

Electroacoustic Music Portfolio: *In-Situ* Auditory Experiences of
Nairobi Bus Soundscapes and Sexual Harassment

ESTHER WAIRIMU KIBURI

Submitted in fulfilment of the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY (PRACTICE-AS-RESEARCH)

Music and Audio Technology, School of Arts

University of Kent

MARCH 2025

Word count:

Content: 56,144 (excluding Appendices and footnotes); Bibliography: 4,309

Abstract

This research presents a portfolio of seven electroacoustic compositions exploring experiences and expectations of Nairobi bus soundscapes through a sexual harassment lens (pre-COVID-19). Motivated by the 2014 #mydressmychoice protests, a pivotal moment for women's rights activism in Kenya, I developed an intersectional approach to creating a socially-conscious portfolio of compositions that bridge critical gaps in the broader disciplines of sociology (gender/feminist literature), sound studies (sonic geographies, soundscape studies) and electroacoustic music research and composition.

In developing the portfolio, I examine how the intersection between gender, sound, and safety shapes auditory expectations and experiences of buses, in the Nairobi context. This research addresses two research questions: to what extent does an experience of a bus soundscape in-situ impact understandings of sexual harassment?; and how can the portfolio imbue and communicate the nuances of sexual harassment within Nairobi bus soundscapes while actively engaging with and contributing to the ongoing socio-cultural dialogue surrounding this issue?

To address research question one, I collected and analysed data from field recordings and detailed fieldwork notes using a novel "soundsit-in-motion" methodology that adapts traditional soundscape research techniques to mobile environments. Additionally, I conducted qualitative interviews with practitioners addressing violence against women and girls in Nairobi. Two significant findings emerged: first, fear of sexual harassment fundamentally alters women's perceptual experiences of soundscapes. Second, the manifestation of "transient sonic markers" due to heightened attention to the environment. These sounds function as safety checkpoints and reveal how women might navigate threatening sonic spaces. Theoretical frameworks from Huron's (2007) theory of expectation and Valentine's (1989) 'spatial expression of patriarchy', contextualised how socio-cultural factors such as respectable femininity, lack of sexual harassment awareness and culture of victim blaming and shaming can influence women's everyday soundscape experiences and expectations.

To address research question two, I adapted answers to research question one to create the resulting portfolio. The portfolio is organised into two themes: "Sexual Harassment, Socialisation and Impact on In-Situ Experience" and "The Bus Soundscape and Transient Sonic Markers" and translates these complex issues that emerged in research question one into compositional works. The research and subsequent portfolio established clear connections between socialisation practices, in-situ soundscape experiences, fear of sexual harassment, and the manifestation of transient sonic markers.

Acknowledgements

I would like to express my deepest thanks to my supervisors, Dr. Aki Pasoulas and Dr. Erin Sanders-McDonagh, whose guidance, expertise and encouragement were instrumental throughout this journey. Your thoughtful feedback and unwavering support, even when I felt like I could not push through, helped shape not only this research but my development as a scholar and composer. So thank you!

I am especially grateful to the University of Kent for their financial support through the Vice Chancellor's Research Scholarship and Graduate Teaching Assistant Scholarship, which allowed me to fully dedicate myself to this research.

Finally, to my family, especially my mother, Dr. Wakaguyu Wa-Kiburi, thank you from the deepest part of my being for supporting me through these past years. Your understanding, patience, being my listening ear and unwavering love and encouragement sustained me throughout. I am the scholar and artist I am because you believed in me even when I did not.

List of Compositions

Name	Year Released	Duration	Details
<i>Less than 140</i>	2020	11:00	Stereo with Visual Media
<i>Aware</i>	2021	10:12	Stereo
<i>Still Waters Run Deep</i>	2023	9:12	Stereo
<i>Mashine*</i>	2023	7:55	8-channel/Binaural
<i>In-situ</i>	2023	12:32	8-channel/Binaural
<i>Listen and Let's Talk About It</i>	2023	14:08	Stereo
<i>Listen and Let's Do Something About It</i>	2024	10:34	8-channel/Binaural

**Mashine is a Swahili word meaning Machine in reference to a bus as a machine.*

TOTAL TIME: **75.33 minutes**

Table of Contents

<i>Abstract</i>	<i>ii</i>
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	<i>iii</i>
<i>List of Compositions</i>	<i>iv</i>
<i>Table of Contents</i>	<i>v</i>
<i>List of Figures</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>List of Tables</i>	<i>2</i>
Chapter 1: Introduction	3
1.1. Motivations, Aims and Purpose	3
1.1.1. Aims and Purpose	3
1.1.2. Motivation	4
1.1.3. Research Gaps	6
1.1.4. Nairobi Society Research Location Context	7
1.2 Research Questions	13
1.3 Methodology	14
1.4 Arguments and Summary of Research Results	21
1.5 Thesis Overview	24
Chapter 2: Review of Current Literature	28
2.1. Literature on Auditory Experience of Public Soundscapes	29
2.1.1. A Holistic Approach to Exploring Soundscapes, in Context	29
2.1.2. David Huron’s ITPRA Theory of Expectation	35
2.1.3. Auditory Expectations of a Soundscape, in Context	43
2.2. Literature on Patriarchy, Respectable Femininity and Sexual Harassment	50
2.2.1. Literature on Rhythm and Mobility in the Bus Soundscape	50
2.2.2. Gill Valentine’s <i>Spatial Expression of Patriarchy</i>	53
2.2.3. Feminism and Respectable Femininity in an African Context	57
2.2.4. Gender Role Socialisation of Women	66
2.2.5. Sexual Harassment Studies and Research in Nairobi and Bordering Countries	71
2.3. Soundscape Analysis Through A Sexual Harassment Lens	82
2.3.1. Nairobi “Balanced” Soundscape	83
2.3.2. Hierarchy of Listening Attention in a Soundscape	84
2.3.3. Keynote Sounds and Signals in a Nairobi Bus Soundscape	86
2.4. Chapter Conclusion	89
Chapter 3: Research Design and Methodologies	91
3.1. Introduction	91
3.2. Mixed Methods Qualitative Research Design	92
3.2.1. Overall Research Approach	92
3.2.2. Embodied Positionality in the Research	95
3.2.3. Social Facets of Nairobi Society and Their Impact on my Positioning	98
3.3. Data Collection Methods	100
3.3.1. <i>Soundsit-in-Motion</i> Soundscape Embodied Fieldwork Approach	100
3.3.2. Autoethnographic Fieldwork Notes	107
3.3.3. Qualitative Interview Design and Structure	110
3.4. Data Analysis Plan	113
3.4.1. Fieldwork and Fieldwork Notes Integrated Analysis	113
3.4.2. Thematic Analysis and Interview Coding	113
3.4.3. Other Portfolio-Related Methodologies	115
3.5. Research Ethical Considerations	119
3.5.1. Fieldwork Ethical Considerations	120
3.5.2. Interview Ethical Considerations	121

3.6.	Chapter Conclusion	122
Chapter 4: Research Findings		124
4.1.	Socialisation and Spatial Expression of Patriarchy in Nairobi Public Spaces	124
4.1.1.	Theme 1: Respectable Femininity in Nairobi	126
4.1.2.	Theme 2: Sexual Harassment Acts in Public Spaces	129
4.1.3.	Theme 3: Culture of Victim Blaming and Shaming and Fear in Public Spaces	134
4.2.	Listening to the Nairobi Bus Soundscape	141
4.3.	Transient Sonic Markers and Fear of Sexual Harassment	146
4.4.	Chapter Conclusion	149
Chapter 5: Analysis of Compositions		150
5.1.	Theme 1: Sexual Harassment, Socialisation and Impact on <i>In-Situ</i> Experience	150
5.1.1.	<i>Less Than 140</i> (2019) Analysis	151
5.1.2.	Aesthetic Direction for <i>Listen and Let's Talk About It</i> (2023) and <i>Listen and Let's Do Something About It</i> (2024)	159
5.1.3.	<i>Listen and Let's Talk About It</i> (2023) Analysis	160
5.1.4.	<i>Listen and Let's Do Something About It</i> (2024) Analysis	165
5.2.	Theme 2: The Bus Soundscape and Transient Sonic Markers	169
5.2.1.	Aesthetic Direction for <i>Aware</i> (2020) and <i>Still Waters Run Deep</i> (2023)	169
5.2.2.	<i>Aware</i> (2020) Analysis	170
5.2.3.	<i>Still Waters Run Deep</i> (2023) Analysis	173
5.2.4.	Aesthetic Direction for <i>Mashine</i> (2023) and <i>In-situ</i> (2023)	179
5.2.5.	<i>Mashine</i> (2023) Analysis	180
5.2.6.	<i>In-situ</i> (2023) Analysis	186
5.3.	Chapter Conclusion	192
Chapter 6: Conclusion		193
6.1.	Research Study Conclusion and Contributions	193
6.2.	Evaluating the Conceptual Framework: Valentine and Huron	196
6.3.	Research Considerations and Future Directions	198
Appendices		201
	Fieldwork Notes	201
	Interview Materials	206
	Glossary	209
Bibliography		211
	Discography	211
	References	212

List of Figures

[Figure 1: Linear Evolution of the ITPRA Theory](#)

[Figure 2: General Statistics of the Participants of the Flone Initiative Study](#)

[Figure 3: Flow Chart for Content Analysis](#)

[Figure 4: Research Routes](#)

[Figure 5: Word Cloud Art for Visual Media for *Less Than 140* \(2019\)](#)

List of Tables

[Table 1: Interview Participant Details](#)

[Table 2: Fieldwork Bus Journey Details](#)

Chapter 1: Introduction

This chapter briefly presents the main elements of the research project conducted between 2018 and 2025 at the University of Kent that resulted in this thesis and portfolio.¹ I briefly discuss the motivations, aims, and purpose of the research, the gaps the research fills, and the methodologies used to address the two research questions and ultimately develop the portfolio.² Additionally, I highlight the main research arguments and provide a summary of the emerging results. A thesis overview concludes the chapter.

1.1. Motivations, Aims and Purpose

1.1.1. Aims and Purpose

The aim and purpose of this research was to create a portfolio that explores experiences and expectations of a Nairobi bus soundscape through a sexual harassment lens. The context of the portfolio and research is sexual harassment within Nairobi buses. This novel approach was motivated by a moment in the history of Activism for women's and girls' rights in Nairobi, Kenya, as discussed in the next section.

¹ From this point forward, “portfolio” refers to the music compositions, while “thesis” refers to this written commentary.

² I use First-Person point of view while writing this thesis. In gender/feminist literature, First-Person point of view is considered appropriate when discussing findings. First-Person encapsulates the methodology of the research and my efforts to reflect more deeply on the nuances of the context of the portfolio in my own socialisation and the extent to which certain socialisation and socio-cultural practices shaped experiences during fieldwork. Furthermore, this perspective reflects an acknowledgement of the intentional ways I brought with me and incorporated those deeply personal experiences from the field while developing the portfolio. This is tied to the importance of a context-based approach—a popular approach in electroacoustic music composition—in realising this research and to my own compositional process.

1.1.2. Motivation

In 2014, several videos uploaded on social media platforms, Facebook and YouTube, showed two separate assaults of two women being violated and violently stripped off their clothing in Nairobi. During one of the incidents, three men attacked a female commuter on a Nairobi bus. In the other incident, a street vendor was sexually assaulted, robbed, and stripped of her clothes by a man employed by a Nairobi bus service operator (Mwaura, 2018; Mc Sirchuti, 2014). During the Court hearings for the suspected perpetrators charged with attacking the female commuter on the bus, the accused men excused their behaviour, expressing that the woman had “tempted them” and was “asking for it” since she was “inappropriately dressed” (Mwaura, 2018; Mwaura, 2020: 106). Advocate for women’s and girls’ rights in Kenya, Naomi Mwaura (2020: 106) mentioned that in the case of the woman who was attacked at the bus stop—though the victim did not report the case to the police—the Twitter (now X) social media campaign #mydressmychoice highlighted this issue, bringing awareness to sexual harassment in public spaces and played a role in the suspects being arrested and prosecuted.

Sexual harassment is a human rights violation that violates the right to equality, dignity and security. According to UN Women, sexual harassment contradicts one of the Sustainable Development Goals of the UN: “Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls”, to eliminate violence and discrimination towards women and girls (UN Women, n.d.). A recent publication released by UN Women contributes to the increasing literature on sexual harassment acts and its consequences within a number of different settings: from the home, workplace and in public spaces. The researchers of this publication define sexual harassment as:

... unwelcome sexual conduct, which can range from looks to rape. It is a creature of gender inequality that is also shaped by other inequalities, such as ethnicity, Indigenous status and race, sexual orientation, age and disability as well as social class. It is an abuse of power and a human rights violation (Sen *et al.*, 2018: 29).

This definition aligns with RELX, describing sexual harassment as acts that aim to perpetuate an environment of “fear, stigma and powerlessness” among victims who are mostly women and girls, which subsequently impacts women’s and girls’ rights to economic opportunities, live free of violence and discrimination (RELX, n.d.; UN Women, n.d.).

The 2014 incidents in Kenya above highlighted victim blaming practices and misogyny rife within Nairobi society that continues to impact many women’s safety, mine included, within the city. Further, these incidents reflect a long history of patriarchal structures functioning to police women in public spaces such as in buses (Megarry, 2014: 53). Such incidents, unfortunately, happen all the time, and are not always filmed or get the media attention that these two 2014 incidents received.

Additionally, three studies conducted in Nairobi, Kenya, further reflect the extent to which sexual harassment towards women often occurs within and around chaotic and competitive Nairobi bus environments. I briefly discuss them below.

In a World Bank study by Kishiue *et al.* (2020: 46), 80% of female respondents (out of 298 women surveyed) and 65% of male respondents (out of 102 surveyed) reported that they had witnessed or experienced sexual harassment while in a Nairobi bus. The authors (2020: 47) posit that the high number of male respondents suggests that men recognise sexual harassment in buses as a huge problem. This aligns with a similar study conducted by Women’s Empowerment Link (2015: 9), where 40% of the 616 participants surveyed across five cities—Nairobi, Mombasa, Kisumu, Nakuru and Kakamega (now referred to as counties)—witnessed some form of violence towards women in buses. In Nairobi, the

percentage was 44.61%. In the third study/survey by Wafula *et al.* (2018), of the 86 participants surveyed, 88% of commuters (nineteen men, thirty-one women surveyed) had witnessed or heard of cases of harassment, in comparison to 73% and 44% of managers (nine men, two women surveyed) and operators (twenty-two men, three women surveyed), respectively. These studies, explored in more detail in Chapter 2, paint a vivid picture of how sexual harassment continues to affect most women while using a bus, due to how often it happens, and the heightened risk faced whenever we enter the space.

Sexual harassment towards women is an important issue to me and heavily influenced my desire to research it and create music about it. Through this research, and in creating a *socially-conscious* portfolio, I intended to examine the extent to which sexual harassment continues to be a likely stressor to many Nairobi women and how it might alter our soundscape experiences and expectations while in public spaces. A *socially-conscious* approach to creating music considers the intersectional ways that issues might overtly affect a person's being and therefore calls for continuous reflection during the research process. There is emerging research and creative approaches in electroacoustic music/soundscape research that is adopting a socially-conscious/socially-engaged approach, as discussed in Chapter 3.

The next section addresses the major research gaps to justify my research.

1.1.3. Research Gaps

This study addresses research gaps in gender/feminist research within sociology, sound studies (specifically sonic geographies) and electroacoustic music research and composition. I explore three major gaps in this research. First, there are no research studies that specifically address sexual harassment and soundscape experiences and expectations within

buses in Nairobi. This gap is crucial given the complex mobilities and sonic geographies of such spaces. Second, there is a dearth of interdisciplinary research in Nairobi that addresses women's experiences in public spaces and how these experiences might be further shaped by socio-cultural issues and socialisation practices. Here, I briefly situate the research by considering the nuanced influences of sonic geographies, mobilities and decolonial perspectives on experiences and expectations of a public space. Third, the field of soundscape research in the Nairobi context is still in its early stages. Therefore, my research is one of the first of its kind that applies research on this issue to the concept and creative direction of the portfolio.

The next section briefly outlines research location elements specific to Nairobi, Kenya, to provide integral context to the research and the foundations of the portfolio.

1.1.4. Nairobi Society Research Location Context

This section provides essential context for an intersectional understanding of sexual harassment on Nairobi buses. Here, I begin to briefly explore the connection between politics, the government and the transport sector, highlighting how these elements might influence women's socialisation in Nairobi society, including issues such as social class and tribe, and the continued normalisation of certain behaviours that may encourage sexual harassment in public spaces and on buses. This section further provides a foundation to understanding some of the crucial issues that might form a Nairobi woman's "mental map" in-situ, as highlighted by Valentine (1989) and Huron (2007), and thus, soundscape expectations and experiences in public.³

³ *In-situ* refers to examining the research subject matter while being present in the original context/physical location (i.e., in a Nairobi bus).

I begin by providing some important statistics across Kenya to consider. According to a 2019 population census, Kenya had a population of 47.6 million people, representing 47 tribes, with 50.5% being women (Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, no date). The largest ethnic group/tribe (as of the 2019 consensus) are the *Kikuyu* with 17.1% of the population followed by the *Luhya* (14.3%), *Kalenjin* (13.4%), *Luo* (10.7%), *Kamba* (9.8%) and *Somali* (5.8%) (Cowling, 2023). Currently, there is no data available that shows the gender breakdown by tribe. Each tribe has its own customs and traditions that govern relationships between men and women; some are stricter and more restrictive than others. This blend of cultures and practices does not account for other non-Kenya tribes from expats of other neighbouring countries, such as Sudanese and Somali people.

Kenya's social class can be divided into six: Upper class (upper-uppers, lower-uppers), Middle class (upper middles, average middles), working class and lower class (Wanjiku, 2023). 2% of the population (part of the upper-uppers class) are considered as part of the 'ruling class' as they own 30% of privately held wealth, are in charge of the massive corporations and companies and dominate government representation and interests (Wanjiku, 2023). The difference between the upper class, and middle/working/lower class, is that the upper class tends to have wealth (higher income that facilitates acquiring financial assets such as investments and property) while middle/working/lower class are differentiated based on the income earned per household (Wanjiku, 2023; Bhattar, 2023). The middle class in Kenya has been growing in the past couple of years while 36% of the population occupies the lower class and lives below the poverty line (Bhattar, 2023).

The statistics above help to contextualise the power imbalance that might manifest in public spaces, exacerbated by patriarchal structures that are persistent in Nairobi society. Makama describes patriarchy as a "system of social stratification and differentiation on the basis of

sex” (2013: 116), that continues to provide economic and material advantages to men while severely constraining women in what they can or cannot do, in a continued effort to marginalise women. This systemic disadvantage is evident in the political landscape in Kenya and the public transport sector. For example, Kishiue *et al.* (2020: ii) suggest that the public transport system and sector has been “conceived, designed, and matured from either a male-oriented or a gender-neutral perspective”. This imbalance is further reflected in political representation, where, at the time of this research, we were in the 2017 to 2022 presidential cycle, and only 23% of the sitting members of parliament were women (Cowling, 2024; IPU Parline, no date). Even in the current presidential cycle, 2022 to 2027, the figure remains the same despite research showing that a greater representation of women in positions of leadership, such as in parliament, increases the likelihood of women’s issues being represented and seriously considered (Kivoi, 2013: 175). While “Kenya Vision 2030 mission” aims for equitable access to public facilities, the pervasive influence of politics through government policies sometimes overlooks women’s safety concerns within transport systems.⁴

Tribalism and classism are huge issues in Kenya, fuelled by politics and people in power. Zipporah Nyambura (2017), in discussing the link between tribalism and politics, posits that the three major tribes in Kenya—*Kikuyu*, *Luhya/Luo* and *Kalenjin*—clash often when it comes to politics and economic growth, and almost always, politicians use this to their advantage to cause further divide and create more tension. In my experience, this divide becomes very apparent around election times or during political strife (i.e., when a prominent person has been caught doing something illegal and they belong to a major tribe). Seeing a

⁴ For more on Kenya Vision 2030, please see here: <https://www.planning.go.ke/kenya-vision-2030/>

person from another tribe as a threat breeds stereotypes and distrust. This trickles down to gender stereotypes and the continued subjugation of women and women's rights. For example, in some tribes, women are not allowed to address men in public because it is considered disrespectful and goes against traditions (Kivoi, 2014: 178).

Beyond politics and tribalism, there are tribes in Kenya who still believe that only boys should be educated because women/girls are socialised to housework and are viewed as cheap labour, therefore, "when a young girl is sent to school, it costs the family twice, as they lose her free labour, and they must pay for her school fees" (Kenyatta, 2023: 9). In such communities, anyone who is seen to deviate or resist these communal beliefs might lose social standing and respect (Kenyatta, 2023: 9; Kivoi, 2014: 179). In this research, gender role socialisation is defined as "the process of learning the social expectations and attitudes that are associated with one's gender" and gender role stereotypes are "cultural beliefs that reflect the societal understanding of each gender" (Nieder *et al.*, 2019: 1719). In a study exploring gendered parenting approaches regarding sexual and reproductive health and its impact on gender inequality in Nairobi society, Nyakangi *et al.* (2021) present differing approaches that fathers and mothers use when parenting teenagers. The 48 parents involved in the study provide a useful reflection of what most of society still upholds and believes.

In the study (2021: 6), fathers emphasised the importance of aligning to specified expectations and gender roles in society in preparation for adult life. While, in contrast, the mothers encouraged the same roles and responsibilities for boys and girls, fathers believed that girls' responsibilities are in the home (cleaning and cooking) while for the boys, it is outside the home. According to this study, it is still a widely held belief that girls', through emphasising responsibilities are in the home, are being socialised to be good wives, "expected to be submissive to their husbands, perform as housewives and primary

caregivers, roles that are traditionally meant for them” (2021: 7). When it comes to the boys, there is no expectation for them to be good husbands, they had more freedom outside the home, and in the case of sexual and reproductive health, the onus to protect from sexual risks is on the girl. It was found that mothers, more than fathers, had similar expectations and rules for both genders, highlighting that mothers are more likely to challenge traditional gender norms than fathers (2021: 10).

As the research subject and composer, the above elements influence my research, whether intentionally (as part of the research and compositional process) or inherently and cannot be separated from the research outcomes. As a Kikuyu woman, brought up by an educated Kikuyu woman, in an upper-class family, my experience and expectations of a bus soundscape, on reflection, was influenced by these elements. In hindsight, my social standing, the tribe I belong to (a major tribe) and the educated status of my parents influence my in-situ experiences and expectations in ways I had never considered before beginning this research. These personal contexts are especially important in recent scholarship in sound studies, which foregrounds the importance of situated knowledge and challenges dominant, Western-centric understandings of sound and space (discussed in-depth in Section 2.1.1). Perhaps because of these aspects, including my training as an electroacoustic composer and the deliberate reflection of sexual harassment while in the field, I would assume that my attention and vigilance to the soundscape is much more heightened compared to other women. This supports previous research in that our experiences of a soundscape are subjective.⁵

⁵ Chapter 3 discusses these issues in-depth to situate my positionality within the research and while collecting data through the soundsit-in-motion approach and in developing the socially-conscious portfolio.

In a city like Nairobi, there is a constant negotiation as to what is deemed appropriate, in context. For example, behaving like a respectable woman, i.e., do not be too loud or express yourself freely. Remain pliant and soft-spoken, even when you are in a situation you need to defend yourself. However, acting appropriately and upholding social norms and respectable femininity values does not always lessen the risk of being sexually harassed while in a public space such as in a bus. Here, Anne Kamau and Tessa Wright, in discussing gender-based sexual harassment in the public transport industry in Nairobi, posit that sexual harassment is not an expression of desire or want, rather concerns control and power over women, particular in public spaces; that is, it is an “expression of power, rather than sexuality, experienced by an individual because of their sex” (2022: 41). Though things are changing, more needs to be done to address women’s experiences while the shift in social relations between men and women continues to unfold.

In addition to socio-cultural norms and practices, which vary depending on the tribe to which someone belongs, religion also plays a part in women’s socialisation in Nairobi. Religion is ingrained in our day-to-day lives. Kivoi suggests that religious teachings emphasise that “power and authority is believed to divinely belong to men, hence subjugating women” (2014: 178). Through these teachings, and wider gender norms, the researcher asserts that men have been socialised to be “aggressive, brave, autocratic, dominant and independent” while women are labelled “emotional, sentimental and fragile” (2014: 179).

