

## **Stories of a Traffic Circle**

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In the last decade, research and practice have seen an increasing attempt to move beyond the plateauing of efforts to address road crashes, injuries and safety. Scholars advocate a critical look at interactions between components at various levels of decisions and actions to develop a systems view of road safety planning. Road infrastructure is a complex socio-technical system with deeply embedded human factors such as normative mobility patterns and socio-cultural attitudes which shape decision-making, governance, and operations.

Through the legacy of post-independence modernist planning and the opening of markets through NEP in 1991, both space (roads) and product (cars) have come to define the automobile-centric approach to planning Indian cities. Our cities have increasingly prioritised and built infrastructure for vehicular speed, capitalising on middle-class aspirations and the logic of neoliberal growth. However, a large section of our urban population continues to walk, cycle and use public transport. As per Census 2011, 46.5 % of India's urban population walks to work. Pedestrians, along with motorcyclists, are the most vulnerable groups. Study estimates for India show around 33 % of all road user fatalities in 2022 were pedestrians.

Can an exploration of networked relations and assemblage be used to question the effectiveness of automobile hegemony (a northern condition) in a context where most of the urban population continues to walk, cycle and use public buses (a southern condition)? While we continue to desire urban futures which render vehicular speed as an infrastructural marvel, injuries and fatalities, largely affect those who do not fit into this rendering.

Can Latourian assemblage and investigations of 'science in the making' tackle a systems view of road safety and foster novel ways to move towards a southern understanding of mobility justice?

Studying interactions between human and technical components provides a path to a complex systems' view and understanding of the overall performance of a transport infrastructure. Interactions and performance are seen through social structures, economic conditions and the power dynamics of place.

The paper discusses systems thinking and Latourian assemblage as a dialogue and attempts to make sense of a spatial unit – a traffic circle- through its governance, operation, design and usage network.