Helsinki, Department of Social Research. Her research interests include sociology of work, care, ageing, globalisation, sociology of migration, gender studies, ethnic and racial studies, social theories and ethnographic methods. She is currently leading the research project 'Struggles over Home and Citizenship' funded by Kone Foundation (2018-2021). She is the editor-in-chief of the Nordic Journal of Migration Research and vice-head of discipline of Sociology at the University of Helsinki, Finland

### Title: Local care loops and classed time disciplines

In this paper, Lena Näre combine an everyday and temporal perspective to social policies to analyse how Finnish cash-for-care policies produce certain spatiotemporal arrangements around the organization of care, or what we have termed local care loops (Isaksen & Näre 2019). Temporalities, or the organizing of time, is a fundamental feature of contemporary capitalism and the daily practices of organizing time are part of the political economy of contemporary societies (Harvey, 2010). This everyday spatiotemporal perspective allows us to understand why in a society with relatively expansive public childcare services, middle-class families are turning to private caregivers (nannies, au pairs). Analysing interviews with Finnish employers of privately employed childcarers from this perspective demonstrates varying classed time disciplines in which care is organised in a way that maximizes time available for wage labour on the one hand and the organization of 'quality time with children' on the other hand (Näre & Wide 2019).

#### References

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Isaksen, LW. & Näre, L. (2019) 'Local loops and micro-mobilities of care: rethinking care in egalitarian contexts', *Journal of European Social Policy*, 29(5): 593–599.

Näre, L. & Wide, E. (2019) 'Local loops of care in the metropolitan region of Helsinki – a time economy perspective', *Journal of European Social Policy*, 29(5): 600–613.



Chigusa Yamaura (Junior Research Fellow and Departmental Lecturer in Japanese Studies, University of Oxford)

Chigusa Yamaura is a sociocultural anthropologist, specialising in contemporary Japanese and Chinese society. She received her PhD from Rutgers University in 2013, and since 2015 she has been a Junior Research Fellow at Wolfson College, University of Oxford. Her research investigates the ways in which intimate life intersects with larger social and political ideologies (such as nationalism and gendered life course expectations) and processes (such as transnational flows and demographic change). Her work addresses a broad array of topics, including gender, marriage, cross-border marriage, family, life course expectations, motherhood, reproduction, childcare, and

fertility as well as migration, colonial memory, and transnationalism in East Asia.

## Title: Gendered Realms, Gendered Activities, and Gendered Norms in Japan

In this presentation, Chigusa Yamaura examines how gender norms have materialised within social space and social activities in Japan. More specifically, she asks how space has been gendered not just discursively but also physically, and how social conceptions of gendered realms have changed over time. In post-war Japan, especially during the economic boom years, the norm of the “post-war Japanese family” (Ochiai 1997) was constituted within strict gendered divisions of labour in Japanese society more widely. This paper however shows that now, against the background of perceptions of an ageing population and low-fertility society, a new normative model of what Chigusa Yamaura calls the “productive and reproductive family” has emerged, especially since the 1990s. Within this new family model, Japanese women are expected to be just as productive as men, but at the same time retain their reproductive roles as well. she argues that the productive and reproductive family has blurred the physical separation of gendered realms at home and in society, but it nonetheless paradoxically reinforces the notion that the gendered differences are crucial for promoting the prosperity of Japanese society more broadly.

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