The intersectionality of women’s socialisation and their experiences in public spaces, particularly in Nairobi, as discussed briefly above, is intimately influenced by issues such as tribalism (often political), socioeconomic class, parenting, and religion. Chapter 2 presents a more in-depth assessment of these elements, situating them further within sociology gender/feminist research.

The next section presents the two main research questions.

1.2 Research Questions

The context of the portfolio is deeply rooted in exploring experiences and expectations of the Nairobi bus soundscape through a sexual harassment lens. The research project explores this context using the following research questions:

Research Question 1: To what extent does an experience of a bus soundscape *in-situ* impact understandings of sexual harassment?

Research Question 2: How can the portfolio imbue and communicate the nuances of sexual harassment within Nairobi bus soundscapes while actively engaging with and contributing to the ongoing socio-cultural dialogue surrounding this issue?

The research questions are interlinked and addressed iteratively and thematically according to the themes that emerged from the data. Research question two could not be addressed independently; rather answers to research question one dictated the approach to addressing research question two.

It is important to note that, although the research questions focus on addressing the ideation-to-production stages of music creation in relation to the context of the research, I still considered and reflected on how listeners would experience my music. Here, I acknowledge that the reception of my compositions would be one of “construction and not transmission” (Knight-Hill, 2017: 12). In exploring how listeners interpret context-based compositions that utilise ‘real-world’ contexts, electroacoustic composer and researcher, Andrew Knight-Hill (2017: 12) asserts that the context of a composition is not entirely interpreted just from the

sound itself, but that listeners use their own experience and associations to begin to infer and build an understanding of what they are listening to.

With my portfolio, even though I attempt to make the context clear to the listener—such as through narrating some aspects of the fieldwork notes, including excerpts from the interviews, and using programme notes, as discussed in the next section—I remain aware that inferences listeners make may not come from the music or the provided notes of the work and their interpretations will vary (Parry, 2000: 11; Vandsø, 2018: 12).

Here, I acknowledge that “heard context is not absolute, but inferred” and listeners will use their own experiences of the context, or lack thereof, or knowledge of technologies or tools they might be familiar with, to assess the context of the music (Knight-Hill, 2017: 12). Additionally, I consider that my music will be listened primarily by a Western audience (initially) and that the gender/feminist lens and subject matter are considered a sensitive and potentially triggering subject. It is my hope that these compositions will at least encourage broader conversations surrounding sexual harassment of women within public spaces on both a local and international level.

The next section briefly discusses the methodology of this research.

1.3 Methodology

I begin by exploring the bricolage approach. Bricolage technique is a qualitative methodology approach defined by researcher Helen Kara (2015: 27–28) as combining several qualitative methodologies to make sense of the chosen research theme. Methods and techniques best suited to assessing the aims of the research can be chosen across different disciplines. I use a bricolage research technique to integrate both primary and secondary

research in a complementary way. This approach was used to apply a mixed method, iterative, and intersectional qualitative research design to exploring soundscape expectations and experiences of Nairobi buses through a sexual harassment lens. In both sociology (gender/feminist literature) and sound studies (sonic geographies and soundscape studies), an intersectional approach analyses how factors that underpin oppression and marginalisation, such as gender, social strata/class, sexuality and socio-cultural practices and beliefs, shape everyday experiences (Gatwiri and McLaren, 2016: 265; Ingleton, 2015: 63; Nyambura, 2018: 430).

To address research question one, the focus is an interdisciplinary analysis of the theme of the project. Two existing concepts were applied: sound studies researcher David Huron's (2007) ITPRA theory of expectation and Geography feminist Gill Valentine's (1989) 'spatial expression of patriarchy'.⁶

Huron's (2007) ITPRA theory of expectation is applied to discuss the link between expectations of a soundscape and emotions triggered in relation to one's association with the space. This concept expounds on my experiences during the soundsit-in-motion fieldwork. I apply this concept to contextualise my fieldwork experience in a bid to understand the emerging research results, as discussed in the next section. Gill Valentine's (1989) 'spatial expression of patriarchy' theory expounds on issues such as socialisation, respectable femininity, patriarchy and socio-cultural norms and practices, and the extent to which these influence in-situ soundscape experiences and expectations. I first situate Valentine's (1989) concept in the broader fields of mobilities (feminist geography lens) and sonic geographies

⁶ The acronym ITPRA stands for the various types of responses that shape expectations: *Imagination, Tension, Prediction, Reaction* and *Appraisal* (Huron, 2007: 17). This concept is explored in detail in Chapter 2.

(which explore the relationship between sound and space) before exploring her research. Both these concepts offer a foundation for my research, and a way to critically assess the spatial, social and temporal elements associated with bus travel and the extent to which they might influence experiences and expectations of the bus soundscape through a sexual harassment lens. Valentine's concept provides a spatial and social lens to understanding how public spaces become sites where harassment is perpetuated, while Huron's ITPRA cycle of expectation offers a temporal understanding of how expectations and experiences might unfold in-situ over time, shaped by past learned experiences.⁷

In addition to secondary data, this research integrates primary data collected in three ways: first, a *solo soundsit-in-motion* fieldwork.

In soundscape research, a soundwalk is a popular approach to collecting soundscape material (See: Pasoulas, 2020; Bruce, 2023; Voegelin, 2024; Zećo 2021; Westerkamp, 1994, 1998, 2002, 2021; Fiebig, 2015; Bosma, 2017; Drever, 2019, 2020; Martin, 2018). For my research, I apply a derivative of soundwalking. I coined the term *soundsit-in-motion* to refer to this fieldwork approach because I was sitting still in a predominantly mobile space. A soundsit-in-motion approach considers that the soundscape itself that I was in is a moving space and that changes to the soundscape could be influenced by other soundscapes while in

⁷ At the beginning of the research in 2018, I wanted to better bridge and blend elements from electroacoustic music research and composition, sound studies (sonic geographies, soundscape research), and sociology gender/feminist research, and find overt ways to further connect strands between these disciplines. To understand the context of the portfolio from a sociological perspective and the current intersectional gender and feminist literature, I audited sociology classes at the University of Kent, following advice from my supervisors, and immersed myself in gender and feminist research. I also had the privilege to join research groups such as *Flow & Flux Feminist Research Group* hosted by CHASE Feminist Network and attended a Gender Research Workshop (2019) hosted by London Centre for Interdisciplinary Research to learn more about the ideologies and emerging research on violence against women and girls on a global scale, while narrowing it down to Nairobi, Kenya. This immersion in gender and feminist research was crucial, as I wanted to better conceptualise how expectations and beliefs related to women's roles in Nairobi society (socialisation) can influence how we might be treated in public spaces and, consequently, the impact of women's experiences and expectations on a bus soundscape.

motion (i.e., when the bus stops at a bus stop to collect more passengers, when other forms of transport pass by and the sounds they produce temporarily enters the soundscape).

Applying an embodied, in-situ approach, I went on three journeys in the summer of 2019 (pre-COVID-19) on different routes, at different times and days, and averaging one hour travel time, to capture varied and dynamic soundscapes. By an embodied approach, I mean applying an active, situated physical presence within the fieldwork. Here, I centred my own experiences and expectations throughout the research, with a focus on how important it was for my positionality to be embodied and receptive to what emerges during the research process. I considered the influence of Nairobi society on my socialisation as a woman and the ways in which socio-political issues shaped this socialisation and further how I could include this into the composition process.

Additionally, I acknowledge that as a composer, my creative choices are a consequence of socially grounded identifications and relational social factors, such as my gender, social class, tribe, and age (as discussed earlier when exploring specific aspects of Nairobi society), which also shape my everyday lived experiences.⁸ When exploring matters of socio-cultural significance, such as sexual harassment within public spaces, the embodiment of sound highlights the extent to which different communities (i.e., women) interpret and engage uniquely with soundscapes, and how socio-cultural backgrounds and practices might influence these experiences. Here, I consider that listening practices and sonic experiences are never neutral and always shaped by power structures and situatedness of whoever is listening within the space, in this case, me (Zéco, 2021: 285). A soundsit-in-motion allowed,

⁸ Chapter 3 explores in-depth the various social facets of Nairobi society and how they shape my socialisation and thus, the importance of considering these elements in the methodologies I chose to create the portfolio.

in my case, for an engrossed and embodied listening experience where one can be immersed in the “flow of the enveloping soundscape” (Drever, 2020: 1).

Second, fieldwork notes. After these journeys, I wrote down my post-fieldwork reflections. Initially, I wrote these notes as a way to better recall my experiences when I went to the studio to compose. These fieldwork notes provided not only useful contextual data that informed the aesthetic of the portfolio but also valuable information that further contextualised the theme of the project and lent credence to the data collected during the third approach, as discussed below.⁹

Third, I conducted semi-structured, qualitative interviews with people who work in organisations that advocate for women’s and girls’ rights in Nairobi. The interview responses and fieldwork notes further cemented my understanding of how socio-cultural norms and practices of Nairobi society such as respectable femininity, patriarchy and sexual harassment (as discussed briefly in the next section) impact in-situ experiences and expectations of the Nairobi bus soundscape; in my case, how these issues filtered into my thoughts and behaviour while in the bus.

The remainder of this section explores the methodologies used to address research question two.

In order to develop a portfolio that explores experiences and expectations of a Nairobi bus through a sexual harassment lens, my approach in this research, and my creative practice, is firmly rooted in soundscape research and composition. In the field of soundscape

⁹ The travel diary journal entries can be found in Fieldwork Notes in the Appendices.

composition, where environmental sounds are the primary source for aesthetic and composition themes and sound material, understanding human and nonhuman interactions within the environment is the main premise (See: Westerkamp 1974, 2002, 2021; Drever, 2017, 2020; Carras, 2019; Radicchi, 2017; Zećo, 2021; Bruce, 2023; Voegelin, 2024). Soundscape composer Hildegard Westerkamp suggests that “a soundscape composition is always rooted in themes of the sound environment” and defines the soundscape as a combination of environmental sound recordings that provide an “artistic, sonic transmission of meanings about place, time, environment and listening perception” (Westerkamp, 2002: 53; Grinfeder *et al.*, 2022: 2).

In addressing research question two, the creation of the soundscape composition portfolio, I consider the emerging themes from the data in research question one. This was integral to forming the *socially-conscious* portfolio. My approach to creating the portfolio was iterative and wholly dependent on the emerging themes in research question one.

Three methodologies assisted in addressing question two. First, general themes and motivation inspired by data from research question one. Second, soundscape recordings from soundsit-in-motion fieldwork used as sound material to develop the soundworlds and influenced the technical approaches used to create each composition. Third, fieldwork notes and qualitative interview responses used as narrative material. Narration served to further embroil myself within the research while also providing contextual information to the listener. I also apply content analysis to collected tweets to provide visual material for the visual component of *Less Than 140* (2019).¹⁰ In sociology, content analysis is a research

¹⁰ *Less Than 140* centres the #mydressmychoice campaign, that trended on Twitter in response to the 2014 incidents, as mentioned earlier in the chapter. I use tweets that were shared on Twitter in response to the incidents to develop some aspects of the composition. I discuss content analysis as a portfolio-related methodology in Chapter 3 and examine how I integrated the data from the content analysis in Chapter 5.

method used for interpreting and analysing visual or textual communication (such as social media posts) to understand themes, patterns, or socio-cultural phenomena (Wilson, 2022: 40; Drisko and Maschi, 2015: 6). These methodologies guided the aesthetic and creative direction of the portfolio.

It is important to note that this was not the initial approach but rather it was adapted due to COVID-19 restrictions. The fieldwork I conducted in 2019 was a pre-fieldwork exercise to determine logistics and the best methods for recording the soundscape (including safety considerations, equipment selection, and optimal recording techniques). I intended to return with better equipment and a better plan to record the soundscape as well as speak to participants face to face after necessary ethics approvals. However, with COVID, I needed to adjust this plan and use what I had already collected (soundscape recordings and travel journey diary entries) and consider online interviews. Returning to record after lockdowns were lifted later in 2021 had financial implications that would have made travelling to Kenya to conduct research difficult and expensive (quarantine rules and fees, etc). In Kenya, COVID restrictions were still in place well into 2022. The established research design helped maintain research momentum and rigour during these uncertain times. It is also interesting to note that, because the interviews were conducted between 2021 and 2022, participants often referenced the impact of COVID-19 on women's safety in public spaces and sometimes compared experiences before and after the pandemic. Even though this is beyond the scope of my project, I acknowledge the ways in which the pandemic may have affected, in some cases worsened, harassment towards women in public spaces and influenced experiences of a bus soundscape. Due to this, my research was based on data collected prior to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The next section presents research arguments and illustrates how the research, as presented in the portfolio, addresses the research questions. It also includes brief discussions on the emerging research results.

1.4 Arguments and Summary of Research Results

In creating the *socially-conscious* portfolio, excerpts from the soundscape recordings, narrating parts of the fieldwork notes, and snippets from the interviews are creatively and carefully integrated within the compositions to connect the different strands of electroacoustic music, soundscape research and sociology.¹¹ The two emerging results from this research are: fear of sexual harassment in-situ and *transient sonic markers*. Transient sonic markers are an example of an auditory coping strategy that manifested in my case while I was in the field. I coined the term to refer to these key sonic events within the bus soundscape that were very prominent and became focal points in my experience as a female commuter. These sounds drew attention more than any other sounds while in the bus soundscapes. These results are explored thematically in the portfolio as well as in this thesis. I discuss them separately below.

Fear of sexual harassment emerged from the data collected in the soundsit-in-motion fieldwork, fieldwork notes and interview responses.

In addressing research question one, three themes emerged from the interview responses and fieldwork notes: respectable femininity, what sexual harassment entails and fear of sexual harassment in public spaces. I apply a thematic analysis approach to examining interview

¹¹ Creative direction and techniques used to incorporate these elements are discussed at length in Chapter 4 and 5.

responses and use quotes from fieldwork notes to further contextualise the findings. Kiger and Varpio describe thematic analysis as a method of analysing qualitative data to “seek to understand experiences, thoughts, or behaviours” (2020: 846). These themes from the data highlight the link between socialisation practices in Nairobi, as explored through Valentine’s (1989) ‘spatial expression of patriarchy’, and how some practices might affect in-situ experiences and expectations within a bus soundscape. Issues such as respectable femininity, socialisation and certain socio-cultural practices, as explored in-depth in Chapter 2, can impact women’s in-situ experiences and expectations, which can vary from woman to woman. Therefore, the research is primarily addressed through my own experiences and expectations as the researcher and composer, and also provides supporting evidence through interview responses.

In addressing research question two, I reflect on my fieldwork while in the studio and apply electroacoustic compositional techniques to explore fear of sexual harassment. To further assess this theme compositionally, I created three compositions that drew on this research result. *Less than 140* (2019), *Listen and Let’s Talk About It* (2023) and *Listen and Let’s Do Something About It* (2024) were developed under the portfolio theme: Sexual Harassment, Socialisation and Impact on *In-Situ* Experience. Fear as the primary emotion is explored in the portfolio through the use of sound textures, gestures and layering in such a way that the tension that comes with fear is felt through the music.¹² I also highlight other soundscape composers that use soundscape recordings in their compositions, and have linked the socio-cultural/political context of where they recorded the soundscape to their compositional approach and aesthetic.

¹² This emotion forms the bedrock of the soundworld of each composition and how it is incorporated, and is highlighted in each individual composition analysis in Chapter 5.

Transient sonic markers emerged from the data collected in the soundsit-in-motion fieldwork and fieldwork notes.

In addressing research question one, this research explores Nairobi bus soundscape, including its properties, Nairobi bus culture and an assessment of the three buses in my fieldwork. To explore Huron's (2007) ITPRA theory and Valentine's (1989) 'spatial expression of patriarchy' concepts, I analyse Nairobi bus soundscapes, drawing primarily on research from soundscape studies and sonic geographies. I discuss aspects such as "balanced" nature of the three Nairobi bus soundscapes, Nairobi bus culture, and how the features and properties of these soundscapes allow for a closer analysis of the layers of sound activities typically present within these spaces. I explore how a hierarchy of listening attention (that is: listen-in-search and listen-in-readiness) draws out certain sounds within the soundscape (that is: keynote sounds and signals).¹³ Exploring the soundscape in this way and integrating Huron's (2007) and Valentine's (1989) concepts in context leads to another major find of the research: the emergence of transient sonic markers.

Transient sonic markers draw attention more than any other sounds while in the bus soundscapes. I argue in this thesis that these transient sonic markers, a term I coined, are an example of an auditory coping strategy that manifested in my case while I was in the field. These sounds are key sonic events within the bus soundscape that were very prominent and became focal points in my experience. The five transient sonic markers I explore in this research are: (a) low-frequency acceleration and deceleration of the engines; (b) whistling

¹³ Shaped by past experiences and expectations of the auditory activities within the soundscape, listen-in-search involves actively searching the environment for sound cues while listen-in-readiness requires a familiarity with the sound events, and an anticipation for the occurrence of a specific sound event. This will be explored in-depth in Chapter 2.

from the bus conductor; (c) a sharp click or tap on the side/window of the bus; (d) door sliding open and closed; and (e) mid-frequency jiggling of coins in hand.

In unpacking these transient sonic markers, and their impact on my in-situ experiences, I address how expectation of a soundscape is formed through use of the space combined with mental associations of the auditory activities within the environment (Truax, 2012: 2105; Truax, 2001: 57; Bruce and Davies, 2014: 3). Huron's (2007) ITPRA theory of expectation is useful in discussing the link between expectations of a soundscape and emotions (fear) triggered in relation to one's association with the space.

In addressing research question two, I explore the bus soundscape and these sounds under the portfolio theme: The Bus Soundscape and Transient Sonic Markers. *Aware (2021)*, *Still Waters Run Deep (2023)*, *Mashine* (2023)* and *In-situ (2023)*, were developed under the theme, further highlighting the connection between these bus soundscapes, transient sonic markers and my heightened fear of sexual harassment, as is evidenced in the fieldwork entries.¹⁴

1.5 Thesis Overview

The thesis is organised as follows.

Chapter one presented the motivations and aims of the research project and the research gaps in the broader disciplines of sociology (gender/feminist research), sound studies (sonic geographies) and electroacoustic music research and composition. It then explored the two research questions that address the research theme: soundscape expectations and experiences

¹⁴*Mashine** is a Kiswahili term that translates to Machine.

of Nairobi buses through a sexual harassment lens. This was followed by a discussion of the bricolage research design and methodologies used to address the research. Then, I highlighted the major arguments and summarised the research results from the collated data and how these data addressed both research questions.

Chapter two presents current research on auditory expectations and experiences of an environment, exploring soundscapes in context and situating Huron's (2007) ITPRA theory of expectation. The chapter then situates Valentine's (1989) 'spatial expression of patriarchy' in the broader fields of mobilities (feminist geography lens) and sonic geography before exploring her research, highlighting issues such as respectable femininity, feminism and women's socialisation broadly before narrowing down to a Nairobi context. Additionally, the chapter briefly examines emerging coping strategies within a bus soundscape to reduce the risk of being sexually harassed, situating transient sonic markers as examples of auditory coping strategies. The last section critically discusses Valentine's and Huron's concepts, situating how these concepts formed the bedrock of the research. Here, I briefly include literature related to soundscape analysis, particularly R Murray Schafer's approach, including notions of keynote and soundmarks.

Chapter three highlights the bricolage research design, which employed an intersectional and iterative approach to addressing research question one and developing the portfolio, including my positionality within the research and the socio-cultural aspects I considered that impacted my experiences and expectations. The chapter also discusses the solo soundsit-in-motion methodology, autoethnographic fieldwork notes approach, interview design and structure and other portfolio-related methodologies (that is, narrative and content analysis).

Chapter four explores research findings from the data and the themes that emerged to address research question one, with a focus on fear as the primary emotion. The chapter examines the link between socialisation and spatial expression of patriarchy, addressing three themes that emerged from the data: respectable femininity, sexual harassment acts in public spaces and the impact of culture of victim blaming and shaming in compounding fear in public spaces. This situates the first major find of the research: fear of sexual harassment. The chapter also assesses Nairobi bus culture and soundscape properties, highlighting the “balanced” nature of the soundscape. Here, the chapter expounds on Huron’s (2007) and Valentine’s (1989) concepts in context, highlighting the use of a hierarchy of listening attention to assess Nairobi’s bus soundscape in-depth and the types of sounds/sound activities typical in such an environment. The chapter discusses keynote sounds and signals to build out the emergence of the other major research finding: transient sonic markers. The chapter concludes by linking fear of sexual harassment and the emergence of these transient sonic markers.

Chapter five highlights how the results in research question one were used to address research question two. The portfolio was developed under two themes: “Sexual Harassment, Socialisation and Impact on *In-Situ* Experience” and “The Bus Soundscape and Transient Sonic Markers”. This chapter assesses the iterative approach to integrating musical and nonmusical data, approaches and techniques to develop a portfolio that explores soundscape expectations and experiences through a sexual harassment lens. Further, I contextualise my compositional approach with similar research in the field, particularly soundscape composers who use soundscape recordings in their music and integrate the socio-political nuances of the place where they recorded.

Chapter six concludes the thesis and provides the study conclusion, contributions, research considerations, and future directions.

Chapter 2: Review of Current Literature

This chapter reviews existing literature in the broader disciplines of sociology (gender/feminist research), sound studies (soundscape studies, sonic geographies) and electroacoustic music research and composition to explore soundscape expectations and experiences of a Nairobi bus. I draw on concepts and research from soundscape research, psychoacoustics, electroacoustic research and gender/feminist sociology research. I consider Huron's (2007) ITPRA theory of expectation while exploring the link between emotions triggered when in a soundscape through a particular context (sexual harassment), influenced by how one might interact with the moving space and this context, and expectations of the soundscape.¹⁵ Then, I discuss sexual harassment within the context of Nairobi, Kenya, examining issues such as respectable femininity, patriarchy and toxic socio-cultural norms and practices, and highlight the extent to which these concepts are ingrained in the socialisation practices of women and girls while at the same time continuing to reinforce certain behaviours within society that might lead to the normalisation of violence and harassment towards women and girls. Here, Gill Valentine's (1989) concept of the 'spatial expression of patriarchy' offers a foundation to this discussion. Then, I examine auditory experiences and expectations of a Nairobi bus soundscape through a sexual harassment lens. This includes establishing the manifestation of certain sounds as auditory coping mechanisms that I refer to throughout the thesis as transient sonic markers. The last section critically discusses Valentine's and Huron's concepts, situating how these concepts formed

¹⁵ The acronym ITPRA stands for the various types of responses that shape expectations: *Imagination, Tension, Prediction, Reaction* and *Appraisal* (Huron, 2007: 17).

the bedrock of the research. Here, I briefly include literature related to soundscape analysis, particularly R Murray Schafer's approach, including notions of keynote and soundmarks.

2.1. Literature on Auditory Experience of Public Soundscapes

This section begins by defining the term soundscape, assessing soundscape features and mapping out the importance of examining these features, and auditory experiences associated with them, in context. I then assess Huron's (2007) ITPRA theory of expectation, and develop the link between emotions triggered within soundscapes and past learned behaviour in relation to a particular context; in this case, sexual harassment. Finally, I explore Huron's research further, highlighting how certain emotions and learned habits linked to a particular context (sexual harassment) might lead to manifesting certain sounds that help to navigate a triggering space.

2.1.1. A Holistic Approach to Exploring Soundscapes, in Context

This section discusses the main elements of a soundscape and the importance of considering how a specific context (sexual harassment, or the fear of it) might influence soundscape expectations and experiences. I apply soundscape research and existing literature to define a soundscape, and examine the importance of context within soundscape research.

Soundscape studies and research apply a holistic approach to understanding the complex layers of sounds and interactions in a given location or context, paying special attention to how people in that environment might experience the auditory information within it. My research focuses on experiences and expectations of Nairobi bus soundscapes through a sexual harassment lens, highlighting that an issue such as sexual harassment can impact how a woman might experience the sounds within that environment, in context (Bruce *et al.*,

2009: 2; Schulte-Fortkamp and Jordan, 2023: 51). The aim of my research is not to say definitively that all women who use buses in Nairobi experience this predominantly mobile/moving soundscape in this way. It is an example of an experience; in this case, my own. This experience has been supplemented in later chapters by interview responses. For the purposes of this research, it is important to define the term “soundscape”.

