

Public Transit in the Palestinian West Bank: A Critical Race and Indigeneity Perspective

Public transportation plays a vital role in connecting people to essential services, education, and employment opportunities. However, in the occupied Palestinian West Bank, the accessibility, affordability, and reliability of public transit services are significantly hindered by the Israeli occupation and its complex system of checkpoints, settlements, and roadblocks.



Vehicles of Decolonization: Public Transit in the Palestinian West Bank (Critical Race, Indigeneity, and Relationality) by Jennifer Haigh

★★★★★ 5 out of 5

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Through a critical race and indigeneity lens, this article examines the challenges faced by Palestinians in accessing and utilizing public transportation services in the West Bank. It also explores the importance of recognizing the unique experiences and perspectives of indigenous Palestinians in shaping transportation policies and practices that are equitable and inclusive.

Critical Race Theory and Public Transit

Critical race theory (CRT) is a framework that examines the impact of racism and colonialism on social and political institutions, including transportation systems. CRT scholars argue that transportation policies and practices are often shaped by racial biases and power dynamics, which can lead to unequal access to transportation services for marginalized communities.

In the case of the Palestinian West Bank, the Israeli occupation has created a fragmented and discriminatory transportation system that favors Israeli settlers over Palestinians. Israeli checkpoints and roadblocks restrict Palestinian movement and make it difficult for them to access public transportation routes that connect Palestinian cities and towns.

For example, a study by the World Bank found that the average travel time for Palestinians to reach their workplaces in the West Bank was more than twice as long as the travel time for Israeli settlers. This disparity is directly related to the restrictions imposed by the Israeli occupation on Palestinian movement.

Indigeneity and Public Transit

Indigeneity is a term used to describe the original inhabitants of a land or territory. Indigenous peoples have unique cultural, linguistic, and political traditions that often differ from those of the dominant society.

In the case of Palestine, the indigenous people are the Palestinians. Palestinians have a long history and cultural connection to the land of Palestine. However, the Israeli occupation has dispossessed Palestinians

of their land and resources, and has denied them their right to self-determination.

The recognition of Palestinian indigeneity is essential for understanding the challenges they face in accessing public transit services. Indigenous peoples have a unique perspective on transportation that is rooted in their relationship to the land. They often have a deep understanding of local transportation patterns and needs, and they can provide valuable insights into how to create transportation systems that are equitable and inclusive.

Recommendations for Equitable and Inclusive Transportation

To create a more equitable and inclusive public transit system in the Palestinian West Bank, it is essential to address the challenges faced by Palestinians due to the Israeli occupation and to recognize the unique experiences and perspectives of indigenous Palestinians.

Here are some recommendations for improving public transit in the West Bank:

- **Remove Israeli checkpoints and roadblocks:** Checkpoints and roadblocks are a major barrier to Palestinian movement and access to public transportation. Removing these obstacles would significantly improve the accessibility of public transit services for Palestinians.
- **Invest in public transit infrastructure:** The Palestinian Authority should invest in improving the quality and quantity of public transit infrastructure, including buses, trains, and light rail systems. This would make public transit a more attractive and reliable option for Palestinians.

- **Subsidize public transit fares:** Public transit fares should be subsidized to make them more affordable for Palestinians. This would help to ensure that everyone has access to affordable transportation.
- **Involve indigenous Palestinians in transportation planning:** Indigenous Palestinians should be involved in all aspects of transportation planning, from the design of new systems to the implementation of new policies. This would help to ensure that transportation systems meet the needs of the Palestinian community.

Public transit is a vital service that can connect people to essential services, education, and employment opportunities. However, in the occupied Palestinian West Bank, the Israeli occupation has created a fragmented and discriminatory transportation system that favors Israeli settlers over Palestinians.

Through a critical race and indigeneity lens, this article has examined the challenges faced by Palestinians in accessing and utilizing public transportation services in the West Bank. It has also explored the importance of recognizing the unique experiences and perspectives of indigenous Palestinians in shaping transportation policies and practices that are equitable and inclusive.

By addressing the challenges faced by Palestinians and recognizing the unique experiences and perspectives of indigenous Palestinians, it is possible to create a more equitable and inclusive public transit system in the Palestinian West Bank.

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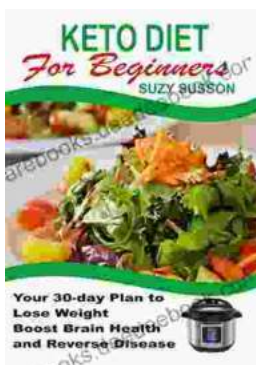
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