2.1.1.a. Defining the Term *Soundscape*

This section defines the term “soundscape” as used in this research and thesis and when referring to in-situ recordings interweaved in the *socially-conscious* portfolio. Since first mentioned by Michael Southworth in 1969, the term “soundscape” has been widely adapted across different research disciplines. When researching the auditory experience of urban environments, Southworth first defined it as “the quality and type of sounds and their arrangements in space and time” (Southworth, 1969; Axelsson, 2020: 551; Grinfeder *et al.*, 2022: 1). Later, it was popularised in soundscape research by R. Murray Schafer in the 1977 book *Our Sonic Environment and the Soundscape*.

Barry Truax—when discussing the soundscape analysis approach adopted by the World Soundscape project to create awareness of sonic environments—defines soundscape as an ever-evolving relationship between us and the auditory environment of the spaces we occupy (1974: 36). Established in the late 1960s to early 1970s by R. Murray Schafer, the World Soundscape Project (WSP), through education and research, began with a detailed analysis of Vancouver City (Canada) public soundscapes. Truax was part of this research group. In the article, Truax (1974: 36) argues that this relationship between us and the environment reflects changes in our cultural, social and philosophic developments. Further, Truax posits that any analysis of a particular soundscape is an effort to better understand the influence of

the soundscape on our behaviour should not only be based on “physical parameters, but rather on what may be called perceptual and cognitive primitives and procedures or concepts derived from them” (1974: 37). Here, the researcher gives a few examples of primitives, or foundational aspects of soundscape analysis, such as foreground/background concept, silence, acoustic space etc.

The term “soundscape” has evolved across different disciplines, from urban city planning to soundscape research and composition, leading to some ambiguity in its definition (Brooks *et al.*, 2014: 31). My thesis and research applies the definition provided by the International Standard ISO/DIS 12913-1: a soundscape is defined as “a perceptual construct of an acoustic environment” and is based on one’s experience of an environment, in context (ISO 12913-1, 2014: 1; Fiebig, 2023: 22; Kang *et al.*, 2018: 4; Brooks *et. al.*, 2014: 32). Context in this definition refers to not only the physical location of the environment but also includes aspects such as interactions with people in the space, and socio-cultural background of the individual(s) (Schulte-Fortkamp and Fiebig, 2023: 8; Fiebig *et al.*, 2020: 9). A key factor of my research considers my socio-cultural background, and the socio-cultural norms and practices, unspoken or not, governing the research location (Nairobi) as discussed in Chapter 1 briefly, and how certain issues affected my in-situ behaviour.

The next section highlights the importance of context in soundscape research, and the extent to which context can affect experiences and expectations of a soundscape in-situ.

2.1.1.b. Context of a Soundscape

Soundscape researchers such as Brigitte Schulte-Fortkamp and Pamela Jordan have distinguished between auditory environment and soundscape. The researchers trace a broad history of soundscape studies, focusing on holistic approaches that several projects have

adopted to analyse the impact of the soundscapes we occupy daily, with the aim to enhance these acoustic environments and enrich the lives of those who live and traverse within them. The authors distinguish between acoustic environment and soundscape, arguing that an acoustic environment comprises several layers of sonic stimuli “constructed in its entirety by the people who use it and their interactions with the space” (2023: 49, 74). On the other hand, a soundscape not only includes these interactions but also how these individuals who frequently occupy this space perceive the acoustic environment and their responses to sound events within this space (ibid.).

This distinction echoes Truax’s sentiment in the second edition of *Acoustic Communication* where the researcher applies an interdisciplinary framework to discussing various aspects of the acoustic environments we occupy (in his case, environments of 2001 and before)¹⁶. He writes that distinguishing between the acoustic environment and soundscape deepens an understanding of how “an environment is understood by those living within it” (Truax, 2001: xviii; Schulte-Fortkamp and Jordan, 2023: 27).

Within the auditory environment, context affects how we might experience the soundscape, what we hear, how we interpret what we have heard and our responses to these auditory events (Schulte-Fortkamp and Fiebig, 2023: 8). Sounds in the environment have meaning and provide important information that might impact how we navigate through these spaces (Aletta *et al.*, 2014: 66). Heikki Uimonen (2011: 256) asserts that sounds in the environment might provide information to people who occupy it to help interpret what is happening, sonically, in the space. The author explores sound/listen walks in soundscape research and

¹⁶ The first edition of this book was released in 1984. My research cites the most recent and current edition released in 2001.

acoustic communication, further arguing that our understanding and consciousness of the sounds within the environment impact how we construct our surroundings. And this shapes our “phenomenon of experience” as posited by Ingold (2007: 11) and Drever (2020: 1).

Context is key to understanding the expectations we might have when navigating a soundscape and consequently how these expectations can be shaped by our socio-cultural background and ability to handle difficult situations when they happen in the soundscape (Bruce *et al.*, 2009: 2; Schulte-Fortkamp and Fiebig, 2023: 8). Schulte-Fortkamp and Jordan (2023: 51) attest that there is a “dynamic, bi-directional” relationship between the context of a soundscape and the individual within it. Our behaviour directly impacts the auditory events in a soundscape, while the soundscape in turn might influence our relationship and behaviour within this acoustic environment. We not only interpret what we hear in our everyday soundscapes, but also, consciously or not, construct the spaces we occupy based on the roles these sounds play in the environment (Uimonen, 2011: 256).

In the podcast, *The Rest is Just Noise*, Mitchell *et al.* (2023) explore city soundscapes with composer and sound studies researcher Marcel Cobussen. In discussing creating awareness of the soundscapes we occupy, Cobussen asserts that listening to sounds in context is important to understanding how they impact us. The researcher mentions that extrapolating a sound from the environment and studying it in isolation does not give a full analysis of the impact of that sound, rather, “sound is more than sound and has socio-political implications attached to it” (Mitchell *et al.*, 2023: 28’25”–29’25”). Each auditory environment, and soundscape, is unique in its properties and how we might experience it. Therefore, context is crucial in establishing the impact the auditory environment of a soundscape has on us, and vice versa, and how we experience it.

It is essential to note that while my research focuses on creating a portfolio of music with context that intersects with in-situ experience and expectation of a Nairobi bus soundscape through a sexual harassment lens, I acknowledge that sound is also deeply enmeshed within broader structures of power and historical processes (colonial history). Recent scholarship in sound studies, particularly in the field of sonic geographies, provide an important backdrop for thinking about whose voices and sonic practices are rendered audible within feminist soundscape research, and under what conditions. Establishing the context for my research involves being transparent about whose perspective the experience is from (mine) and why this perspective matters in the broader collective agency of women's safety while in public spaces.

Steingo and Sykes (2019) argue that soundscapes are not neutral but are often “organized by power,” embedding social, economic, and political conditions within the domain of sound. Listening practices, particularly in-situ experiences, can therefore reinforce or challenge these everyday environments. This aligns with Cobussen's (2022: 83) assertion that auditory events offer a “public account of the social world,” carrying social meanings that shape and are shaped by the ways that people and communities act and interact within these spaces. Though an in-depth assessment of the larger political and historical entanglements in soundscapes in Nairobi is beyond the scope of this research, in Chapter 1, I briefly discussed certain elements that might impact women's experiences and expectations while in a bus soundscape (tribe, class, politics, etc.) and contextualised them to my own background as the research subject and composer.

Additionally, within soundscape studies, Dylan Robinson (2020), in critiquing settler-colonial listening practices, calls for an awareness of how listening can become extractive, reinforce control and sometimes erase, particularly in contexts that might carry embedded

expectations or unconscious practices that align with or resist power structures. Here, Robinson asserts that decolonisation in sound studies is not only a matter of including marginalised voices but requires a rethinking of listening practices. In my research, I centre my own marginalised experience within the frame of the research subject. Chapters 3, 4 and 5 highlight a continual effort to be reflective and attentive to broader arguments and practices within soundscape studies and my intersectional approach to developing the portfolio, from ideation to final composition, and writing this thesis.

The next section dives deeper into how we might experience a soundscape and the ways in which we might process the sounds within it. Huron's (2007) ITPRA theory of expectation sets the stage for a discussion on the ways in which a contextual approach to examining a soundscape might lead to a specific auditory experience.

2.1.2. David Huron's ITPRA Theory of Expectation

David Huron's ITPRA theory of expectation in the seminal book, *Sweet Anticipation: Music and the Psychology of Expectation*, sought to explore the link between what music listeners expect to hear when listening to music and their emotional states (Huron, 2007: 17).¹⁷ Huron's concept offers a way to analyse the Nairobi bus soundscape in context. Although the focus of Huron's research is on music, the theory provides a temporal analysis framework that has merit in soundscape studies, offering a parallel between emotions in music and the time-sensitive unfolding of auditory experiences and expectations in soundscapes. Here, Ma and Thompson (2015: 14563) support this parallel, arguing that similar emotional responses

¹⁷ ITPRA stands for *Imagination, Tension, Prediction, Reaction and Appraisal* (Huron, 2007: 17).

are triggered when certain acoustic attributes in music are adopted from environmental sounds.

Ma and Thompson conducted experiments on different groups of participants to determine whether there was a correlation between how we might track information in the soundtrack of a film (speech, music and sound effects) and the environments we occupy in our everyday lives. The researchers concluded that three key acoustic attributes are tracked in the same way in both real life and films:

Frequency, intensity, and rate may interact with human emotions because they carry biologically significant information about the size, proximity, and degree of energy of a sound source. For example, larger species tend to produce lower-pitched calls than smaller species; intensity is inversely related to the distance and positively related to the body size and muscle power of the sound source; rate is inherently determined by the speed of motion (2015: 14565).

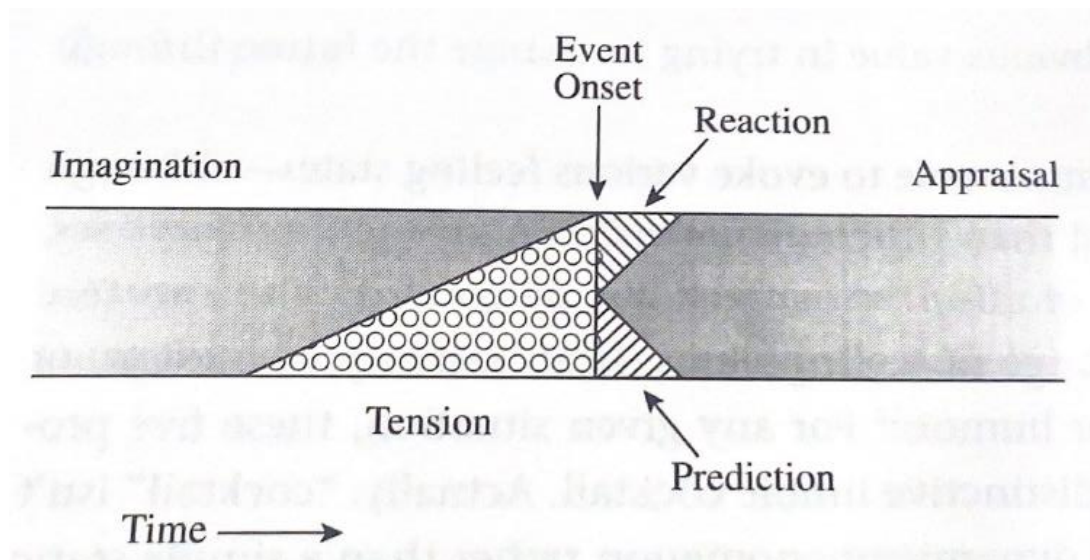
In discussing the psychological theory of expectation and its link to how music evokes emotions, Huron (2007: 3) proposes that expectations are “mental functions” that have been adapted over time and familiarity with a space, and how accurate our experiences are, allows for us to experience the soundscape in a way that is useful and helps to respond appropriately. The intention behind the ITPRA theory of expectation is to offer a general theory with both biological and cultural roots that assesses the link between emotions as evoked by expectation. This is particularly important for my research as I ask myself: does expectation play a role in shaping in-situ experiences?

The acronym ITPRA stands for the various types of responses that shape expectations: *Imagination, Tension, Prediction, Reaction* and *Appraisal*, and play a crucial role in “tailoring behaviour so that it is optimally adapted to a given environment” (Huron, 2007: 17). Within the context of a moving soundscape like a bus, this concept helps to trace a linear unfolding of in-situ experiences and expectations especially when an unpredictable event

such as sexual harassment, that has the potential of influencing auditory experiences, occurs.

The following diagram has been adapted from Huron's research:

Figure 1: Linear Evolution of the ITPRA Theory (from Huron, 2007: 17).



The Imagination and Tension responses occur before an event happens; in the case of my research, before entering the bus soundscape. These two responses, Huron argues, can build progressively over time depending on the event and how soon it is about to happen. An Imagination response can modify behaviour to increase the likelihood of a positive outcome when the event happens such as pre-emptively avoiding a situation that could escalate to sexual harassment within the evolving soundscape of a bus.

We might *imagine* what will happen and adjust our reactions to better protect ourselves. If we imagine a negative outcome, then we are likely to prepare for that outcome by tuning our senses into every aspect of the environment. This progresses on to a Tension response in anticipation of the event. Huron here asserts that preparation involves coordination between our motor and mental functions to “match attention and arousal to the expected outcome”, synchronising the levels of both appropriately “so that they are reached just in time for the

onset of the event” (2007: 9). He provides examples of arousal such as muscles tensing, heart rate increasing, faster response to stimuli etc. In cases where the outcome of the event is uncertain, Huron (2007: 10) suggests that preparing for the worst case scenario, an event that requires the highest level of attention and arousal, is the safest option.

Sexual harassment within a bus soundscape—whether a woman might be harassed or not; or if being harassed, how to react to deescalate the situation—can be considered as an unpredictable event within the soundscape and lends to preparing for the worst case scenario to occur.¹⁸

Electroacoustic researcher, Gary Kendall, suggests that we should consider how “feeling participates in meaning” (2014: 201). Kendall explores how emotion contributes to meaning that listeners get from music and makes a link between our experiences of music and everyday habits and vice versa. The researcher suggests that there is an ongoing analysis and evaluation of what emotional response is appropriate to a situation. That this ongoing evaluation builds up over time, and is stored in our long-term memory, a sentiment that echoes Huron’s argument above. We then subconsciously draw on these past experiences to evoke the appropriate emotional response.

In a similar vein, Fiebig (2023: 29) discusses auditory experiences in soundscapes, offering that we not only react to the physical stimuli and sonic patterns within the soundscape, but also draw on long-term memory, and learned behaviour, to manage our cognitive responses to the auditory events within a soundscape, further influencing the Imagination and Tension

¹⁸ I have experienced this in the past, which seemed to have manifested unconsciously while doing the fieldwork for this research. It is only during post-fieldwork, and in writing fieldwork notes, that I could reflect on my experiences and realise that this happens more often than I had initially realised.

phases. For Kendall, these conditioned emotional responses based on patterns experienced in the past can “predict future outcomes with emotional significance” (2014: 195). Huron, Fiebig, and Kendall agree that there is an inextricable link between experience and emotions; that we cannot disassociate emotions and feelings from any experience (Kendall, 2014: 192).

The next three responses in Huron’s concept—Prediction, Reaction and Appraisal—happen immediately after an event has occurred. The Prediction response depends on our assumptions of what will happen and on how certain we were about the outcome of an event. This can be influenced by past experiences and learned behaviour. Huron (2007: 13) argues that there is generally a positive emotional response when our predictions are confirmed, whether good or bad. The Reaction response occurs after the outcome is known. Prediction and Reaction responses happen at the same time and are linked to each other. Huron’s conclusion that we might have a positive emotional response when our predictions are confirmed provides an interesting find.

Huron *et al.* (2015: 2) echo Huron’s ITPRA theory and assert that sound plays a crucial role in providing time-sensitive information about the environment around us, which ultimately, shapes how we interact with the environment and with each other within this environment in-situ. In discussing how music might trigger “experience of safety”, Huron *et al.* (2015: 1) argue that the main task of our sensory system is to gather key information from the environment to help in adapting behaviour in-situ. This ties to my research as an emerging result of the project was that the transient sonic markers provide a way through which safety and protective behaviour might be adopted (consciously or not) while travelling in a bus.

While in a soundscape, certain auditory information might immediately grab our attention, either indicating danger or a safe and stable environment. Our reaction response will depend

on these factors. Huron asserts that Reaction response and Appraisal response are the main two types of reactions after an event has happened. Huron (2007: 13, 14) writes that Reaction responses are quick and unconscious assessments of the situation that immediately triggers a response, bodily or otherwise, while Appraisal responses engage our consciousness and a more “thoughtful” analysis of the event, taking into consideration any social and environmental factors. Both these responses can either evoke the same emotional reaction or differ because, as Huron (2007: 15) asserts, Appraisal responses can change and adjust based on the contextual and social factors that have been assessed after the immediate Reaction response. Huron concludes that these responses can last long after the event has occurred.

Similarly, in their study, Huron *et al.* (2015: 7) conclude that safety within an environment is determined by auditory information that is neither fast changing and chaotic sounds nor scarce/little sonic activity. Fast changing and chaotic sounds might lead to the sensory system becoming overloaded and unable to process the information to determine how safe one is while occupying the environment. The influx of information can lead to important auditory cues concerning the safety of an environment being overlooked, which can result in the individual becoming overwhelmed and stressed. Silence or scarce auditory information leads to the absence of information about the environment, and therefore, being unable to determine the safety or lack thereof, of the environment. In both situations, feelings of threat and danger can be expected and experienced, especially if certain aspects of the space become ingrained elements that are expected when inhabiting the environment. In my case, part of Nairobi bus culture includes buses with graffiti exteriors and sound systems that play loud music, and such buses attract clients. According to Ronald Agak (2024), buses with graffiti and loud music get filled up quickly and attract a younger, hip crowd, who are

usually the main target market. Chapter 4 expounds on the effect of this bus culture on experience and expectations of the bus soundscape in relation to sexual harassment.

Schulte-Fortkamp and Jordan (2023: 54) echo Huron's ITPRA theory and Huron *et al.*'s study, arguing that our experiences of the auditory environment of a soundscape might be constructed in the following way. The researchers propose that the process begins at our auditory senses when a sound in our environment is produced or we enter an environment after a sound has been produced and sound waves reach our ears (Imagination and Tension). Then, the process moves to the next stage, where we interpret this sound by using our past experiences or best deduction (Prediction). Here, the sources of the sounds and the intended use of the environment can influence our interpretation of the sound (Schulte-Fortkamp and Fiebig, 2023: 8). We then ascribe meaning to the sound we have heard, which triggers a conscious, or unconscious, reaction based on learned behaviour (Reaction). And finally, respond appropriately to the soundscape (Appraisal). Over time, this creates an expectation of what types of sounds we envisage within a particular soundscape. An intimate link is thus formed between the context of a soundscape and the meaning we attribute to the sound events within the auditory environment of that soundscape; one does not exist apart from the other (Schulte-Fortkamp and Jordan, 2023: 61).¹⁹

Though phenomenology researcher, Giorgio Biancorosso, posits that a predictable sound that we might have experienced in the past can still “surprise and require a different interpretation” (2008: 398). In critiquing Huron's ITPRA theory of expectation, Biancorosso argues that expectation stems from repeated exposure, and understanding what leads to this expectation “is not so much driven by the search for truth but rather the need to predict and

¹⁹ I use this approach to analyse the three journeys for the fieldwork, which can be found in Chapter 4.

detect what is useful for survival” (2008: 401). Survival, in the context of this research, can be equated to avoiding or reducing the risk of being sexually harassed while on a bus, and thus developing an auditory acuity to the soundscape to prevent such incidents from happening, as shown in the research data discussed in Chapters 4 and 5.

Here, Schulte-Fortkamp and Fiebig (2023: 3, 39) propose a link between our past learned behaviour and experiences, and how we react in-situ. The researchers state that we apply various mental processes acquired from past experiences or picked up from interactions with the people around us to form an understanding of the acoustic patterns within a soundscape to make sense of the space and react appropriately, in context. Recognising these patterns represents how we perceptually construct and react in-situ, a statement echoed extensively in Huron’s ITPRA theory of expectation.

Within the context of this research, sexual harassment, a topic in itself that triggers an intense emotional response, might impact a woman every time she needs to use a bus for whatever purpose (leisure, to work, etc.). The ITPRA cycle reinforces itself, and depending on the outcome of entering a bus or waiting to arrive at your destination—i.e., increased possibility of becoming a victim of sexual harassment—might influence what to expect in terms of the auditory activities within the bus soundscape. The likelihood of it happening might keep a woman at a heightened state of awareness. Sudden auditory changes in the environment can be quickly assessed and appraised before returning to the previous state of consciousness. In some cases, this sudden event might trigger a more heightened vigilance of the space. Examining reactions post-sound event are beyond the scope of this research; however, it is crucial to note that though a sudden sound event might be assessed as non-threatening, the emotions triggered at that time might linger throughout one’s time within the space, and thus continue to affect experience and expectations of sounds within that soundscape, as

discussed by Huron (2007). Here, I posit that having an intimate knowledge of the soundscape and the sounds/actions within the space is crucial to perhaps lessen the instability of occupying a space that increases the risk of sexual harassment. Soundscape awareness can mean the difference in such a triggering environment. I explore this further in the next section.

2.1.3. Auditory Expectations of a Soundscape, in Context

This section dives deeper into Huron's research and the crucial elements of a soundscape, linking how expectation of a particular space through the lens of sexual harassment can impact our interpretation of the sounds within the space. I discuss how being aware of the sound activities within a soundscape can alter our reactions to sound events. I also highlight that part of being aware of the activities within a soundscape, culminates in learned behaviour, which, to an extent, might also be influenced by the emotions one might experience within this environment.

There is a direct relation between what we expect to hear in an environment and our emotional responses to these auditory activities. An emotional reaction to sounds, whether good or bad, remains ingrained in our subconscious, as concluded by Huron (2007), and is applied later in the future when analysing a similar experience. This section is also important in situating my own experiences, which is the focus of this research, within a broader framework of research into soundscape expectations and experiences, and how this experience influenced the creative process of developing the socially-conscious portfolio.

Expectation is a significant element of context, and further, of our experience of everyday soundscapes. In a study that involved interviews, soundwalks and a simulation of an interactive soundscape, Bruce and Davies (2014: 3) explored how expectations of a location

and its acoustic environment can influence how we might experience it. They argued that we have expectations of what things should sound like while in a soundscape; we expect certain sound events to occur and anticipate when they might happen and to what intensity. Bruce and Davies add that the way we react will depend on what we expect to experience and the auditory events themselves:

...we learn how places should sound through experience, and this forms competence, which affects our unique perception of a space in that specific moment of time and through competence and context, we form an expectation of a space, and it is through this expectation that we make decisions about the positive or negative evaluation of the environment we are in (2014: 10).

Truax refers to this accumulated knowledge, this competence, as “tacit knowledge” of a soundscape; information that people have about “the structure of environmental sound, knowledge that manifests itself in behaviour that interprets such sound and acts upon it” (2001: 57). Rooted in subjectivity, this tacit knowledge relates to how we might experience the soundscape, and what we might expect when occupying a soundscape.

We occupy different soundscapes as we go about our lives; some busier and more dynamic than others. In some cases, depending on our familiarity with the soundscapes, we are likely to pay more attention to the auditory activities within the soundscape to be able to respond appropriately; more so while in public. This is not to say that if we are familiar with an environment—that is, we occupy it on a daily basis—we are aware of all the sonic properties and features a soundscape might hold. Or that we will react in the same way as we did in the past, as discussed by Biancorosso (2008) in the previous section. We might choose to focus on the sounds that are important to us at a particular moment.

André Fiebig (2023: 27) discusses human experience of the soundscape, proposing that a soundscape approach to understanding the auditory makeup of an environment and its impact on humans and their activities within that area should emphasise three key elements

of a soundscape: people, context of the situation and environment itself. Fiebig (2023: 28) also asserts that assessing how the environment and sounds within that space affect humans and how humans impact the environment is an important step to understanding the relationships between people and the environment in a contextual way.

This echoes Truax's statements in his 2012 article that explores the link between acoustic space, multi-channel composition and our understanding of the relationship between humans and soundscapes. Truax (2012: 2105) argues that individuals and communities that experience the auditory environment of a soundscape on a daily basis have a strong sense of what to expect when entering a soundscape: they have a strong sense of "what belongs" and what types of sounds have invaded the space. Familiar sounds and auditory patterns, Truax expounds, that we have been exposed to "characterise our sense of space" and "subtle changes to the habitual pattern (which we usually take for granted) may be noted" (2012: 2105).

Schafer, in *Our Sonic Environment and the Soundscape: The Tuning of the World* (1994), refers to this awareness of the soundscapes we occupy as "sonological competence".²⁰ Schafer's book explored extensively everyday soundscapes, offering an in-depth analysis of his sonic world at that time. Schafer (1994: 153) asserts that sonological competence, though may develop differently across different cultures, is the culmination of mental processes and activities that lead to soundscape awareness, including assessing the sounds that occupy a particular auditory environment. As Truax puts it, being aware of the aspects that form how we experience the soundscape allows us to "understand environmental sound as meaningful" (2001: 58).

²⁰ The first edition of Schafer's book was released in 1977.

As everyday users of public spaces, we simultaneously create and experience the auditory activities within the soundscapes we occupy. As Schafer puts it:

the soundscape of the world is a huge musical composition, unfolding around us ceaselessly. We are simultaneously its audience, its performers and its composers (1994: 205).

Echoing Schafer, Schulte-Fortkamp and Fiebig (2023: 1) argue that we are both creators and receivers of the soundscape, interacting with our environments, shaping, listening and adding to them. We do not passively experience our auditory environments, rather, we become part of this interlocked, dynamic and complex system of auditory information exchange (Truax, 2001: 11; Fiebig, 2023: 27; Cobussen, 2022: 50). In the same vein, Andra McCartney, when discussing the use of environmental sounds in soundscape composition, offers that a confluence of time, memory and place intersect when thinking about sounds in the environment:

On the one hand, they make up the often unnoticed ambiances of our daily lives: they are so much with us and surrounding us that it takes a special effort to bring them into the foreground, and pay attention to them. On the other hand, environmental sounds form a powerful conduit to memory. Hearing a particular sound or ambience can launch a chain of related memories, whether experienced consciously or working subconsciously, that reconnects us with particular places and times in our lives (2002: 1).

Every day experiences of the rhythms and sounds in the world influence us, both in unconscious and conscious ways (Schafer, 1994: 103). Soundscape awareness, for both the composer and general public, is important in understanding how our everyday environment continues to not only influence music creation but our everyday habits (Schafer, 1994: 111).

Researchers Michael Bull and Les Back posit that sound has the power to shape how we think about our social experiences, and to make us rethink how we might “relate to ourselves, others and the spaces and places we inhabit” (2003: 4). These experiences accumulate over time, moulding how we might behave whenever we enter such spaces. Sound becomes a

medium through which our experiences are shaped and formed. Sound tightens the connection that someone can have with a place, creating a compelling interaction as “the sound of a place enters the listener’s body just like breath” (Fiebig, 2015: 15).

In a similar vein, Karahan Sen asserts that sounds play a crucial role in reproducing social space, and our experience of it (2019). In a study that explores the perceptual, physical and socio-cultural context of sounds in Karaköy, Istanbul, Sen presents an urban planning perspective. The researcher argues that public spaces produce different experiences and rhythms, and being attuned to these differences allows us to further explore the extent to which sounds reproduce social space at the specific place at the present time. Listening to the environment can highlight “a complex conscious and subconscious, social, and psychological series of interactions...” (Bruce, 2023: 790) and experiences that are “unpredictable, unrepeatable and ‘noisy’” (Drever, 2017: 79). Within the act of listening to the soundscape, there is a network of political and social structures and processes through which daily life is enmeshed (Fiebig, 2015: 15).

Sen describes a typical soundscape as a space that encompasses the totality of sounds within it, and further emphasises the interrelationship between “individual or society’s perception of, understanding of and interaction with the sonic environment” (2019). Further, the researcher acknowledges that listening in-situ is affected and transformed by our experiences of a soundscape, as well as our socio-cultural backgrounds. In my case, I highlight the link between socio-cultural norms and practices and how these aspects of Nairobi society influence how Nairobi women are socialised and consequently how we might experience Nairobi bus soundscapes, particularly through a sexual harassment lens.

Sound studies researcher Marcel Cobussen provides a comprehensive analysis of the sounds that we might interact with and produce on a daily basis, asserting that sounds are a “public account of the social world” (2022: 83). The researcher argues that auditory events provide both information about the environments we occupy and live in, and that their “composition, perception and socially ascribed meanings influence the ways people (inter)act” (2022: 83). Certain mental processes activate to help to process what we hear and how we respond to it. This “knowledge-driven” information guides in constructing our auditory environment and assists in making decisions, consciously and unconsciously, about the level of attention we should pay to the auditory events within a soundscape.²¹ However, this process is subjective, as argued by Uimonen (2011: 257). We all listen and interact with the auditory environment of a soundscape in different ways, as Sen earlier asserted, and are influenced by external issues that directly affect women, such as sexual harassment.

A crucial aspect of our experiences while in a public soundscape involves emotions, as presented by Huron’s ITPRA theory of expectation. André Fiebig *et al.* (2020: 2) explore emotions in the soundscape context, offering a framework for measuring likely features of a soundscape. The researchers argue that across various disciplines such as sociology, psychoacoustics and soundscape research, there are some aspects related to emotions that are recognised across the board: that is, that emotions are mostly conscious; manifest differently depending on experiences, learned behaviour and cognitive responses; can be short-lived (impacted by what is happening at the moment); and they always serve a purpose in-situ. Similar to this line of research, Zadra and Clore (2011: 682) assert that emotions are momentary states directly linked to perceptions of an auditory event, object or action within

²¹ In Chapter 4, I expand on this and discuss the hierarchy of listening attention within soundscape, offering two approaches to listening to the sounds in the space: listen-in-readiness and listen-in-search (Truax, 2001: 21–22, Botteldooren *et al.*, 2012: 2). This begins to map out the emergence of the transient sonic markers.

an environment. Their research focuses on visual experience and emotion, offering parallels to sound experience and emotion.

There is an intimate link between how we interpret, interrupt and reorder our reactions while in the environment and the emotions (if any) certain sound events might trigger. Our level of attention is therefore influenced and broadened depending on the meaning and importance we have placed on certain auditory activities in the environment. This level of attention might be further heightened when fear of sexual harassment is triggered. A particular sound might not be experienced the same way, or at the same intensity, by everyone; the same sound can trigger vastly different emotions. For example, the emotion of fear might manifest without much effort and can drastically change one's level of attention within the soundscape, thereby increasing the "chances of seeing potential threats," and further influences experiences of the auditory environment (Fiebig *et al.*, 2020: 2; Zadra and Clore, 2011: 683). The emotion of fear was a result of the research conducted for this project and is discussed in detail in Chapters 4 and 5.

Fiebig *et al.* (2020: 2) argue that a specific moment or object can trigger an emotional reaction while in the soundscape. A function of emotions is to provide feedback about a situation within an environment to help in reacting appropriately to remain safe and ensure continued survival, as evidenced in Huron's research. Fiebig *et al.* (2020: 2) further argue that how an individual reacts within a soundscape, and the intensity of their reactions, depends on their emotional predispositions, formed through years of experience navigating within that space. In the case of sexual harassment, continuous victimisation, or hearing about it through media and friends/family, might influence experiences and learned associations of the soundscape, as discussed in-depth in the next section.

2.2. Literature on Patriarchy, Respectable Femininity and Sexual Harassment

This section provides a broader argument presented in gender/feminist sociology research and sonic geography on the impact of issues such as patriarchy, respectable femininity and sexual harassment of women in public spaces on a global scale and how these issues continue to reinforce societal norms that can lead to the prevalence of sexual harassment in public spaces, thus influencing learned behaviour in the long-term. I begin by briefly situating the literature in the broader fields of mobilities (feminist geography lens) and sonic geographies (which explore the relationship between sound and space), before exploring Gill Valentine's (1989) 'spatial expression of patriarchy,' which offers a starting point for exploring toxic masculinity, socio-cultural norms and practices, and research on respectable femininity that continue to normalise harassment within global public spaces. This concept is key to answering the first research question on the extent to which sexual harassment impacts an experience of a bus soundscape in-situ. The section further narrows related research in the Global South. In sociology, Global South is a term used to describe countries that are outside Europe and North America, are broadly located in Asia, Africa, Latin America and Oceania. Kenya is considered a Global South country (Ceccato, 2017: 164; Quinones, 2020: 55; King *et al.*, 2023: 2, 13). The section further streamlines the research to focus on Nairobi, situating the context of this project within an intersectional gender and feminist sociology methodology and framework.

2.2.1. Literature on Rhythm and Mobility in the Bus Soundscape

In this section, I briefly situate my research within the broader fields of mobilities (feminist geography lens) and sonic geographies from a sexual harassment lens, allowing for an in-

depth discussion of sexual harassment within bus soundscapes. The literature here offers a critical starting point in understanding the continued perpetuation of sexual harassment within public spaces and the extent to which such acts can alter in-situ experiences and expectations of the bus soundscape. The research also provides a contextual framework for adopting Valentine's (1989) concept in my research, which is discussed in the next section.

Lewis *et al.* (2021: 279) posit that sexual harassment towards women in public transport has a “spatial, social, and temporal nature that accounts for the unique ways” these acts are “experienced and perpetrated within public spaces”. This multi-faceted nature underscores the importance of combining Valentine's (spatial and social) and Huron's (temporal) analyses to understand such a complex issue as the impact of sexual harassment on in-situ experiences and expectations. In their study that analyses sexual harassment of women in the London underground, Lewis *et al.* provides a rhythm mobilities perspective, asserting that mobilities in public transport are manifested daily and often intersect. For example, the researchers mention the often linear rhythms manifested by passengers (that is, travelling from point A to point B) and the rhythms of the space itself (fast-paced and transitory nature of navigating in and out of a bus). The researchers (2021: 282) suggest that the prevalence of sexual harassment occurs where these rhythms intersect, and sometimes, these rhythms can create pockets of moments that “facilitate and conceal” sexual harassment acts.

Within these rhythms, aspects such as the transitory nature of the space, inattention, repetitiveness, can cause friction and tension and exacerbate the risk of being sexually harassed, or in some cases, the normalisation of sexual harassment. One of the participants in Lewis *et al.*'s study describes a situation in which she did not want to draw attention to her harassment, fearing embarrassment or humiliation from other passengers (*ibid.*, 2021: 287–288). This response, mirrored by others in Lewis *et al.*'s study, can impact the

“Imagination” phase of the ITPRA theory of expectation as posited by Huron (2007) and thus influence navigating this triggering space in the future.

Lewis *et al.*’s three key features of sexual harassment play a role here: in my research, the rhythm of the bus soundscape (for example, peak times, music playing in the bus which form the sonic geography of this space), ignoring harassment in favour of unwillingness not to disrupt others’ journeys and the transitory nature of the space create situations where the possibilities of being sexually harassed are high. Building on Lewis *et al.*’s assertions above provides a deeper understanding of sexual harassment within the Nairobi bus soundscape. The intertwined spatial, social and temporal nature of sexual harassment (as I unpack further through Valentine’s concept in the next section and reflecting Huron’s ITPRA theory) can often leave women unable to report being harassed to authorities either due to fear that their harassment was not “serious enough”, apathy from authorities or fear of being victimised further when reporting what happened (i.e., being asked questions tied to respectable femininity standards, i.e., clothes, time when travelling, behaviour to ascertain the role a woman might have played in her own victimisation) (Mitra-Sarkar and Partheeban, 2011: 76; Quinones, 2020: 55; Chowdhury and Wee, 2020: 103).

Here, Noor and Iamtrakul (2023: 16) suggest that this is exacerbated in developing contexts where there might be a lack of safety measures that protect women while using public spaces and poor to no surveillance systems. Noor and Iamtrakul discuss the importance of building a gender-responsive transport system that considers the unequal ways men and women in developing contexts, primarily those in the Global South, use public transport. Women in countries of the Global South use public transport more often for various reasons compared to men. I discuss this in-depth later on in Section 2.2.2.

Sexual harassment can have debilitating effects and impact the health and well-being of women to varying degrees and intensities (Hoor-Ul-Ain, 2020: 3). Even the fear of it happening can alter the ways in which women navigate this space, their experiences and expectations throughout the journey. My research theme explores the ways in which expectations and experiences of a Nairobi bus is influenced by an issue such as sexual harassment. The next section discusses Valentine's (1989) concept, unpacking the spatial, temporal and social nature of sexual harassment.

2.2.2. Gill Valentine's *Spatial Expression of Patriarchy*

This section assesses the link between patriarchy, respectable femininity and how Nairobi women might be socialised to behave within a patriarchal society.

In the seminal study by Gill Valentine (1989) titled *The Geography of Women's Fear*, the researcher offers a feminist geographical perspective, examining how often women's experiences and use of a location is influenced by fear and experience of male violence. She conducts in-depth interviews with women in Reading, UK, exploring women's fear of occupying public space. Although the research was conducted in the UK, which is considered a Global North/developed country in sociological terms, her conclusions are relevant in the global context, and within Kenya, a Global South country. Her research (1989: 389) highlights the extent to which sexual harassment in public space, particularly fear of it, has led to the burden of safety most often being carried by women to avoid, or minimise, situations where the risk of a sexual crime is high. And as a consequence, further restricting mobility and limits use of public space. Valentine (1989: 389) refers to this as a manifestation of 'spatial expression of patriarchy', rooted in socio-cultural practices and

norms and that dictates and reinforces what is acceptable while in public (respectable femininity).

To echo this, in a study investigating fear of sexual harassment and use of public transport and women's travel behaviour in the US, Hsin-ping Hsu (2011: 87) proffers that the prevalence of sexual harassment in public spaces is due to gendered power and social relations, adding that there is a correlation between women's restriction to public spaces due to fear of sexual harassment and inequality in society. Hsu echoes Valentine, offering that upholding certain behaviours that condone and might lead to normalisation of sexual harassment can be seen as a form of social control, which strengthens existing power dynamics in society, further reinforcing "social exclusion through spatial exclusion" (Hsu, 2011: 87). This can be further blurred during peak rush hour times, typical in the rhythm of buses, when personal space can be invaded due to a high volume of people squeezing in or holding the hand rail while the bus is moving. Here Lewis *et al.* (2021: 287) assert that perpetrators might exploit such acceptable transgressions, perpetuate their 'spatial expression of patriarchy', due to the understood rhythm of the bus at the time (rush hour) to harass, and in some cases, women do not overtly react to acts of sexual harassment because of uncertainty as to whether the action was accidental or coincidental. This might then lead to women being overly cautious and aware of their surroundings and the people around them, further impacting experiences while inhabiting these spaces.

Valentine (1989: 389) further proposes that women are conscious of the 'micro design features' of a space when risk of sexual harassment, or fear of it, is triggered. Part of remaining aware of the 'micro design features' of a space, as Valentine points out, is to construct mental maps of these environments in order to either avoid them, or if unable to avoid, learn how to navigate the space in a way that will minimise risk. It can be argued that

this might influence the Imagination phase of the ITPRA theory as proposed by Huron (2007), initiating the temporal progression and snowballing to the rest of the phases as discussed earlier in the chapter. In the cases where we cannot avoid a particular space—and based on past experience, we know there is a high risk we are likely to be harassed—we imagine the worst that could happen. There is an expectation of being harassed and thus enter the space in a heightened state; a state that is unique to most women’s experience within public spaces (See: Pain, 2000; Carretta and Szymanski, 2019; Stark and Meschik, 2018; Chowdhury and Wee, 2020; and participants responses in Chapter 4).

Valentine (1989: 387) posits that a product of ‘spatial expression of patriarchy’ has led to some women, whether consciously or not, experiencing and perceiving public space differently compared to some men. Valentine writes that some women might draw on learned behaviour, past experiences and stories from other women/media to develop “individual mental maps” of soundscapes. And as suggested above, uncertainty as to whether one has been harassed or not, due to rhythms of everyday bus use. Valentine (1989: 387) asserts that this learned behaviour is cultivated from when women are younger. Being a “woman” and being a “man” are social attributes that we are taught to uphold from when we are young; we are socialised to behave in certain ways that continue to uphold the cultural norms of the societies we are born into (Srivastava, 2012: 3). This is reflected in the Nairobi study by Nyakangi *et al.* (2021) discussed in Section 1.1.4, where the researchers explored gendered parenting approaches, and concluded that mothers in the study challenged traditional gender norms compared to fathers (2021: 10).

In expanding Valentine’s concept through a feminist philosophical lens, Louise Pedersen offers an argument that ‘spatial expression of patriarchy’ is both geographical and structural. While offering broader arguments on sexual harassment, Pedersen (2020: 374) asserts that

‘spatial expression of patriarchy’ is geographical, and leads to a fear or avoiding particular spaces where risk of male violence is considered high. To avoid victimisation, or being blamed for their own victimisation, some women develop coping strategies, “mental maps”, to protect themselves and remain safe (Pedersen, 2020: 380; Valentine, 1989: 389). Here, we see a link with Huron’s research; in that, the mental functions that Huron (2007: 3) presents as expectations can be considered as integral aspects in forming the “mental maps” Valentine (1989) and Pedersen (2020) offer. This highlights the context of my research; expectations and experiences of a soundscape are influenced by “mental maps” that have been shaped and moulded by external issues such as respectable femininity and socialisation practices.

In exploring how ‘spatial expression of patriarchy’ is structural, Pedersen (2020: 375) argues that in patriarchal societies, which are most societies across the world, women are continually devalued (in varying intensities), and sexist social practices are enforced, leading to gender inequalities persisting. These harmful practices considered as “respectable femininity” controls—such as policing what women wear, restricting movement at certain times of the day, victim blaming and shaming—are built into the core societal values, which can make it difficult for women to contextualise their experiences if or when sexually harassed. The perception of risk while in a public space can also be influenced by not only the rate of victimisation, which can equate to one’s level of fear, but also witnessing someone else being victimised or hearing about it through friendship/family circles or in the media (Ceccato and Loukaitou-Sideris, 2022: 38).

When discussing sexual harassment broadly, Rachel Pain (2000: 374) addresses that the fear of it can shape some women’s behaviour and experiences in-situ, and argues that fear of sexual crime reveals a great deal about the ways in which gender control and oppression

operate. Focusing on both the situational and transitory nature of fear of sexual crime, Pain (2000: 374) notes that fear of sexual harassment is influenced by past experiences and the social, spatial and temporal situation of the spaces we occupy, and that the precautions and coping strategies that some women must take to avoid sexual harassment constitutes ‘spatial expression of patriarchy’, further echoing Valentine. ‘Spatial expression of patriarchy’ impinges women’s freedom to occupy and move through public spaces freely without fear of male violence that manifests from patriarchy and male dominance (Pedersen, 2020: 374).

Each society, including Nairobi, has its own rules as to what is appropriate and acceptable behaviour; this filters into what is considered respectable femininity. Respectable femininity, in most cases, has been used by patriarchy, as a system, to justify the continued marginalisation of women, encouraging the stratification and unequal positioning of women, thereby “offering limited incentives for amending the existing distribution of power between men and women” (Makama, 2013: 115, 131). Valentine’s suggestion on the link between socialisation and experiences and expectations of a soundscape brings forth the respectable femininity debate while in public spaces, as discussed in the next section.

2.2.3. Feminism and Respectable Femininity in an African Context

Different cultures uphold and reinforce patriarchy and socio-cultural norms and practices in varying intensities. Having lived in both a Global South/developing city (Nairobi) and Western/developed context (around London), it does not escape me the vastly different ways women’s roles are reinforced in both these societies, particularly in regard to socially acceptable behaviour in public spaces. There is a gap to the intensity to which these issues prevail, though there are some cross-cutting issues and deeply rooted toxic socio-cultural norms and practices that are shared and upheld across the world such as what constitutes

respectable femininity (wearing ‘appropriate’ clothing, behaving in a certain way to avoid bringing attention to yourself etc.). This experience is echoed in Simidele Dosekun’s discussion of feminist research in Africa, who argues that the “dominant shape or meaning of any given culture is inextricably linked to power and inequality within the society or cultural tradition in question” (2007: 42). The next section discusses the importance of feminist debates from an African perspective. It is important to note that research into sexual harassment within Nairobi public spaces, particularly in buses, is severely lacking. Therefore, I have applied research from neighbouring countries to supplement the scarce research that I found. Additionally, the interviews that I conduct and discuss in Chapter 4 further build on the conclusions made in this section.

2.2.3.a. Feminism From an African Perspective

This section serves a dual purpose. It is a deeper analysis of the link between broader socialisation, sexual harassment and experiences and expectations in a soundscape. Additionally, this section helps to situate my own socialisation and what motivates my creative practice and the decisions I made in developing this research and the resulting portfolio.

Feminism is a divisive issue within the African context, as a common-held argument is that “feminism is not part of African culture” (Dosekun, 2007: 45). In debunking this argument, Dosekun (2007: 45) argues that there is a resistance when “Western” values are adopted within African societies, and are labelled and critiqued as “un-African”. And those that are seen to adopt “Western” ideals such as wearing Western-style clothing or behaviour are considered to deviate from African culture. This argument, Dosekun posits, has been used

often to dismiss any discussion on harmful practices towards women, particularly when addressing these issues is framed through a feminist framework.

Glory Gatwiri, in exploring her own feminist position as a Kenya-born woman performing feminist research within a Western context, and Dosekun, in discussing African feminisms, align in their arguments. Gatwiri posits that the term “African feminism” is controversial because it purports that every African woman’s need is the same (Gatwiri and McLaren, 2016: 266). This view, Dosekun (2021: 50) asserts, is a blanket assumption that does not consider that Africa is a continent with diverse cultures and practices and thus what constitutes respectable femininity and behaviour is not the same everywhere on the continent (for example, wearing a hair cover in public in certain countries is considered respectable while in other countries, it is not among the list of things that is considered “respectable femininity”).

Gatwiri and Dosekun conduct gender research in Africa and mention that some Gender scholars within Africa do not embrace feminist scholarship because of its “associations with radical versions of Western feminist thought” and “man-hating behaviour” that goes against African culture (Gatwiri and McLaren, 2016: 267). In this case, there seems to be a reluctance to acknowledge certain behaviours that continue to perpetuate sexual harassment. Dosekun presents that this view functions to “promote conservative and oppressive agendas” (2007: 45, 46) in an attempt to wholly be in opposition to Western values, even when such practices continue to encourage certain harmful behaviour towards women.

Saying feminism is “un-African” makes it seem like women were not engaging in feminism before the West “brought it to Africa” (Dosekun, 2021: 49). Dosekun argues that matriarchal

traditional societies and powerful female figures such as priestesses and queens existed long before the West colonised the continent, offering that:

...women in Africa were “feminist before feminism,” that is, engaged in agentic, self-determined, and typically collective advancement of their particular interests well before the advent of a modern, self-named, and putatively overarching women’s movement (Dosekun, 2021: 49).

The interdisciplinary approach in my project aims to, as Gatwiri and McLaren puts it, embrace African feminism as “a school of thought and a mode of discourse that attempts to understand the multiple complexities and challenges presented by sexism—a derivative of patriarchy, poverty and at times colonisation—faced by the [Nairobi woman]” (2016: 267). Section 1.1.4 highlighted the several aspects of Nairobi society to consider when examining women’s in-situ expectations and experiences while in a public space.

Framing the context of my project from this perspective is key to unpacking my own socialisation and how it seeps into my creative practice as an electroacoustic composer while developing my *socially-conscious* portfolio. I sought to attune and respond to my situated experience, as Dosekun asserts that “African feminisms must be attuned and responsive to the conditions of African women’s lives,” (2021: 47) echoing that research must be proactive and rooted in the experiences of African women on the continent. Therefore, to meaningfully explore respectable femininity, as described by Nighat Ansari as a “gender ideological construct that prescribes the rules of conduct for women within a particular socio-cultural setting” (2016: 529), a discussion on the concept within the patriarchy framework is necessary within this thesis.

2.2.3.b. Patriarchy and Respectable Femininity

This section discusses respectable femininity within the patriarchy framework broadly in Africa and how, in most cases, it contributes to most women's (as well as my own within the research context) experiences and expectations within a soundscape. The information in this section begins to build on what influenced and motivated the creation of my portfolio.

Godiya Makama on patriarchy and gender inequality in Nigeria, argues that traditional African culture and religion has continued to perpetuate “male domination into the structure of social organisation and institution at all levels of leadership” (2013: 116). Makama refers to gender relations as ingrained within social relations between men and women, and as “the social meaning of being male and female, and thus what is considered appropriate behaviour or activity for men and women” (2013: 118). Though Makama focuses on Nigerian society, there are direct links with the Kenyan society, as highlighted in Daniel Owiti's (2021) study on gender based violence in public transport in Kenya. In discussing the violence that women face while riding “*boda bodas*” (a form of public transport) in Nakuru county in Kenya, Owiti (2021: 2) suggests that a major reason for the continued victimisation of women using this public means of transport is both socio-cultural—that is, women and women's issues being treated as trivial—but also that the key perpetrators of this violence, for the most part, are not involved in developing interventions to address public forms of violence towards women.²²

Sexual harassment is a “function of living in a patriarchal society”, where normalisation of sexual violence towards women is prevalent (Carretta and Szymanski, 2019: 525, 529). Trivialising women's issues, particularly as a social problem, has led to a lack of awareness

²² A *boda* refers to a motorcycle/bike used for commercial purpose, such as transporting people and goods in exchange for money. In this case, a motorcycle is considered as another public means of transport alongside buses.

and knowledge of the effects of harassment on women, such as how it might alter our in-situ auditory experiences. Here, many gender and feminist researchers have asserted the link between the public/private dichotomy, trivialising of women's issues and violence towards us, and patriarchy (see: Neupane and Chesney-Lind, 2013; Fenster, 2005; Mitra-Sarkar and Partheeban, 2011; Madan and Nalla, 2016; Megarry, 2014; Bowman, 1993).

Broadly speaking, Neupane and Chesney-Lind argue that despite advances in increased rights in some aspects of life and ability to contribute to the economy, women are still expected to “perform their gender roles and occupy spaces determined by traditional norms and cultural and religious values” (2013: 28). This links to debates surrounding respectable femininity within the African context, where, according to Dosekun aspects such as motherhood and community are inherently entrenched and considered an integral dimension to the “African woman” experience (2021: 53).

Gender inequalities produced by patriarchy and upholding certain behaviours that continue to oppress women should be examined by considering how gender identities manifest in various contexts, particularly in public and private spaces. Speaking from a broader context, Sanjay Srivastava (2012: 19) discusses the importance of evaluating the relationship between gender identities within patriarchal societies in various contexts (i.e., socio-cultural, political) to understand the nature of gender inequality. In this case, public spaces are gendered, where issues and matters that are usually handled privately, such as anything of a sexual nature, should remain in that domain, “away from public scrutiny” (Srivastava, 2012: 26). This restriction—that is, discussing issues within society that are of a sexual nature—is socialised into beliefs and behaviour, facilitating the continued suppression of women's experiences when victimised.

The concept of “public” spaces belonging to men and “private” spaces to women continues to bolster gender inequality and that the hostility that women might face when they enter public spaces is tied to masculine anxiety and hostility in an attempt to guard “the public as a realm of men” (Srivastava, 2012: 6). This gendered discourse on public/private spheres, Srivastava asserts, deems the “public” space as sites where only women who conform to the acceptable behaviour (respectable femininity) are allowed safe passage and security while in-situ (Srivastava, 2012: 8). However, this reinforces the notion that the choices women make when travelling “should not” deviate from what is accepted in society. That we should abide by what is respectable based on the norms and values of the society. Any deviations, such as wearing what might be deemed as revealing clothes or being loud or using suggestive language, is seen as “deliberately titillating men” of which the consequences is being shamed and blamed for what might happen (i.e., being groped because of wearing a short skirt) (Srivastava, 2012: 8). This might feed into the “mental maps” that women construct to avoid situations where the risk of a sexual crime is high, as discussed by Valentine (1989). Further, this manifestation of the ‘spatial expression of patriarchy’ develops the mental functions, reinforcing Huron’s ITPRA theory of expectation (2007).

Bakare-Yusuf (2003) offers a critique here in that positioning women as the “victims” and men as the “victimisers”—further, men as the reinforcers socio-cultural norms and practices that continue to harm women—overlooks the role that some women have played in both the past and present in facilitating patriarchal structures and functions. In discussing feminism in Africa, the researcher asserts that patriarchy should be viewed as an ever-changing unstable power that is constantly being challenged and reconstituted by the changing dynamics between men and women. In a similar vein, Gatwiri and McLaren assert that there is increased attention in unpacking the extent to which “...institutional and systematic domination by men that render these women incapable of understanding their participation

in and reinforcement of their own oppression” (2016: 269). The researcher offers that the challenges Kenyan women face can be alleviated through education, elevation and empowering women, further fostering a culture of socialising women to “own their own power not against men, but alongside them” (2016: 267, 269).

Some women, researcher Srivastava (2012) argues, continue to be gatekeepers for traditions that might encourage harassment and violence towards women. In some cases, women might not want to seem like they are “disturbing social codes and stepping outside the bounds of the cultural definitions of femininity” and therefore, reinforce certain socialisation to maintain socio-cultural norms and practices that aligns with what is expected of them (Srivastava, 2012). The researcher adds that this reluctance to question traditional values, the status quo, upholds certain behaviours in society, including the normalisation of sexual harassment. Misogyny upheld by other women reflects how some women have internalised “the ghost-like presence of norms and values within the patriarchal social structures” (Pedersen, 2020: 377).

In a paper discussing gender parity in Kenya, researcher Gloria Kenyatta (2023: 8) applies the four indicators used to determine the progress that a country is making towards gender parity in Kenyan society. One of those indicators is retrogressive cultures, to which Kenyatta highlights most cultures in Kenya empower men, “propel them into positions of power”, while subjugate and disempower women, “portraying patriarchal attitudes towards women and hinder their engagement in the public sphere and societal decision-making positions” (2023: 11). The gendered roles women are assigned, as the author mentions (2023: 11), continue to promote gender inequality. In the case of women occupying leadership positions in Kenya, Kenyatta showcases that most societies in Kenya use cultural and traditional teachings to socialise women to view and confine themselves to the home (private spaces)

while the men make crucial decisions in policy and running the country (governing public spaces).

Here, Srivastava (2012: 2) argues that exploring the dynamics between space (public and private) and social identities is one way to understand social relationships and how we engage with each other in public. In this sense, there is a duality in the spaces we occupy; on one hand, they are sites where our different identities play out, while in the other, where they are shaped and formed. The author suggests that:

Gender norms and categories are directly related to the distribution of power among genders, and hence to issues of social justice, equity and human rights. ‘Power’, in turn, relates to the control over both symbolic as well as material goods. That is, the ideas we hold about men and women—their ‘appropriate’ roles, capacities and characteristics—along with the access they enjoy to material resources go towards determining their positions with respect to each other (2012: 3).

Exploring gender norms and disparities under patriarchy is key to examining sexual harassment in context, where women are more disproportionately affected. In examining challenges women involved in peace building activities post-conflict in Nairobi, Alice Mumbi (2020: 48) argues that women’s interests tend to be neglected during the peace process, therefore leading to male-centred approaches to peace and security. The researcher adds that as a consequence of not involving or hearing women’s voices when making crucial community decisions, a pattern of dominance develops, where “men are portrayed as active participants in decision-making and women are classified as passive or innocent victims” (2020: 52). This has a knock-on effect, as the researcher argues, that a lack of women in leadership or management positions...

...reinforces patriarchy and other specificities that place men at the higher echelons of the society as resilient and able leaders compared to women. This is further compounded by society’s obliviousness and indifference to the fact that women like men and every other citizen of the world, possess equal rights that should be valued and reinforced (Mumbi, 2020: 52).

In a similar vein, Srivastava asserts that the subjugation of women is an “attempt to maintain existing structures of gender power” and sexual harassment and violence towards women is argued to reinforce women’s “place” within society (2012: 16). And women who deviate from what is respectable femininity such as in the way they dress and how they carry themselves—justifications for harassment and violence as evidenced in the previous section—“forfeit the right to (male) protection and regard” (Srivastava 2012: 8). In the African context, women’s ‘worldliness’ can be argued to be the reason why women might be sexually harassed or violated. The following section explores this issue further, examining patriarchy and socialisation from a Global South perspective, further expanding on Valentine’s (1989) ‘spatial expression of patriarchy’ and Huron’s (2007) ITPRA theory of expectation.

2.2.4. Gender Role Socialisation of Women

It is important to note that due to limited research on this subject from Nairobi, I have incorporated research from other developing contexts and neighbouring countries. I acknowledge that different social and cultural contexts make it difficult to say with absolute clarity that research done in these locations is relevant within Nairobi, however, research from these countries gives important insights into issues shaping my research project. Additionally, Chapter 4 presents results and supplementary information from the interviews conducted with participants who work in the field of women’s and girls’ rights in Nairobi, Kenya, further elaborating on the points mentioned here. This section further contextualises the research theme, offering specific research from Nairobi.

Sexual harassment, while in public spaces, according to UN Women, has been a neglected issue, with very few policies and laws in place to address and prevent it (UN Women,

unknown). In Kenya, no specific law addresses sexual harassment in public spaces. The Kenya 2006 Sexual Offences Act in the constitution defines sexual harassment under the umbrella of “Indecent Act.” In part, the Act states that an “indecent act means an unlawful intentional act which causes any contact between any part of the body of a person with the genital organs, breasts or buttocks of another, but does not include an act that causes penetration” (National Council for Law Reporting, 2008: 4–5). This definition does not specify what these ‘indecent acts’ might be, or mention verbal means of sexual harassment such as catcalling or wolf-whistling or the impact of anticipation.

Sexual harassment in public is a global issue that has close links with women’s perceived role within society and continued socialisation that has unfortunately yielded in environments and spaces that are unsafe for women. Patriarchy, particularly aspects that continue to reinforce socio-cultural norms, practices and behaviour, continues to control women within public sphere through the threat of harassment or violence. Though patriarchy affects women worldwide, the intensity is much higher in Global South countries. In section 1.1.4., I began to explore the link between politics, government policies related to the transport sector, patriarchy and women’s socialisation to show the importance of approaching the theme of this project from an intersectional understanding. The rest of this section builds on the research presented in Chapter 1.

Thomson Reuters Foundation (2018) surveyed 548 participants across the world to rank the most dangerous countries for women with the highest risk of sexual harassment, violence and coercion. Countries at the highest risk were predominantly in the Global South, which King *et al.* (2023: 2) attributes to the higher prevalence of harassment in these largely patriarchal societies. Here, a consideration of the economic and social disparities between African nations, and the Global South, is required, further reflecting on the diversity of

feminist issues on the continent (Mohanty, 1988: 338; Coddington, 2017; Bakare-Yusuf, 2003; Mama, 2011: 8; Gatwiri and McLaren, 2016: 266). Doing this recognises that ‘women’s social standing’, and the advocacy of our rights, continues to develop disproportionately across the world (Gardner *et al.*, 2017: 8).

Socialisation plays a role in silencing women’s voices and self-blame and shame when victimised. This is rooted in a widespread acceptance of normative patriarchal ideas surrounding sexual behaviour and male aggression towards women. Women are socialised “to blame ourselves due to expectations that others will hold us responsible for being harassed” (Carretta and Szymanski, 2019: 527). A result of victim blaming is that it is rooted in acts of sexual harassment within public spaces being considered as “part of life” and/or “harmless demonstrations of sexual attraction” (Quinones, 2020: 56). This is echoed in Lewis *et al.*’s study (2021), as explored earlier in this chapter, where one of the key features of sexual harassment is ignoring harassment in favour of unwillingness not to disrupt the typical rhythm established within buses, whether the harassment was intentional or accidental. And a result of this is perpetrators of sexual harassment using public spaces to reproduce social inequalities. Women might put on themselves self-imposed restrictions, which is a fear response to being victimised or fear being victimised. This action is influenced not only by certain gender-specific socio-cultural norms and practices within the society that end up limiting women’s mobility and freedom, but also compounds the shame and blame women experience from the abuse they experienced in public (King *et al.*, 2023: 13).

King *et al.* (2023) assert that there is a high rate of harassment and violence towards women in Global South countries as most societies here uphold stringent expressions of femininity and patriarchal values. In this case, they posit that women’s resistance to conform comes at

a great cost to their personal well-being while in public and they are less likely to be taken seriously when something happens to them. The researchers add:

This reality, in conjunction with women's early exposure to gender-based violence and learned fear of public spaces more broadly, may result in a low sense of safety when using public transport that is instilled before (and regardless of) women's actual exposure to violence. By extension, it may also mean that personal and witnessed attacks will do little more than confirm women's expectations, therefore having minimal impact on perceptions of safety (2023: 13).

This is echoed in Neupane and Chesney-Lind's research (2013), who surveyed 238 college-aged women to investigate sexual harassment towards women in Nepal, India. 97% of the participants mentioned experiencing sexual harassment while using public transport system. Nearly 50% of the respondents argue that the main intent behind such behaviour is based on "male superiority and their assumption that men can do anything they like" (2013: 30). Participants further add that wearing "Western" style of clothing is seen as some kind of signal of sexual availability, further reflecting men's lack of respect, privilege and power within public spaces.

Gender stereotypes and practices that continue to oppress women are formed over time and are as a consequence of reinforcing beliefs, traditions and practices, until they are taken to be reality, internalised to the point that "men remain at the helm of affairs and make decisions virtually exclusively, even when the issues border on women matters" (Kivoi, 2014: 179). It is interesting to note that the dominance of this argument—that women belong in the home—within Nairobi society does not reflect day-to-day experiences. Women travel in and out of the city using buses and are more likely to be more dependent on public transport, and occupy public spaces more frequently, compared to men (Chowdhury and Wee, 2020: 102). This paradox is reflected in some research that highlights women occupy public spaces more frequently and take more trips to not only fulfil their supposed role as a mother and caretaker,

as emphasised both in Kenyan African culture and tradition and in Western discourse, but also for work, as elaborated in the next few paragraphs.

Ceccato (2017: 164) argues that in the Global South, more women than men depend on public transport and are essentially “transit captives”. Babinard and Scott (2011: 214) assert that despite this, men’s travel needs are prioritised within a family structure, and therefore, women end up relying heavily on the public transport system. For example, in a family with one car, as is usually the case for middle/working/lower class families in Global South countries, the husband will have access to it while the wife will need to find other means of transportation to fulfil her daily obligations. Researcher on gender relations in transport in Africa, Sam Mwangi agrees, adding that this shows “women’s inferior economic status within households compared to men” (2011: 8), tying to how women and men are socialised.

In Nairobi, buses are mostly easily accessible. According to an article on commuting in Urban Kenya, researchers surveyed approximately 15,000 middle/working/lower class families in Nairobi regarding public transport usage. The families reveal a mix of walking or using a bus or motorcycle to travel throughout the city (Salon and Gulyani, 2020; 1). 98% of the families surveyed reported that a bus stop is within walking distance of their homes (Salon and Gulyani, 2020; 2). Women use public buses often than men, and considering the low percentage of women who are in leadership positions in Kenya, it is likely that issues such as sexual harassment within a bus, and generally women’s experiences within a public space, are not considered while transport policies are developed.

A more in-depth exploration of sexual harassment in Nairobi follows in the next section.

2.2.5. Sexual Harassment Studies and Research in Nairobi and Bordering Countries

This section dives deeper into the study statistics presented in Chapter 1. Kishiue *et al.* (2020: 46) surveyed nearly 400 bus users in Nairobi, 298 women and 102 men, and reported that 80% of female respondents and 65% of male respondents mentioned they have witnessed or experienced sexual harassment while in a Nairobi bus. The authors posit that the high number of male respondents suggests that men recognise sexual harassment as a huge problem in buses (Kishiue *et al.* 2020: 47). When looking at data from women and men separately, the researchers argue that sexual harassment within buses seems to be a gender-specific challenge as women respondents selected sexual harassment, safety and overcrowding as the top three challenges and barriers when choosing travel modes, while men chose affordability and accessibility as the primary concerns (Kishiue *et al.* 2020: 45). 30% of the women respondents marked sexual harassment as a top barrier to using buses (Kishiue *et al.* 2020: 153). This echoes a similar earlier study conducted by Women's Empowerment Link in 2015.

The multi-city study by Women's Empowerment Link (2015: 8) surveyed nearly 616 participants from five major cities (now referred to as counties) in Kenya; Nairobi, Mombasa, Kisumu, Nakuru and Kakamega. In addition to bus travellers, the study also collected data from SACCO employees, police and other service providers.²³ The report mentions that more than 40% of the participants have witnessed violence towards women in

²³ SACCO stands for Saving and Credit Cooperative Organisations. These are independent private groups that govern and manage bus operations across the country. There are currently 181 licensed SACCOS that manage buses across the country (Sacco Space, no date).

buses (2015: 9). In Nairobi, the percentage is 44.61%, including participants who know of someone who has been violated while travelling. These statistics are in line with Flone Initiative's study.²⁴ The study explored and examined the pervasiveness, nature, and reaction to gender-based violence in the public transport sector in Nairobi (Wafula *et al.*, 2018).²⁵

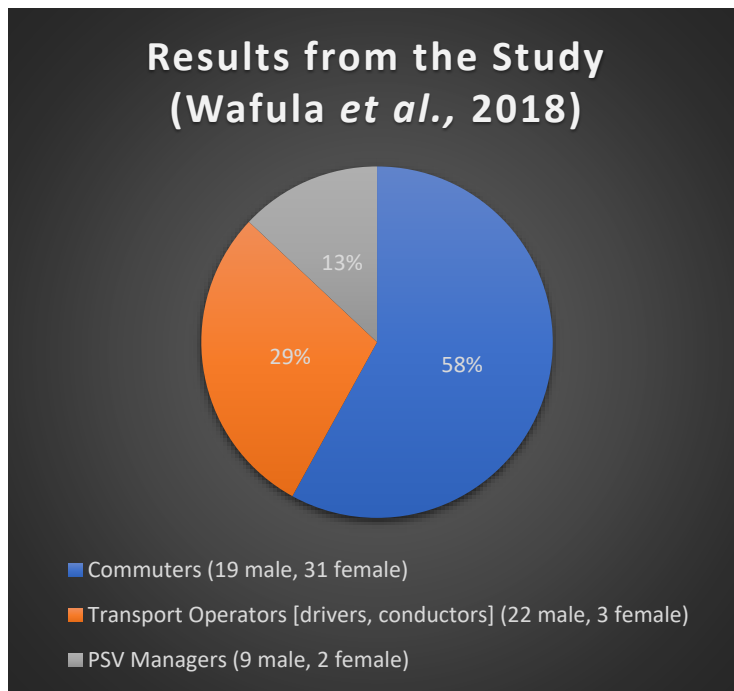
Wafula *et al.* offered a self-administered descriptive survey that explored the prevalence of sexual harassment as well as captured the nature of these acts. The survey also measured public perception and attitudes towards sexual harassment. The sample of interviewees originated from three populations: public service vehicle (PSV) managers, public transport operators (conductors, drivers and route managers), and commuters. The study applied both a quantitative and qualitative approach and collected primary data through semi-structured questionnaires and secondary research on the subject matter. Both men and women were sampled; however, it was noted that male participants for two populations (PSV managers and conductors) far outweighed female participants because few women worked in the industry at the time of data collection (Wafula *et al.*, 2018).

The study collected data from 86 participants and was conducted with participants who worked and commuted at the time, using two specific routes: Nairobi East and Nairobi North routes. The following chart shows a breakdown of the general statistics of the participants:

²⁴ To my knowledge, Flone Initiative is the only non-governmental organisation (NGO) involved in advocating for change of policy related to sexual harassment in buses in Kenya.

²⁵ Flone Initiative played a crucial role in promoting awareness and activism regarding sexual harassment in buses. They were a key player in creating the Twitter (now X) #mydressmychoice campaign following the 2014 incidents. This campaign inspired *Less than 140*, the first composition in the portfolio as discussed in Chapter 5.

Figure 2: General Statistics of the Participants of the Flone Initiative Study



According to the study, 88% of commuters had witnessed or heard of cases of harassment, in comparison to 73% and 44% of managers and operators respectively. 33% of commuters highlight inappropriate physical touch as a common form of harassment, in opposition to 35% of managers and 30% of operators who emphasise abusive language as the most common. When it comes to reporting or alerting authorities of incidents of sexual harassment, 64% of commuters would ask for help, in comparison to 68% of operators who would take no action. 64% of managers, 60% of operators and 70% of commuters state bus stops and stations as the most common spaces for sexual harassment to happen. 18%, 20% and 22% of managers, operators and commuters respectively indicate that inside the vehicle is another common space.

Though the sample for this particular report is small, it begins to show the forms of sexual harassment that are common, where the abuse occurs most often, and what might happen when a woman has been sexually harassed in a Nairobi bus. If 68% of operators who are

present within these spaces are likely not to help a woman after they have been sexually harassed, what are the consequences? This thesis highlights that one consequence is the rise in fear of being sexually harassed and developing an auditory acuity to certain sounds within the environment (transient sonic markers) to remain hypervigilant, as evidenced in the data.

The number of people who have witnessed or know of someone who has been sexually harassed while in a Nairobi bus is high, and though it varies from study to study, it shows a clear problem. The high percentages matches other figures from studies conducted in other Global South cities such as Chennai, India (66% of 274 surveyed women), Hawassa, Ethiopia (87% of 223 surveyed women and girls), and Bogotá, Colombia (84% of 1169 surveyed women) (Mitra-Sarkar and Partheeban, 2011: 74; Kacharo *et al.*, 2022: 8; Quinones, 2020: 59).

When asked about the most common types of sexual harassment participants have witnessed, 90% of women and 75% of men in the World Bank study reported indecent/suggestive remarks as the most common form (Kishiue *et al.*, 2020: 152). Inappropriate watching and touching/groping/rubbing are other common forms observed by the respondents. 26% of respondents in the multi-city study by Women's Empowerment Link (2015: 9) mentioned that insults are the most common, followed by coercion to enter the bus (23%) and suggestive and unwelcome groping (18%). In a similar study across the border to the north of Kenya by Kacharo *et al.* that investigates factors that contribute to women's and girls' security and safety while using public transport in Hawassa, Ethiopia, 67% of the 223 surveyed women and girls mention staring as the most common form of harassment, followed by obscene gestures (60%), and making suggestive noises, whistling or catcalling (49%) (2022: 8). Other forms experienced include comments or remarks of a sexual nature, and physical forms such as groping, rubbing, grabbing and pinching.

The respondents in the World Bank study (Kishiue *et al.*, 2020: 155) in Nairobi mentioned that in some cases, harassment comes from SACCO employees, especially conductors. The Nairobi public transport industry is male-dominated, with approximately 94% of male workers (Kamau and Mitullah, 2022: 165). The role of a conductor is to call out at bus stops/stages to attract customers, collect fare while the bus is moving, manage passengers and alert the driver when customers want to alight at their destination or board the bus (Kamau and Mitullah, 2022: 167). In their pursuit to carry out their duties, the study participants (Kishiue *et al.*, 2020: 157) mentioned that conductors might push and pull on women to forcefully get inside the bus, inappropriately touching, or refusing to return fares in exchange for a sexual favour or an exchange of numbers. This assertion of male dominance continues to affect the decisions that women make while travelling. And this particular behaviour (verbal coercion) is something that I witnessed myself during the first journey of my soundsit-in-motion for my research. It had not occurred to me while in the field that this is a form of sexual harassment but upon reflection of my own travel diary entry, it was apparent that anticipating this behaviour while approaching the bus stop impacted my own mental map of the bus environment and the Imagination and Tension phase before entering the bus, as discussed by Valentine (1989) and Huron (2007).

The experiences mentioned by participants in the two studies carried out in Nairobi is reflected in Elliott Niboye's study. The participants in Niboye's (2023: 7) research mentioned catcalling, groping, coercion and inappropriate, abusive comments as common forms of sexual harassment in buses in Dar es Salaam. In this study exploring violence in public transport in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, Niboye (2023: 2) asserts here that some ideologies that continue to encourage toxic male-dominant behaviour are deeply embedded in patriarchal social norms that further exacerbate gender inequality and continue to contribute to harassment and violence towards women. Niboye (2023: 2) further argues that

the continued belief that women are inferior and different, and associated social norms that subjugate and oppress women, are deeply rooted in men's consciousness within Dar es Salaam's patriarchal society.

This high percentage of respondents in the studies conducted in Nairobi above who have seen or experienced sexual harassment reflects a societal issue that needs to be tackled but continues to be reinforced on a daily basis. One reason for this is tied to people's beliefs, as evidenced by the data collected by Corazon Obure. Obure's study collected data from 215 respondents to investigate the reasons why gender violence towards women in Nairobi buses is prevalent.

The study sampled travellers, SACCO employees and the director of city transport at the time of Obure's research. The researcher found that 42.5% of respondents mentioned provocative dressing as a reason for sexual harassment, 55.4% cited the seating arrangement, 58.9% mentioned congestion and overcrowding, and 60.4% mentioned the music being played on the bus (2017: ix). The 'micro design' of the bus, as posited by Valentine (1989), congestion, overcrowding and music playing are all typical rhythms of the Nairobi bus soundscape, and can lead to pockets of moments where the risk of sexual harassment is high. These elements, as presented earlier through Lewis *et al.*'s (2021) work, highlight the intertwined spatial, social and temporal nature of sexual harassment within Nairobi buses.

Further, 57.5% of the participants assert that overall, gender inequality encourages violence towards women, with the researcher linking oversexualisation of women's bodies as a form of men's entitlement (2017: ix, 21). Obure (2017: 21) asserts that within this space, the way a woman is dressed connotes their sexual accessibility, reinforcing gender sexist norms. The earlier study by Women's Empowerment Link (2015: 24) further echoes this statement in

its findings as some of their participants mentioned that women are perceived as weak and therefore profiled based on what they are wearing.

In Kacharo *et al.*'s (2022: 14) study, participants from Hawassa, Ethiopia, mentioned that the way that single women dress provokes violence of a sexual nature from men, leading to violence towards women who have worn short skirts or tight-fitting trousers to be justified in the eyes of society, as Srivastava (2012) argued in an earlier section. Niboye's participants posit that dressing is a core cultural factor that determines whether a woman will be victimised; however, Niboye the researcher asserts that such views are a consequence of patriarchy, where women are policed by what they wear because women are often viewed as "instruments of sexual pleasure" (2023: 9). These findings impact how women are socialised: to be good wives and homemakers, dress modestly and behave appropriately in public.

Another major reason given in studies for sexual harassment in buses is overcrowding. As part of the typical rhythm expected within a Nairobi bus soundscape, overcrowding, partially due to the high competition in getting as much money as employees of the buses can get and the arrangement of the seats, creates opportunities for harassment to occur. Though there are laws in place in Nairobi to curb overcrowding, during peak hours, these are overlooked in favour of making more money (Obure, 2017: 3). Overcrowded spaces offer anonymity to harassers (King *et al.*, 2023: 3). It is interesting to note that in Obure's study (2017: 71), 57.2% of SACCO employees said that the seating arrangement does not encourage gender violence, in comparison to 40.4% of travellers. Another deviation is in the topic of overcrowding and congestion inside the bus: 55.4% of SACCO employees mentioned that it is not a problem, whereas 62.6% of travellers consider it a crucial issue. This deviation in figures could be explained due to the overwhelming number of men who work within this

industry, as mentioned earlier, and some might not believe that certain aspects of the bus journey, including the design of the bus itself, could create opportunities for sexual harassment towards women. Such views support why most women then become hyperaware of the ‘micro design of a space’, as Valentine (1989) offers.

The music and videos being played on the bus is an interesting find in Obure’s research as in the study by Women’s Empowerment link, the respondents mentioned that sexually explicit music and videos creates an environment conducive for sexual harassment and violence (Obure, 2017: ix; Women’s Empowerment Link, 2015: 11; Niboye, 2023: 8). The study (Obure, 2017: ix) asserts that such music and videos, and sometimes stickers and posters in the bus, reinforce prejudices and stereotypes towards women, creating an environment that deems it okay to demean and sexualise women.²⁶ These justifications exemplify how deeply rooted patriarchy and toxic gender norms are and, through socialisation, encourage such beliefs (i.e., that music can make someone want to sexually harass a woman).²⁷ The high rate of victimisation, as evidenced above, can lead to the manifestation of certain coping strategies to reduce the likelihood of being harassed, as discussed in the next section.

²⁶ This finding also ties to the integral sounds within the bus soundscape being masked by loud music, an issue I encountered during my soundsit-in-motion fieldwork. Chapter 4 discusses Nairobi bus culture, including the use of loud popular music to entice customers to enter buses.

²⁷ This is an interesting find that is further explored in Section 4.2, considering that I occupied buses in my fieldwork that played music and music videos while I travelled.

2.2.6. *In-Situ* Coping Strategies

This section briefly highlights experiences of sound within the bus soundscape, situating coping strategies, particularly sounds that I refer to as transient sonic markers, as an auditory manifestation of being in a heightened state of awareness to reduce the risk of victimisation.

It is important to note that there is a lack of literature and research that highlights, in particular, coping strategies women might use to prevent victimisation in developing societies, such as in Nairobi buses. Although the interviews that I conducted briefly touch on this subject and the participants provide some insight into this from their own point of view, as discussed in detail in Chapter 4. Therefore, the research in this section is presented briefly and broadly, to draw out similarities and differences that researchers within this field in developed contexts have identified. Although there may be similarities in women's experiences, the intensity and deeply rooted issues can vary from country to country. As Valentine (1989) and Huron (2007) assert and as discussed throughout this chapter, women might use coping strategies and mental maps to varying degrees to avoid victimisation, which might ultimately impact our in-situ experiences while in public spaces, such as a bus stop or inside a bus.

Coping strategies can be divided into two: active and passive. Stark and Meschik (2018) conducted a survey in Austria to investigate how sexual harassment affects the travelling behaviour of Austrian women. The researchers discuss passive measures women might take to safeguard themselves and cope with the triggered fear. They assert the use of "arming" as a passive coping strategy; that is, using deterrents like phones to seem busy (2018). Women are cautious when applying either active or passive coping strategies when navigating a public space that triggers fear of sexual harassment. In discussing individual coping

strategies that women in New Delhi apply when in public spaces, Nieder *et al.* (2019: 1728) differentiate these strategies into three categories:

The first category is *Safety*, which involves actions such as assessing risk, carrying pepper spray or defensive objects, escaping a likely situation, and making fake phone calls. The next category, *Avoidance*, involves staying away from certain spaces at certain times and ignoring ongoing harassment to avoid being targeted. The third category, *Empowerment*, focuses on educating women on how to protect themselves, sharing experiences, and encouraging confident navigation of the space.

Royo *et al.* expand on Valentine's (1989) research, and echo Nieder *et al.*'s categories. In exploring fear, sexual violence and coping strategies women in Mexico apply when navigating public spaces, the researchers (2023: 6) classify coping strategies into four. *Time-space avoidance* strategies involve actions such as avoiding going out at night, and if it is unavoidable, being accompanied by someone. *Physical defence strategies* involve wearing modesty, carrying defensive objects, and knowing how to defend yourself. The third strategy, *Environmental response strategies*, involves appearing confident, changing routes or travel times, being aware of your surroundings, walking in semi-crowded areas, and moving away when uncomfortable. The last category includes other active measures, such as standing next to a safe person, like another woman, avoiding fixation on the phone, and when using headphones, listening at a low volume so that you remain aware of the people around you.

Based on the above categories, the transient sonic markers can be considered as an environmental response strategy that empowered my experience during soundsit-in-motion

fieldwork. Transient sonic markers as a research result is further discussed in Chapters 4 and 5.

Carretta and Szymanski (2019: 526), in a paper broadly addressing the link between PTSD symptoms and sexual harassment, posit that though sexual harassment might not be life-threatening in some cases, the stress it evokes is a constant reminder of threats to one's safety, thereby evoking feelings of defencelessness and vulnerability. This echoes Huron's (2007) argument that stress triggered in the Reaction and Analysis phases of the ITPRA cycle can linger after the event has passed. Feelings that might be compounded by fear and uncertainty that the harassment will escalate to violence. The threat of further assault can lead to women feeling agitated or easily startled while in public because of hypervigilance. The researchers argue that women tend to apply either active or passive coping strategies to navigate a public space that triggers fear of sexual harassment. In such cases, though, active coping strategies such as displaying non-threatening behaviour (smiling and responding) are applied. Applying passive coping strategies (such as wearing headphones to deter conversation) might escalate a situation to violence because the harasser might be expecting a friendly response (Carretta and Szymanski, 2019: 528). Coping strategies, particularly auditory manifestations observed during my fieldwork, which I describe as *transient sonic markers*, are discussed in Chapters 4 and 5. The next section presents literature related to analysing the soundscape through a sexual harassment lens, bringing together Huron's (2007) and Valentine's (1989) concepts while situating R. Murray Schafer's soundscape analysis approach.

2.3. Soundscape Analysis Through A Sexual Harassment Lens

Schafer (1977) asserts that as everyday users of public spaces, we simultaneously create and experience the auditory activities within the soundscapes we occupy. In soundscape research, the distinction “balanced/imbalanced” has become more popular, as opposed to “hi-fi/lo-fi,” as Schafer proposed in the 1977 book *Our Sonic Environment and the Soundscape* discussed earlier in this chapter. In some cases, these two ways of discussing the soundscape are used interchangeably. This thesis employs the term “balanced/imbalanced” because it offers a more nuanced assessment of the Nairobi bus soundscape. Schafer in his research preferred to adopt his soundscape analysis model to exploring isolated pre-industrial soundscapes, which is comparatively different to my approach (a moving space within a busy city). In this section, I begin to discuss how I have adopted and adapted his concept and approach to understanding the rhythm of the bus soundscape, which is then further discussed contextually and analysed in section 4.2.

However, before proceeding, it is essential to explain why I selected and applied Valentine’s and Huron’s concepts to my research. Both concepts offer a powerful framework to understanding experiences and expectations while in a bus soundscape through a sexual harassment lens. Valentine provides a crucial spatial and social lens that highlights gendered power dynamics, societal norms and practices and expectations that are often inscribed within everyday physical spaces. These aspects of daily life are often ignored and, as discussed by Lewis *et al.* (2021), ignoring these issues can create environments where harassment is perpetuated.

This spatial and social understanding of sexual harassment within public spaces is enriched by Huron’s ITPRA theory of expectation that offers a temporal dimension. The ITPRA

theory within my research helped to trace the linear unfolding of expectations while in the bus, from initial imagination through to tension and prediction of a particular sound event then the proceeding reaction and appraisal phases. This cycle of expectation further demonstrates how past experiences and learned associations shape how a soundscape is experienced and navigated. These concepts enable us to understand how issues like sexual harassment evolve over time within an auditory environment. While Valentine's work highlights the enduring gendered power structures that shape interactions within a space, Huron's model offers insight into how one might navigate this space through the lens of these gendered power structures. The rest of this section applies Valentine's and Huron's concepts to situate Schafer's soundscape analysis approach, which I begin to build on here and then fully analyse in Section 4.2.

2.3.1. Nairobi "Balanced" Soundscape

The Nairobi bus soundscape can be classified as a "balanced" soundscape, and when a soundscape is balanced, the listening process is characterised by interaction. The interaction is a consequence, not a cause (Truax, 2001: 65). Even though the soundscape can get overwhelming during certain times of the day, an expected rhythm of the bus soundscape such as rush hour, the sounds are clear and distinguishable, even in the distance, unlike in an "imbalanced" soundscape where sounds tend to blow over and merge and it is difficult to aurally separate the layers of sound being produced (Järviluoma *et al.*, 2003: 100).

Lercher and Schulte-Fortkamp (2003), in their study on noise annoyance in communities, propose that there is a lack of masking in a balanced soundscape that allows an intimate interaction between the environment and people, and vice versa, leading to an "acoustic colouration" that provides useful information to be interpreted. In comparison, Lercher and

Schulte-Fortkamp (2003) argue that in an imbalanced soundscape, sounds with crucial information are masked because the level of sound is at a constant, “creating a ‘sound wall’ which is biased towards the low frequency range and blocks interactions with the ambient environment” (Schulte-Fortkamp *et al.*, 2023: 6–7).

In a 2023 Radio 3 Documentary narrated by John Drever titled *Tuner of the World* that explored the life and work of R Murray Schafer, Truax remarks that a soundscape that is balanced favours the ears in that we hear the different sounds in different frequency bands, “not being louder but having similar energy in the same frequency range” (2023: 16’37”). In the same documentary, Westerkamp describes a balanced soundscape as one where interactions with the environment are not masked; “you can hear how you are impacting the environment around you” (2023: 14’01” to 15’30”). On the other hand, an imbalanced soundscape is one in which clarity and distinction between the different sounds in the soundscape are lost, where one sound might dominate and mask the others.

While in a “balanced” soundscape, we can have different levels of attention, both in terms of our concentration levels and the auditory events we choose to pay more attention to compared to others. The hierarchy of listening attention, as discussed in the next section, that we allocate to sound events and auditory activities within a soundscape (mental maps) influences our reactions and reaction times (the “Imagination” and “Tension” phases of the ITPRA theory of expectation) and overall experiences within the soundscape (Valentine, 1989; Huron, 2007).

2.3.2. Hierarchy of Listening Attention in a Soundscape

Listening to a “balanced” soundscape is an interactive process between an environment with a constant flow of auditory information and someone who contributes to it while being

impacted by it. Cobussen argues that this state of “becoming” arises from the space coming to life through its embedded sounds, and that the individuals actively participate in this “becoming”, engaging with the acoustic environment and “experiencing the space in motion, emerging through the sounding events” (2022: 14). Here, one can apply two listening modes to further unpack the auditory activities within the soundscape: *listen-in-search* and *listen-in-readiness*.

Truax and Botteldooren *et al.* assert that listen-in-search involves actively searching the environment for sound cues, “expecting certain sounds in context” and being able to focus on one sound, excluding all others, is key to this listening mode (Truax, 2001: 21–22; Botteldooren *et al.*, 2012: 2).²⁸ Listen-in-search is shaped by our mental maps formed from past experiences and expectations of the auditory activities within the soundscape (Valentine, 1989). Listen-in-readiness requires a familiarity with the sound events, and an anticipation for the occurrence of a specific sound event. In some cases, the sound one hears might be unexpected; however, because these sounds are familiar, the mind can process the meaning subconsciously (Truax, 2001: 22).²⁹ Cobussen argues that even though our interaction with familiar sounds mostly occurs on a subconscious level, due to accumulated past experience of what the sounds mean in context, we still actively engage with these sounds:

Although it is often stated that our aural relationship to a familiar soundscape mostly takes place on an un- or sub- conscious level, I would rather claim that such a soundscape still requires an active role from the listener; they are dipping in and out of an affective engagement, contingent upon the particular circumstances in which the interaction with the sounds and the environment takes place (2022: 50).

²⁸ For example, it is common as Nairobi bus user to listen-in-search for jiggling of coins in the hand as it alerts you that the conductor is approaching to collect the fare for the journey.

²⁹ For example, it is common for the conductor to whistle and tap the side of the bus when the vehicle is about to slow down to let more passengers enter, or to signal to the driver to depart from the bus stop.

The sounds that one might *listen-in-search* and *listen-in-readiness* for can be divided into three main categories. Similar to most bus soundscapes worldwide, the typical Nairobi bus soundscape contains layers of sounds that can be categorised based on how we perceive them and their meaning within the auditory environment. The next section examines the two primary categories employed in this research.

2.3.3. Keynote Sounds and Signals in a Nairobi Bus Soundscape

Schafer (1994) and Truax (2001) categorise sounds within a soundscape in three ways: *keynote sounds*, *signals* and *soundmarks*. The distinction between keynote sounds and signals is important to this research because they are the “perceptual aspects of the soundscape, characterised by our background and foreground listening habits” (Truax, 2021: 122). Schafer (1994: 10) and Truax (2001: 67) describe *soundmarks* as community sounds that possess unique qualities and have cultural and historical value. These sounds are valued by people within that community, and should be preserved to maintain the acoustic life of that environment. Such sounds are beyond the scope of this research.

Making a link between a keynote in music theory—that is a note that sets the tonality/key of a particular piece of music—a *keynote sound* within an environment is deeply imprinted in the everyday sounds people experience within that environment (Schafer, 1994: 9–10). These sounds frame other sounds in the environment, and might be experienced subconsciously and when they are not present, it is noticeable (Lee *et al.*, 2015: 5; Martin, 2018: 23). These sounds might not have a profound impact on our physical and mental state and are often at a low, constant level (Järviluoma *et al.*, 2003: 100; Truax, 2001: 25). Certain aspects of the environment characterise these sounds and may influence the lifestyle and behaviour of people that experience them daily (Schafer, 1994: 10). Parker and Spennemann

(2022) support this distinction when exploring sound types in the urban environment and their classification in heritage management. They propose that keynote sounds are ever-present sonic events of a particular location that relate to aspects such as the climate of the place and the behaviour of the people that use that environment every day.

The bus is a moving space, and a notable example of a keynote sound is the constant rumble of the engine, which was common across the buses I entered during my fieldwork and from personal experience. Drones and hums are the most common types of keynote sounds in the modern world (Truax, 2001: 139). This low-frequency rumble, which varies in intensity depending on the vehicle's size and speed, was a constant sound due to the diesel-type engines. As a local Nairobiian, this sound becomes part of the expected sounds within such an environment due to the types of buses that are on the road. A passive detachment can occur with this particular sound when you enter this soundscape, unless it deviates from what one expects, such as a spluttering sound indicating a problem with the engine or a sudden latch when the driver shifts gears.

In contrast, *signals* are sounds that have meaning, are in the foreground and experienced consciously (Järviluoma *et al.*, 2003: 100). They have a function and are designed to be listened to and reacted to, and can be considered “acoustic warning devices” (Parker and Spennemann 2022: 23; Schafer, 1994: 10; Lee *et al.*, 2015: 5). These sounds provide specific information to be interpreted and tend to stand out within the soundscape (Truax, 2012: 2105; Truax, 2001: 67). Huron argues that a signal is “an evolved purposeful communicative behaviour” (2015: 2). Signals trigger certain emotions and are crucial because they indicate a need to change behaviour. Huron adds that, for some signals that are similar across cultures such as alarms, they become learned associations and part of our “mental maps”, and over time, when exposed to the same signal, a conditioned response is created (Valentine, 1989).

Signals are expected sounds within the bus soundscape and influence the ITPRA theory of expectation (Huron, 2007).

Sirens, horns, and bells are examples of such sounds, which hold a special meaning that, when heard, trigger, most of the time subconsciously, a particular action. Two examples of signals within the Nairobi soundscape include jiggling of coins in the hand and the whistle-tap combination, which both signal a particular meaning to the passenger. Another example is the sound of a bus horn (a key feature of the soundscape of a bus), which signals that there is space in the bus for passengers (a special meaning within the context of Nairobi) as it approaches a bus stop. Signals tend to occupy the foreground while keynote sounds occupy the background; however, this clear distinction is influenced by an individual's learned habits and associations that shape their "mental maps" (which affects their cognitive responses to the sound), their emotions at the moment (that determines the intensity of their responses) and how familiar they are with the environment (that is, whether they are a local or a tourist) (Schafer, 1994: 152; Huron, 2007; Valentine, 1989).

Some keynote sounds might be considered a signal by a tourist or visitor to the soundscape because of their unfamiliarity with the meaning of the sound, while to a local, the sound might be a keynote sound, relegated to subconsciously assessing its meaning (Truax, 2001: 25). The "physical dimensions of the sound" does not play a part in whether a sound is a signal or a keynote; very loud sounds can be keynote sounds while quiet sounds can be interpreted as signals (Schafer, 1994: 152; Bruce *et al.*, 2009: 1). In some cases, signals can be considered keynote sounds, crossing over from a foreground sound into a background sound once they have expressed their meaning. Familiarity with the bus soundscape is key to understanding the difference in such a case. Section 4.2. and 4.3. analyse the bus soundscapes for the journeys I went on for the fieldwork to further contextualise my

experiences and expectations through a sexual harassment lens and explore the findings that emerged. The next section is the chapter conclusion.

2.4. Chapter Conclusion

This chapter presented the foundations of the portfolio, demonstrating that various factors influence auditory expectation and the experience of a soundscape in context, and began to show how these factors impacted my own in-situ soundsit-in-motion fieldwork experience. Through a sexual harassment lens, I have discussed the extent to which emotions influence learned behaviour, which accumulates into expectations of a soundscape. I then briefly explored how sound is also deeply enmeshed within broader structures of power and historical processes (colonial history). Although beyond the scope of this project, acknowledging a decolonisation sound studies perspective was important to highlight the recent interest in sound studies in reestablishing the socio-political nuances embedded in listening practices. Then I explored Huron's ITPRA theory of expectations, where expectations are described as mental functions that have been adapted over time (thus forming learned behaviour). Unconsciously, we might associate certain auditory activities with the appropriate emotional response to protect ourselves while in the space.

The chapter continued with briefly situating my research within the broader fields of mobilities (feminist geography lens) and sonic geographies from a sexual harassment lens, allowing for an in-depth discussion of sexual harassment within bus soundscapes. The research also provided a contextual framework for adopting Valentine's (1989) concept in my research, which followed next. Here, I have highlighted feminist geography research, examining the ways in which it has understood spaces and places to be imbued with and governed by patriarchal norms. This was then followed by discussions surrounding feminism

and respectable femininity within the African context and gender roles within Nairobi society.

The final section illuminated the ways in which I adapted Valentine's and Huron's concepts to analysing the soundscape, while situating Schafer's soundscape analysis approach. This section was crucial in establishing how both these concepts are integral to understanding the theme of the project: expectations and experiences of a Nairobi bus soundscape through a sexual harassment lens.

The next chapter addresses the bricolage research design, which incorporates several research methodologies to address the research questions and, ultimately, develop the portfolio.

Chapter 3: Research Design and Methodologies

Chapter 3 highlights the research methodologies used to address the research questions.³⁰

3.1. Introduction

This section briefly introduces what is covered in this chapter.

I begin by exploring the bricolage approach used to apply a mixed method, iterative, and intersectional qualitative research design. I highlight how this approach integrates several methodologies to examine the first research question. Then I move on to the approach to developing a *socially-conscious* portfolio that brings together these learnings, addressing the second research question. This is followed by highlighting the data collection methods: a) solo soundsit-in-motion fieldwork; b) autoethnographical fieldwork notes; and, c) qualitative, semi-structured interviews with activists and non-governmental activists fighting for women's and girls' rights in Nairobi, Kenya.

Then I move on to discussing the data collection approach to extracting relevant data from research question one data to address research question two. This is followed by mapping out the data analysis plan, including how Huron's (2007) and Valentine's (1989) concepts are applied to analyse the collated data and the coding and analysis approach to addressing interview responses. Finally, this section highlights additional portfolio-related methodologies applied to some of the compositions: a narrative approach for some of the

³⁰ Research Question 1: To what extent does an experience of a bus soundscape in-situ impact understandings of sexual harassment? Research Question 2: How can the portfolio imbue and communicate the nuances of sexual harassment within Nairobi's bus soundscapes while actively engaging with and contributing to the ongoing socio-cultural dialogue surrounding this issue?

compositions and a content analysis approach only in creating the visual aspect of Composition 1: *Less than 140*. The final two sections of this chapter address the ethical considerations of using the bricolage approach to apply these methodologies to researching the chosen theme and concludes the chapter.

The next section maps out the iterative and intersectional research design.

3.2. Mixed Methods Qualitative Research Design

3.2.1. Overall Research Approach

Growing research within electroacoustic/soundscape composition influenced my overall research strategy. In the recent past, there has been emerging practice-as-research studies related to socially-engaged/conscious practices. Researchers have explored, in varied intensities, a discourse that blends what Tullis Rennie (2021: 163) refers to as “the aesthetics, ethics and politics of collaborative, participative and otherwise socially engaged approaches to and in sound”. Two particular issues of *Organized Sound*, edited by Tullis Rennie, *Socially Engaged Sound Practices Part 1* (Volume 26 released in 2021) and *Socially Engaged Sound Practices Part 2* (Volume 28 released in 2023), have explored a diverse interpretation of the sociality in relation to music and sound, highlighting “the social, engagement, collaboration in sound, and of listening to and resonating with ideas and sonic experiences beyond one’s own positionality” (Rennie, 2023: 1). This growing research informs the research design. Both creatively and in the technical approaches to composing,

I consider the connection between my field experience, the research theme, and how I can infuse these elements into the music, and enhance what listeners might experience.³¹

I employ a mixed-methods qualitative approach to combine several qualitative methodologies from sociology (gender and feminist literature), sound studies (sonic geographies, soundscape studies), and electroacoustic research and composition. A bricolage approach is necessary to iteratively and intersectionally address the research theme. Researcher Helen Kara posits that the “bricolage technique” (2015: 27–28) is popular in arts-based interdisciplinary research, explaining that this approach offers a creative way to make sense of the chosen research theme. A researcher can choose methods and techniques they feel is best suited to assessing the aims of the research; from data collection methods to approaches in presenting and disseminating research results. In discussing bricolage in qualitative research, Pratt *et al.* define it as “the combination of analytic moves for the purpose of solving a problem or problems tailored to one’s own research project” (2022: 219).

The bricolage approach accommodates an iterative and intersectional approach to making sense of emerging results and integrating them into the research over time. The core central aspects of bricolage include “making do,” “utilising resources at hand” and “combining resources for new purposes” rather than “seeking out and applying specially designed, standard techniques” (Hammersley, 2004: 18; Pratt *et al.*, 2022: 217). This approach provides a way to continuously “learn and experiment with new tools and methodologies to understand and analyse qualitative data” (Pratt *et al.*, 2022: 233).

³¹ Chapter 5 discusses in detail the creative and technical approaches applied to each composition.

The bricolage research design is iterative and intersectional. An iterative approach simply means assessing research question one while developing the portfolio (addressing research question two) at the same time. This was necessary to create momentum within the research process and to allow project completion within the allocated research years. This approach also meant the continued growth of my creative practice; each composition improved in terms of technique, focus and quality.

In both soundscape and sociology (gender/feminist literature), an intersectional approach analyses how factors that underpin oppression and marginalisation, such as gender, social strata/class, sexuality and socio-cultural practices and beliefs, shape everyday experiences (Gatwiri and McLaren, 2016: 265; Ingleton, 2015: 63; Nyambura, 2018: 430). Kara asserts that, as a popular approach in feminist research, intersectionality acknowledges that identity is both multifaceted and linked to geographical and social contexts; that the approach both reflects on the complexity of identity and “examines the relationships between identity and their implications for power relations” (2015: 40).

An iterative and intersectional approach aligns with context-based soundscape methodology, which is the central premise when developing my portfolio. Soundscape researcher Nimalan Yoganathan asserts that a key element in context-based soundscape methodology is in conveying “contextual information to listeners through the sounds” (2021: 205). In discussing the use of field recordings recorded from contested urban environments to create soundscape compositions that “confront oppressive soundscapes of systemic racism” (2021: 201), Yoganathan encourages an intersectional approach to incorporating sounds within music. Studying not only the abstract qualities of the sounds, and related meanings, but also any issues such as race, class, gender, sex or politics that might be embedded within the soundscapes and the people occupying them (2021: 208). Here, the researcher echoes

Westerkamp's research on soundscape composition, a medium through which "cultural exploration and political activism could meet" (2002: 51), adding that, soundscape composition, in particular, on both an activist and political level:

creates a strong oppositional place of conscious listening and a means of 'speaking back' to problematic 'voices' in the soundscape (Westerkamp, 2002: 52).

This bricolage research design approach includes two major aspects. Throughout the research process, from collecting data for research question one and developing the portfolio, I apply an embodied positionality and consider the social facets of Nairobi society that shape and mould my socialisation and, thus, my experiences and expectations in-situ. These aspects are discussed in the next section.

3.2.2. Embodied Positionality in the Research

In adopting an embodied approach, I specifically mean applying an active, situated physical presence within the Nairobi bus soundscape during the fieldwork, discussed in the next section. This reflexive approach throughout my research acknowledges that my life experiences and awareness, beyond the research, directly impacted my in-situ observations, data collection, and compositional processes, from ideation through to the final portfolio. Kara (2015: 72) asserts that cognitive, emotional and sensory resources are the three central aspects of reflexivity. I centre my own experiences and engage with specific modes of listening as discussed in Chapter 2, listen-in-search and listen-in-readiness, which shaped my interactions during the fieldwork (Truax, 2001: 21–22; Botteldooren *et al.*, 2012:2). One way I do this, which will be discussed in Section 3.3: Data Collection Methods, is by keeping a travel diary during fieldwork.

While I acknowledge that the deeply embodied nature of navigating potentially triggering public spaces and the impact of the soundscape on the body, an extended focus on how the

rhythm of my body (including physical sensations like heart rate, muscle tension that resonate with Huron's Tension phase) is beyond the scope of this project. The focus remains on the auditory and socio-cultural dimensions of my in-situ experience, including how these sensations informed expectations and behaviour rather than being individual points of analysis.

It was important for me to include my experiences and voice throughout the project and the bricolage approach helped to determine my positionality in the research. My position within the research is situated within humanity, and I am aware that the context of the research and the use of music as a medium of expression are intrinsically embedded in our everyday experiences. I centre my own experiences and intersectionally consider the influence Nairobi society—where I was born and raised—has had on my socialisation as a woman, the ways in which socio-political issues have influenced this socialisation, and, further, how these aspects filter into the composition process. In adopting an embodied position, I acknowledge that these life experiences affected my in-situ soundsit-in-motion fieldwork experiences, the compositional process and the resulting portfolio.

Cultural sociologist Trever Hagen (2014) suggests that an embodied approach explores how people organise senses through “considering comprehensive, global dimensions of spatiality, experience and emplacement”. This view is supported in electroacoustic music scholarship as well. Composer David Howes discusses the theoretical and methodological challenges presented when focusing on sound and the “power of hearing as both object of study and means of inquiry” (2020: 24). Howes suggests that the way people negotiate meaning, their “ways of sensing” are a cultural act, as “sensory values, and how the senses are conditioned is intimately tied to the condition of difference grouped within society” (2020: 26).

Composer Peter Rothbart (2012) calls for composers to be aware of ethnic and cultural influences when creating music. This awareness can be applied from two perspectives: that of the artist while composing and that of the listener when experiencing the music. Rothbart examines the history of electroacoustic music and how its technological development has largely been devoid of geographical or cultural influences.³² Rothbart posits that when an artist considers that their ethnicity and cultural background influences their creative thinking, they can offer listeners a deeper understanding of the context underpinning their music through other ways such as programme notes, especially when listeners do not share the same socio-cultural background with the composers.

My voice and experiences are important to this project. I consider the ways in which aspects such as my gender, age, tribe, and social strata affect the research theme and process. I reflect on how these factors shape my interactions on public buses in Nairobi. These personal contexts are especially important in recent scholarship within decolonial sound studies, which emphasises the importance of situated knowledge and challenges Western-centric understandings of sound and space, as discussed in-depth in Section 2.1.1. Additionally, I also consider that electroacoustic/soundscape music practice has Western roots and my listeners are likely to have a Western background.³³ Hence, I acknowledge the inherent subjectivity that accompanies artistic practice and actively embody my experiences while researching and composing about sexual harassment on Nairobi buses.

The next section examines how the different social facets within Nairobi society impacted my positioning and socialisation within the research.

³² Though this has changed in the last couple of years, as evidenced in the Organized Sound Journal articles in the previous section.

³³ Electroacoustic music composition is still very much on the fringes of art in Kenya, with only a handful of artists actively involved in this area (I have interacted with only three).

3.2.3. Social Facets of Nairobi Society and Their Impact on my Positioning

In Section 1.1.4, I began to establish the context of this research location, aspects of which I apply intrinsically to the research methodology. As a composer, my creative choices are inherently embodied and intersectional because they are shaped by socially grounded identifications and relational social factors such as my gender, age, tribe, social strata, etc.

My identity as a young, Kenyan woman shapes my everyday experiences, whether I am consciously aware of them or not and, consequently, how I apply these experiences to my creative practice (Järviluoma *et al.*, 2003: 85). An intersectional and mixed methods approach also helps to consider how my positioning within research is impacted by the location of the research (in a Global South city), as well as the people who might be listening to my compositions (a Western audience for the most part). Here, a divide occurs when considering aspects such as gender and race and their impact on my compositional decisions in a discipline with primarily Western roots and scholarship (sound studies and electroacoustic music research and composition).

On the one hand, my gender is at the forefront when assessing feminist scholarship intersectionally, being aware that feminist issues in Nairobi differ from other cities such as Johannesburg or London. On the other hand, my race and national identity is propelled forward, together with my gender, when considering a socially-conscious approach to creating music in electroacoustic music scholarship. This division provides an opportunity to develop a portfolio that considers these aspects, further compounding the necessity of the bricolage approach to the research structure.

As explored in Section 1.1.4, being a Kikuyu woman, brought up by an educated Kikuyu woman, in an upper-class family, influenced my experience and expectations of a bus

soundscape. These aspects, including my training as an electroacoustic composer and the deliberate reflection of sexual harassment while in the field, I would assume that my attention and vigilance to the soundscape is much more heightened compared to other women. This supports previous research in that our experiences of a soundscape are subjective.

Everyday experiences are embodied, with gender not only denoting one's place within society but also the complexity of human experiences (Warren and Hackney, 2000: 21). When developing relationships and interactions during fieldwork, we might negotiate between our embodied selves and the environment. This involves monitoring and modifying our behaviour and how we navigate, physically and mentally, while in the environment. By centring my experiences within the soundscape, and associated context, the sounds take on a central and heightened role, providing what Truax calls "its own form of sensory knowledge that may guide the process" (2022: 279).

In this paper, electroacoustic composer Barry Truax examines the intimate connection between listening and scientific knowledge of sound, specifically the relationship between soundscape composition and signal processing in electroacoustic music. Truax emphasises that it is not enough to just blend relevant disciplines when using a multi-disciplinary approach in sound studies research (of which electroacoustic music and soundscape research falls under). There is a need to critically evaluate traditional knowledge on the subject and how it has been created through a political, cultural and historical lens (Truax, 2022: 282). To this end, the centrality of my experiences in this research functions to inextricably link and shape the contextual references, offering an intersectional exploration into sexual harassment in public spaces that continues to affect women in Nairobi, me included (Barnes, 2019: 64).

The next section discusses the three data collection methods.

3.3. Data Collection Methods

In this section, I chart the three data collection methods and how the data addressed the research questions iteratively. I explore the embodied soundsit-in-motion approach to fieldwork, a derivative of soundwalking practice, and the importance of this approach to creating the portfolio and further contextualising my experiences and expectations in-situ. I also discuss the autoethnographical approach to keeping fieldwork notes in a travel diary journal and its application to the portfolio. This approach further highlights my socialisation as a Nairobi woman and the ways in which my behaviour in-situ unconsciously manifested. Then I address the qualitative interviews I conducted. In each section, I also explore how data from the fieldwork, fieldwork notes and interview responses and the themes that emerged were used to develop general aesthetic, creative direction and motivations of the portfolio (for example, soundscape recordings and sound material from the soundsit-in-motion fieldwork and narrative material from fieldwork notes and interview responses).

The next section maps out the soundsit-in-motion fieldwork approach.

3.3.1. *Soundsit-in-Motion* Soundscape Embodied Fieldwork Approach

The purpose of this embodied approach was to collect fieldwork data in-situ to assess soundscape experiences and expectations within a Nairobi bus through a sexual harassment lens. This involved an active, situated presence, employing specific, intentional listening modes to navigate and interpret the three soundscapes (listen-in-search and listen-in-readiness). The data would address research question one as well as provide aesthetic and

sound material for the portfolio (general composition themes, motivations and soundscape recordings).

In the summer of 2019, I travelled back home to conduct pre-fieldwork experiments to prepare for the upcoming fieldwork I had planned to undertake in 2020. The aim was to assess how feasible it would be to travel in buses with expensive equipment to ensure that I am not putting myself at too much risk, as well as write down ideas on the best routes to take to capture good quality recordings. Recording in a public space always involves some level of risk. In addition to carrying visibly expensive equipment, there is a risk of being seen as surveilling or recording people's conversations. This can draw unwarranted attention in a highly politically tense society such as Nairobi. I carried with me an audio recorder, Zoom H4N, to work out the logistics. The recorded audio was for testing purposes, and to narrow down my fieldwork process. However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic and being unable to travel back home in 2020, the soundscape recordings became a source of research data.

The next section explores the concept of a soundsit-in-motion fieldwork approach.

3.3.1.a. Soundsit-in-motion Versus Soundwalk

I coined the term *soundsit-in-motion* to refer to this fieldwork approach because I sat in the bus which moves through different soundscapes. The bus is a soundscape in itself, and by moving through different environments, the auditory activities within these other soundscapes temporarily become part of the bus soundscape (i.e., while stopping at a designated bus stop, the sounds within the bus stop enter the bus through the windows/doors and become part of the bus soundscape until the bus drives off).

Soundsit-in-motion is a derivative of soundwalking practice that is common in soundscape research and encapsulates another approach under this umbrella: soundsitting. Soundscape researcher and film sound composer Neil Bruce explores soundsitting as a derivative to soundwalking. In discussing soundsitting, Bruce (2023: 788) distinguishes between the two and posits that while soundwalking involves exploring and listening to the environment while “moving through it”, soundsitting “involves sitting still in a particular place and listening to the sounds that exist in-situ”. The researcher further asserts that a soundsit offers an opportunity for a much deeper analysis of the soundscape and a more engaged immersion than a soundwalk. In addition, the researcher (2023: 790) argues that the transitory nature of a soundwalk means that the time to process and mediate on the experience may be fleeting.

My soundsit-in-motion approach combined these elements, allowing me to engage in deliberate, reflexive listening during the three journeys. Specifically, I employ listen-in-search (actively seeking out specific auditory cues related to sexual harassment) and listen-in-readiness (maintaining awareness while being openly receptive to unexpected sound events or interactions) as discussed in detail in Chapter 2 (Truax, 2001: 21–22; Botteldooren *et al.*, 2012: 2).

Soundwalking, and any derivatives such as soundsitting or soundsit-in-motion, can be inherently a subjective experience, and the use of recordings in creating compositions enhances this subjectivity (Polli, 2017: 89). In exploring soundwalking practice, Andra McCartney (2014: 212) argues that the art of soundwalking brings to the foreground activities within the environment that might have been ignored.³⁴ When creating soundscape compositions using recordings captured during a soundwalk, McCartney asserts that “the

³⁴ In my case, my own socio-political place within Nairobi society, as discussed in Chapter 4.

recordist's perspective is written into the recording, into the listening, touching, experiencing and moving through the space" (2014: 221). I performed a solo fieldwork to better understand my experiences and expectations of the bus soundscapes. These active engagements involved concentrated listening through headphones and remaining aware of the people around me and what manifests in me (emotionally, mentally and physically). The listening modes enabled a better understanding of the soundscape (further applying Schefer's soundscape analysis approach) and helped me understand my in-situ experience and expectations of the buses. I chose to centre my own experiences to draw on and embed these experiences while composing the portfolio.

Antonella Radicchi offers a pocket guide to soundwalking and proposes four soundwalking methods that can aid in understanding the interaction and relationship between people and their environment. The researcher (2017: 72) proposes either a 'solo soundwalk', 'silent-group soundwalk', 'group soundwalk with commentary and simple evaluation points' or 'group soundwalk with commentary and complex evaluation points'. The selected type of soundwalk depends on the purpose, which can range from increasing awareness, training for soundscape research, and evaluating the environment for analysis and urban planning. In my case, I wanted to evaluate my relationship with the transitory bus soundscape through a sexual harassment lens, and a solo soundwalk (as defined by Radicchi, 2017: 72), or soundsit-in-motion, was the ideal approach.

The World Soundscape Project (WSP), as discussed in Chapter 2, utilised soundwalks to explore soundscapes, emphasising "listening" to the environment to learn more about our relationship and influence on it, and vice versa, and to increase "awareness of the notion and evaluation of soundscape" (Schafer, 1994: 111; Radicchi, 2017: 71). As part of WSP with

R Murray Schafer and Barry Truax, Hildegard Westerkamp is widely known to have been an early adopter of soundwalking as a methodology for collecting environmental sound.

A soundwalk—of which solo soundsit-in-motion falls under this umbrella—can be described as a listening exercise in an attempt to immerse within an environment and understand one’s relationship to this environment and vice versa (Westerkamp, no date). Soundwalking involves consciously listening to auditory activities, in context, drawing out the individual sounds and their confluence with other sounds within the space. When soundwalking, the rhythm, nuance, impact and meanings imbued in sounds are brought to the forefront. In the case of my research, I deliberately listened to the sounds and auditory activities that make up a Nairobi bus soundscape, considering the research context.

Since WSP in the 1970s, soundwalking practice has developed within the soundscape research community with the intent of bringing sounds that would “habitually be relegated to the background ambience” temporarily to the foreground (Westerkamp, 2021; Polli, 2017: 84). In the article on the influence of soundwalks in sonic art, Christos Carras asserts that the purpose of a soundwalk is to understand how “sound inflects our thoughts about and our relationships to agencies, human or not, that we interact with” (2019: 261). Carras (2019: 262) argues that soundwalking offers an interesting foundation for both practical and theoretical research, addressing questions tied to our everyday lives and encouraging critical reflection on our experiences and expectations. Echoing this, soundscape researcher and composer, John Drever (2020: 14), in discussing soundwalks, asserts that soundwalking encourages listening as a priority above all other senses and it is “inescapably and unashamedly context sensitive with all that may encompass”. Drever posits that a soundwalk allows for an engrossed, embodied and reflexive listening experience where one can be immersed in the “flow of the enveloping soundscape” (2020: 1). In offering a feminist

perspective to soundwalking, David Shannon (2019: 99) considers how a focus on music, voice and inaudibility can shift attention from sonic mastery to centring marginalised and oppressed voices.

While listening in-situ to a soundscape, we are not hearing a soundscape because it is not an “object but a medium of perception” (Ingold, 2007: 11). We do not hear a soundscape, rather it is the environment we hear *in*. Sounds within a soundscape flow, and how we might experience the movements of sounds in and out of the space is unique and subjective to an individual (Ingold, 2007: 11). An analysis of a soundscape should consider that an experience of a soundscape is different to someone else within the same space at the same time. A soundsit-in-motion, a derivative of soundwalking, allows a deeper exploration of the research theme. As discussed in the next section, the research context necessitated an embodied, socio-cultural, reflexive lens, which facilitated a reflection on the overt ways that my cultural and feminine identity, everyday socialisation, and sensory experiences influence my creative practice as an electroacoustic composer.³⁵

3.3.1.b. Embodied and Reflexive Fieldwork Approach

Soundsit-in-motion is an embodied, reflexive practice that allows a closeness to the environment, rooted in the concept that listening is an active, embodied process, where we might engage with our surroundings and construct meaning from the sounds we encounter (Schafer, 1994; Truax, 2001; Westerkamp, 1998). In my case, an embodied, reflexive soundsit-in-motion practice, guided by the predetermined listening modes, helped adopt an

³⁵ Though this was not immediately apparent at the start, it gradually became clearer the more I immersed myself in sociology gender/feminist research. The bricolage approach to my research design enabled the integration of these emerging new findings, which were crucial to the project.

intersectional and iterative approach to unpacking the research theme. According to Carras (2019: 262), the ability to zoom in on a particular detail—whether mentally through concentrating or using equipment, or focusing on the impact of a sound on our experience and realising that there might be political or social forces that influence our experiences and expectations of a space—can imbue meaning into something that has been considered as a basic form of human movement. Here, researcher Zéco (2021: 284) asserts that the practice of soundwalking entangles the listener/sound recorder in the socio-political relationship with the location. In discussing the entanglement between socio-political context of a place and listening/recording in-situ, the author (2021: 285) argues that listening in-situ involves the production of knowledge influenced by the relationship between the listener and any socio-political entangled issues.

In a similar vein, Salomé Voegelin adds here that sounds are entangled within the soundscape, “deprived of any distance view”, and therefore:

your ears and thus your body become part of what you are investigating. Consequently, your understanding has to be found on this body, from how it exists with other human and more-than-human bodies close up, through touch, smell, and sound (2024: 8).

Voegelin (2024: 3) embraces the position of sound and its potential to be fluid, able to move between disciplines, and relational in research through building hybrid connections. In discussing embodied in-situ fieldwork, the researcher argues that it is impossible to investigate individual sounds in isolation, especially in a densely interconnected sphere such as a public space. The typical rhythm of a bus soundscape is fast-paced and densely connected, as people and objects interact and exchange information within this environment.

Anthropologist Tim Ingold offers a critique in that sound should be considered as neither material nor mental but a “phenomenon of experience—that is, our immersion *in*, and

commingling *with*, the world in which we find ourselves” (2007: 11). The researcher argues that experiencing sounds within a soundscape requires an embodied and reflexive approach to understanding the nuances that make up the auditory layers within that environment. In discussing in-situ listening practices and research, soundscape researcher Andrea Polli posits that listening to the environment on a “human scale emphasises the embodied nature of listening” (2017: 82). The author (2017: 81) suggests that applying an in-situ embodied approach to listening in public can help to build awareness of the social and environmental aspects of our society and encourage preservation of practices that could promote a healthy everyday life.

The next section briefly explores the autoethnographic approach to fieldwork notes and its impact on my methodology, research, and portfolio.

3.3.2. Autoethnographic Fieldwork Notes

This approach involved writing down what I observed after each journey so that I could reflect on these experiences while developing the portfolio.³⁶

After the first journey of my soundsit-in-motion fieldwork, it was clear to me that I needed to write down my thoughts to capture my experience to be able to better recall them later while writing the thesis and when composing the *socially-conscious* portfolio. This emphasises the bricolage technique in the research design and allows the integration of another methodology to address a crucial issue that emerged after the first journey. I would listen back to the recordings while documenting these experiences, which helped to trigger to the surface the in-situ experiences I had just experienced, as well as assist in reflecting on

³⁶ The entries can be found in Fieldwork Notes in the Appendices.

past bus journeys before commencing this research. This exercise would happen less than an hour after taking the journeys. Although the fieldwork notes were intended to facilitate recalling my experiences, they also played a crucial role in further revealing my socialisation and explaining my in-situ reactions to the Nairobi bus soundscape.

Autoethnography as a methodology accounts for the personal experiences of the researcher and links these experiences to the socio-cultural aspects of the research location (Kara, 2015: 23). My fieldwork is deeply reflexive and I position my own experiences. As Carolyn Ellis and Art Bochner (2000: 739) assert, autoethnography is an approach to research and writing that seeks to describe and analyse personal experiences in order to understand socio-cultural experiences. Autoethnography centres on my embodied approach, as I draw on my experiences and expectations as the primary source of situated knowledge, while also linking them broadly with socio-cultural issues. Anthropologist Sarah Pink examines various methods for conducting and sharing sensory research, and discusses the concept of autoethnography. Pink suggests that how we (researchers) live, our cultural inclinations and the choices we make in “practising, understanding, recalling and representing” our sensorial experiences and the ways we bring this into our interactions “with and within” the environment relate to our identities and constructed truths (2015: 6). The fieldwork notes contextualised my fieldwork experiences.

I apply an embodied, multisensorial approach to writing the fieldwork notes. Clifford Geertz (1973) describes embodied fieldwork notes as an important way to capture the complexity of human behaviour in context, in this case, my own behaviour in-situ. Geertz offers an anthropological perspective in discussing a “thick description” approach to writing fieldwork notes. The anthropologist asserts that detailed descriptions go beyond

observations and attempt to understand the meaning behind behaviour, actions, reactions, and social interactions.

In building on Geertz's work, Pink rethinks the "thick description" approach and applies a sensory ethnography lens. Pink (2020) recommends that fieldwork notes include a comprehensive account of the embodied experience that a researcher may encounter in the field, incorporating multiple senses, such as touch and smell, where possible. In my case, though I primarily use two senses (seeing and hearing) when creating the portfolio and in writing this thesis, I observe that I included other senses in my fieldwork notes, which would be considered as "thick description" (i.e., smell—dusty, smell of food and physiological senses—hunger, temperature. See Fieldwork Notes in the Appendices). While composing, these fieldwork notes form a crucial reference point that captured the complex feelings and thoughts I had while thinking about the context of the research, in-situ.

The fieldwork notes allowed me to reflect on the gender power dynamics in the bus soundscape and how I navigated a triggering space. By applying an embodied approach to writing my fieldwork notes, I could prioritise being reflexive and subjective and document a deeper understanding of how gender and power are experienced in the field, even though I was not cognisant of the depth of this impact at the time. This process aligns with insights from sound studies that validate my situated perspective and challenge Western-centric notions of neutrality while researching. Additionally, the notes highlighted the intersection between rhythm and mobilities and sonic geographies, showing that moving through these soundscapes is linked to experiences of safety and vulnerability. Writing the notes as a post-fieldwork reflective practice allowed me to critically reflect on my positionality and apply them later in the research and creatively and aesthetically imbue these reflections within the portfolio. For example, I employ narration as a technique in some of the compositions, and

certain sections of the notes have been narrated by my voice and incorporated into the music, as discussed in more detail in Chapter 5. The notes became a source of motivation and interpretation that helped me capture the depth and nuance of the subject matter and my experiences in-situ.

The next section discusses the interview design and structure of the interviews I conducted between 2020 and 2021.

3.3.3. Qualitative Interview Design and Structure

The purpose of collecting this data was to gain a better understanding of sexual harassment in public spaces in Nairobi. Due to the scarcity of research on this subject, these data provided an opportunity to reinforce some of the themes that emerged in the previous two data collection methods.

3.3.3.a. Participant Sampling Criteria and Selection

The participants were purposively sampled, as I aimed to gather the views of individuals who could provide an overview of the broader social issues relevant to Kenyan women. All the participants ($n = 4$) were members of Kenyan non-governmental organisations (NGOs), activists actively advocating for women's and girls' rights, and at the forefront of campaigning against violence against women and girls. While I had initially intended to interview participants who dealt specifically with sexual harassment acts against women in Nairobi buses, it became clear that sexual harassment on buses cannot be separated out from sexual harassment that happens across the board, and in fact is an issue that is subsumed within broader issues that focus on women's and girls' rights and violence against women and girls.

The recruitment approach involved researching organisations and initiatives advocating against sexual harassment in Nairobi. I built a contact list by searching the internet, social media platform X (then Twitter) and LinkedIn. Then I emailed these initial participants, who were 14 in number at the time. Criteria for selection were whether the individual worked closely on a day-to-day basis with this issue. Out of the 14 that I emailed, two replied to me and became participants. Snowball sampling was then applied, wherein I asked initial participants to spread the word about my research. This resulted in two more participants for the project. Table 1 below provides participant details:

Table 1: Interview Participant Details

Pseudonym	Age range	Nature of Work	Commute status
Coord	25–34	Programme Coordinator for an NGO (reforming transport policy in relation to creating safe spaces for women while in public)	Regular bus user
Lyer	35–44	Lawyer and Women’s Rights Advocate	Regular bus user and later private means of transport
Advo	45–54	NGO Advocate for Sexual Gender-Based Violence and Women’s Rights	Private means of transport exclusively
Pho	35–44	Public officer (Ministry of Health; handling cases related to violence against women and girls in Nairobi), runs an NGO, activist/advocate	Regular bus user

The pseudonyms are used in Chapters 4 and 5 when exploring their responses.

3.3.3.b. Interview Design and Approach

The interviews were completed and conducted on Zoom between September 2020 and September 2021. Initially, I had planned to conduct in-person interviews. However, due to COVID-19 restrictions, I had to adapt to a videoconferencing approach. Participants chose the date and time that worked for them. Zoom invites were sent as soon as participants filled out the interview participant sheet, which was distributed through SurveyMonkey. A reminder email was sent a week before the set interview date. The video recording feature on Zoom was used to capture the interview for transcription purposes, as well as to use the audio recordings as material for the compositions, if the participant gave their consent.

Interview questions were semi-structured, with a prepared set of questions about the research theme and included the ability to prompt a further elaboration on an interesting response (Silverman, 2024: 156). During the interview, I employed an embodied approach, seeking to create an environment where participants could reflect on and share their experiences. I aimed to create a space where “representations and understandings of experience rather than objective truths about what has been experienced are intentionally produced” (Pink, 2015: 81). This approach was necessitated due to the nature of the participants’ work and the sensitivity of the subject matter. It was crucial for me to establish a rapport and conduct the interview semi-constructively to facilitate a discussion on the broader social context of the participants’ work and to further explore the participants’ understanding of the continued perpetuation of sexual harassment within Nairobi buses.

3.4. Data Analysis Plan

This section addresses the analysis plan for the data collected through the three data collection approaches: fieldwork, fieldwork notes and qualitative interviews. I begin with the preliminary fieldwork and fieldwork notes integrated analysis approach.

3.4.1. Fieldwork and Fieldwork Notes Integrated Analysis

The main purpose of the fieldwork was to understand in-situ the extent to which the issue of sexual harassment impacts soundscape expectations and experiences of a Nairobi bus. These data were to be analysed using Schafer's (1994) soundscape analysis approach and integrated with Huron's (2007) ITPRA theory of expectation and Valentine's (1989) 'spatial expression of patriarchy' concepts. I assess the features that make-up a Nairobi bus soundscape and auditory activities within this environment. I focus on three soundscape aspects while in the field in order to provide points of analysis in understanding the research theme: a) "balanced versus imbalanced" soundscapes, b) hierarchy of listening attention, and c) types of auditory activities. Chapters 4 and 5 discuss the emerging data in-depth.

The next section discusses the coding and analysis approach for the interviews.

3.4.2. Thematic Analysis and Interview Coding

The interview data was manually coded and analysed thematically. The data included both professional and personal experiences of the subject matter (the interviewees' own experiences and expectations of a Nairobi bus), further offering more context on sexual harassment in buses in Nairobi as well as socialisation within Nairobi society.

In providing a guide to thematic analysis, Kiger and Varpio describe thematic analysis as a method to analyse qualitative data to “seek to understand experiences, thoughts, or behaviours” (2020: 846). It is a method for identifying themes in participants’ responses (Silverman, 2024, p. 136). Kiger and Varpio (2020: 849–850) provide a six-step thematic analysis framework: 1) data familiarisation; 2) generating codes; 3) theme selection; 4) reviewing themes; 5) theme defining and naming; 6) writing a report. I adopt a reflexive approach when using this framework. In exploring thematic analysis, Braun and Clarke assert that a reflexive thematic analysis not only embraces subjectivity but interrogates it. The researchers assert that researcher subjectivity and the practice of reflexivity are required for a successful reflexive thematic analysis, adding that:

Reflexive research treats knowledge as situated and as inevitably and inescapably shaped by the processes and practices of knowledge production, including the practices of the researcher (2022: 13).

Reflexivity was integral to transcribing the data and familiarising myself with the responses as well as the entire research design process.

Coding the data, the next step in the framework, was crucial for determining connections between the data. Coding data is a “process that involves reading each data item closely and tagging the segments relevant to the research question” (Braun and Clarke, 2022: 53). The subjectivity of the researcher fuels the process, understanding of the primary essence and context of the data and interpretation of the data (Braun and Clarke, 2022: 58; Saldaña, 2016: 4). The themes and codes were partially determined by the research questions as well as by the responses. I integrate Huron’s (2007) ITPRA theory of expectation and Valentine’s (1989) ‘spatial expression of patriarchy’ into my selection, review, definition, and naming of the themes that emerged from the data. Chapters 4 and 5 highlight an integrated approach to analysing research data and how I interweave the interview responses (through both direct

quotes and narrative descriptions) based on the emerging data themes while unpacking the research. The emerging themes provided theoretical and contextual material for the portfolio, assisting in creating a socially-conscious project.

The next section discusses other portfolio-related methodologies.

3.4.3. Other Portfolio-Related Methodologies

3.4.3.a. Narration Approach

I use narration as a compositional technique to reflect on my position within the research and fieldwork. I also include the voices of some of the participants (those who consented).

Using voice within electroacoustic composition is a common practice. Famously, Hildegard Westerkamp uses her voice post-fieldwork to emphasise technical aspects of her composition approach in *Kits Beach Soundwalk* (1989). Brona Martin (2018: 22) discusses soundscape composition, noting that the use of narration highlights the context and location of a soundscape. Spoken words can be used to reinforce “a sense of place and identity” and provide more context regarding the inspiration and motivation behind the composition (Martin, 2018: 22). Additionally, in feminist literature, using narrative methodology is inspired by written feminist research: I use my voice as a sound source, adding a sonic interpretation to the piece (Hinkle-Turner, 2003: 35). This approach helps to answer my two research questions, particularly research question two: imbuing research context into the aesthetics of the portfolio.

In one of the articles in the 2021 *Organized Sound Journals*, Robson *et al.* (2021) perform a study with sound artists and composers, exploring the creative process of these participants and the extent to which the approaches and tools they use impact how listeners experience

their work. Based on the collected data (2021: 26–29), it is clear that most, if not all, artists and composers carefully consider the relationship between the space/place/local, produced sound, recorded sound and later, creation of works based on this experience.

In discussing field recording practice and further the ways in which composers can use certain techniques to articulate this experience, Matilde Meireles asserts that the use of voice helps to contextualise sounds, giving “clarity to the listening experience, narrating and guiding the event” (2017: 102). For some of the compositions, I narrate parts of the fieldwork notes from my soundsit-in-motion fieldwork and strategically include this material within certain compositions (for example, in *Mashine* and *In-situ*). I also include snippets from interviews with participants who consented to their voices being used in the portfolio. These snippets were chosen to emphasise the motivation and aesthetics of the composition they were used in (for example, in the compositions *Listen and Let’s Talk About It* and *Listen and Let’s Do Something About It*). Chapter 5 discusses in detail how this approach was applied throughout the portfolio.

The next section discusses the methodology used to gather data and information from X (then Twitter) to create the word cloud (visual element) for the first composition of the portfolio: *Less Than 140*.

3.4.3.b. Content Analysis Approach: Visual Aspect of Composition 1 (*Less Than 140*)

Less Than 140 is the first composition in the portfolio and is the only composition that uses a dual-sensory dissemination approach. The audio component is accompanied by a visual

component in the form of a word cloud that was then converted into video format to match the aesthetic of the composition.³⁷

Silverman asserts that content analysis involves “establishing categories and then counting the number of times those categories are used in the particular data set” (2024: 133). In my research, the use of hashtags offers a connecting thread between the tweet data. The content analysis approach offered an opportunity to analyse tweets tagged with #mydressmychoice and #stripmenot after the incidents mentioned in Chapter 1 that motivated this research. Social Media researcher Steven Wilson (2022: 47) asserts that hashtags label a tweet as part of a larger conversation with others across the platform. In exploring social media as a data source for social science research, Wilson offers that using hashtags implicitly relays the purpose of the tweet. Under #mydressmychoice and #stripmenot, people expressed their opinions and thoughts on sexual harassment within buses in Nairobi. I collected relevant tweets on July 8th 2019, when I began creating this composition. The tweets were limited from when the tweeting began under this hashtag (2014) to the day I collected them (2019).

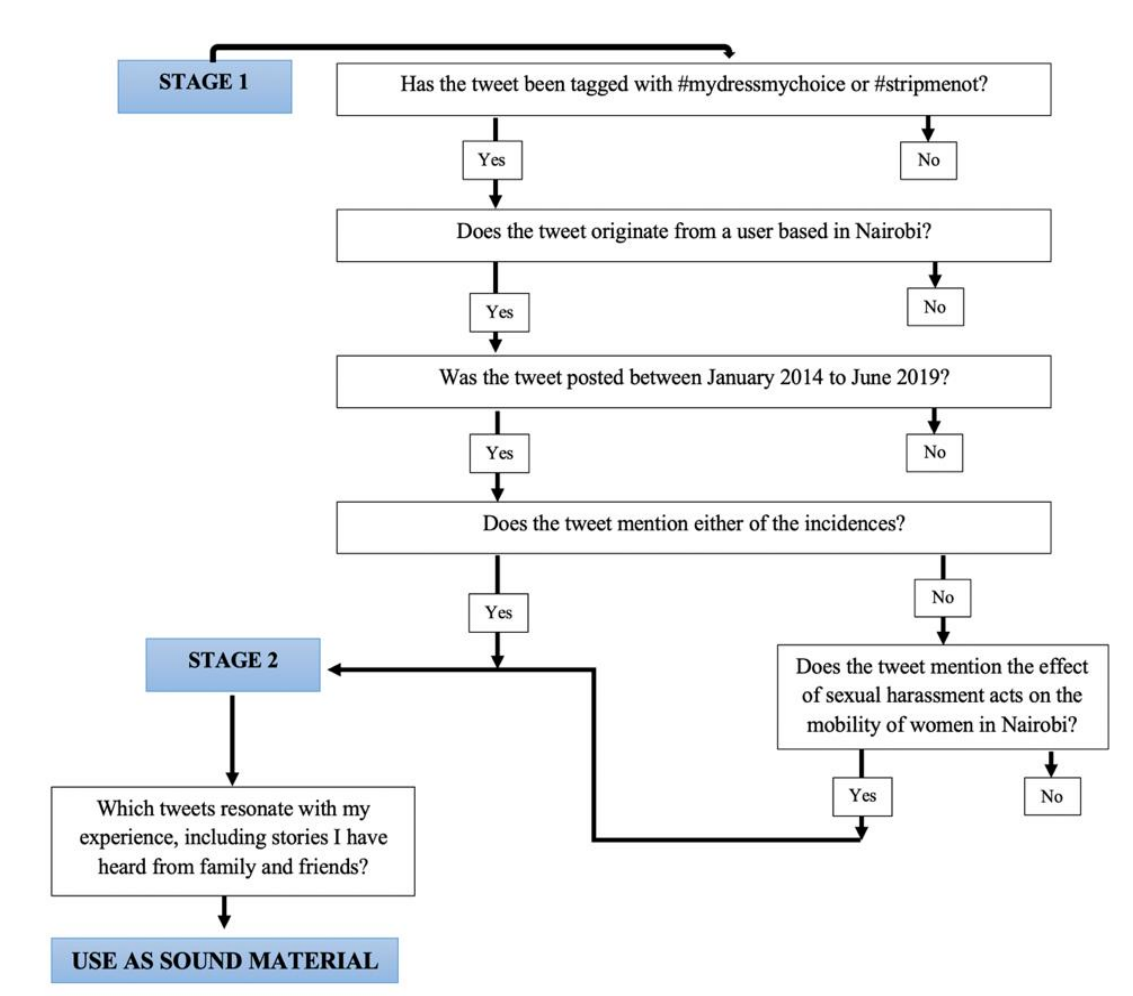
Through content analysis, I examined the language and narrative to identify common themes in the tweets and make “credible and valid inferences from the data” (Drisko and Maschi, 2015: 6). Though the tweets are used primarily to create the visual aspect of this composition, this approach assisted in drawing inferences on people’s reactions to the sexual harassment incidences. This exercise also informed me about the divisiveness of this issue within Nairobi society. Prior to this, it was easy for me to assume that most people would agree that sexually harassing a woman in public is wrong, point-blank. However, the tweets provided

³⁷ In creating the video, which incorporates the word cloud, I underwent video training sessions in 2019 within the music and audio department, where I learnt about offline and online techniques to creating videos using iMovie.

an insight that helped shape the direction of my research: that is, socialisation within Nairobi society might lead to certain behaviours being acceptable in public (catcalling, groping, use of sexually suggestive language, etc.) and further the oppression and subjugation of women.

All tweets used in this project were publicly available, and care was taken to remove identifying information. The following flow chart displays the two-stage process that I applied and criteria through which I selected the textual material that was used as compositional material:

Figure 3: Flow Chart for Content Analysis



The first stage involved assessing the tweets using several parameters. X (then Twitter) allowed users to search tweets using specific parameters, including restricting the search to tweets with #mydressmychoice and #stripmenot tags, posted in Nairobi, Kenya, between January 2014 and June 2019. The sexual harassment incidents happened in 2014, and therefore, anything before that would not be relevant to my research. I did not use anything post-2019 because I collected the tweets in July 2019, and performed my content analysis/selection at that time. Any tweets posted after that date were excluded from the data because they did not contribute to the word cloud or the narration used in the composition. Any tweets that did not have any of these criteria were not used. The search results that came up were from public profiles because results from private Twitter profiles do not appear in the search. The second stage involved reading through the tweets and picking those that were relevant to the research theme. This was a deliberate choice rooted in situated knowledge, to make sure that the relevance of the data was grounded in my lived experience. The selected tweets then served as a source for video material for the word cloud, as well as sound material that I narrated and recorded, particularly the two hashtags #mydressmychoice and #stripmenot, and the words ‘Nairobi’ and ‘Sexual Harassment’. Chapter 5 provides a detailed discussion of the creation of Composition 1: *Less Than 140*, including its aesthetic and creative direction.

The next section discusses the ethical considerations for the research.

3.5. Research Ethical Considerations

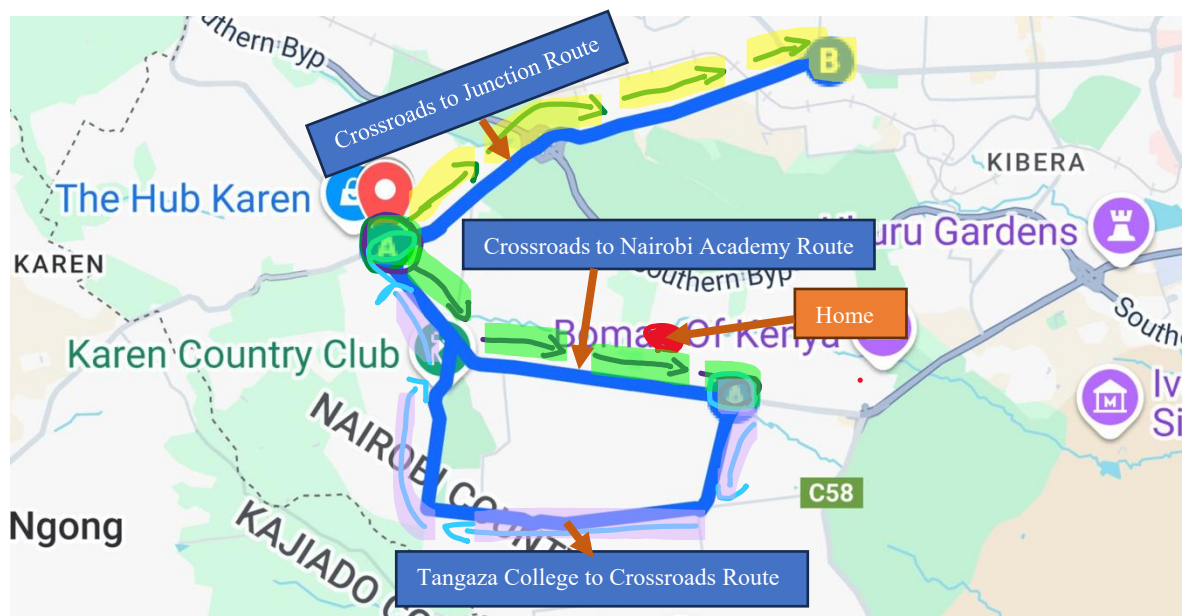
This section explores both the fieldwork and interview ethical considerations.

3.5.1. Fieldwork Ethical Considerations

As mentioned earlier, the initial focus of the 2019 fieldwork was to determine the logistics for the main fieldwork I had planned for 2020. This section discusses the selection of the research routes.

When selecting the routes for the soundsit-in-motion fieldwork, I chose three routes that I was familiar with and within proximity of where I lived, as shown in the figure below:

Figure 4: Research Routes



To this extent, and in hindsight, it seems that I considered the bus routes based on the equipment I was carrying and chose to record in routes I was familiar with and “safer” according to my own experience. It is important to note that as a Nairobiian, we are inherently aware of the routes and areas in the city that are problematic for women in relation to sexual harassment, but also high risk of being robbed when carrying visibly expensive equipment. Performing a solo soundsit-in-motion in such high risk areas while reflecting on sexual harassment would have increased my vulnerability and decreased my safety. Chapter 4

explores reflections about my experiences while on the buses as well as a detailed exploration of each of the soundscapes in context.

3.5.2. Interview Ethical Considerations

This section considers consent, safety of interview participants and ethics review.

3.5.2.a. Consent

Before commencing the interviews, consent was required for two reasons: (a) to take part in the research, and (b) for interview audio material to be used as compositional material. For the latter reason, I was interested in using snippets of the responses from the participants as narrative material for the music. It was necessary to inform participants and gain consent because they would be audibly recognisable, thereby affecting their anonymity in the project. Here, participants were given a choice to either opt in and allow their responses to be used as a form of narrative material or opt out of having their responses used in this way but still take part in the interview³⁸. The following was included in the consent section:

'I would like to opt out of my recorded voice being used in developing the arts-based projects but would still like to take part in the interview, and only have textual information included in project.'

The consent section in the interview participant information sheet, distributed via SurveyMonkey, detailed how the audio snippets would be used, their purpose, and how long the main interview audio file would be stored after the interview. Additionally, as part of the consent process, participants were given the option to review the questions beforehand and

³⁸ The plan was to use the audio recordings either processed or unprocessed, depending on the decisions I made about the structure of each composition.

opt out of answering any question that they found uncomfortable. The interview questions can be found in Interview Materials in the Appendices.

3.5.2.b. Safety of Participants

While the participants regularly worked around sensitive issues such as sexual harassment, as part of the ethics process, it was important to include several protocols within the interview design to ensure their safety. This was to consider the difficulty in predicting the extent to which the interview process may cause emotional turmoil, or bring up deep-seated issues that participants had initially suppressed or were not present at the beginning of the interview (Dempsey *et al.*, 2016: 482; Brown and Durrheim, 2009: 920; Sieber, 1993: 13; Corbin and Morse, 2003). I included an interview and distress call protocol, as well as a resource list with useful support services available in Nairobi.

3.5.2.c. Ethics Review and Approval

The interview design, protocol, questions, and consent were first submitted for ethics review to the Faculty of Humanities Research Ethics Advisory Group (REAG) in August 2019, but they were rejected. I applied again in June 2020 with the requested adjustments, including altering the interview design and approach due to COVID-19 pandemic restrictions. REAG approved and granted the ethics review in July 2020. Interviews were conducted between September 2020 and September 2021.

3.6. Chapter Conclusion

This chapter highlighted the bricolage, mixed method iterative, and intersectional qualitative research design, highlighting how this approach integrated several methodologies to

examine the first research question. Then I explored the approaches used to develop a *socially-conscious* portfolio, addressing the second research question. Additionally, I discuss why I centred my experiences within the research, applying an embodied positionality and the social facets of Nairobi society that shape and mould my socialisation and, thus, my experiences and expectations in-situ. Then I mapped out the data collection methods, exploring the three primary methods of data collection used to address research question one: a) solo *soundsit-in-motion* fieldwork; b) autoethnographical fieldwork notes; and, c) qualitative, semi-structured interviews with activists and non-governmental activists fighting for women's and girls' rights in Nairobi, Kenya.

I discussed the data analysis plan, including how Huron's and Valentine's concepts are applied to analyse the collated data. Coding and analysis approach to assessing interview responses was next. The chapter then explored additional portfolio-related methodologies applied to some of the compositions in this research: the narration approach and the content analysis approach in creating the visual aspect of Composition 1: *Less than 140*. The final section of this chapter addressed the ethical considerations of using the bricolage approach to apply these methodologies to researching the chosen theme.

The next chapter discusses research findings and situates Huron's (2007) ITPRA theory of expectation and Valentine's (1989) 'spatial expression of patriarchy' within the context of the research.

Chapter 4: Research Findings

Chapter 4 primarily addresses research question one while linking the elements used in addressing research question two. I begin by exploring fear and respectable femininity in Nairobi public spaces, aspects that Valentine (1989) asserts can reinforce ‘spatial expression of patriarchy’. In connection with this, I analyse interview responses on how socialisation continues to impact women in Nairobi and our mobility around the city. Additionally, I draw on how socio-political issues influence (whether consciously or not) how women might experience public spaces. This sets the stage to explore the Nairobi bus soundscape, including interview responses to the culture of blaming and shaming within Nairobi society (an emerging theme in the interviews) and how this might shape emotions of in-situ soundscape expectations and experiences. Following this, the chapter highlights the link between emotions in-situ and transient sonic markers, an emerging data result from the soundsit-in-motion fieldwork and fieldwork notes. Here, the chapter comprehensively explores the Nairobi bus soundscape and the manifestation of transient sonic markers as an auditory coping strategy while navigating the space.

4.1. Socialisation and Spatial Expression of Patriarchy in Nairobi Public Spaces

This section explores socialisation in Nairobi society and applies Valentine’s (1989) concept of ‘spatial expression of patriarchy’. I discuss how this concept within society reinforces certain behaviours and normalises harmful behaviour that continues to impact women’s expectations and experiences in public soundscapes. This is key to unpacking my own socialisation and informs my soundsit-in-motion fieldwork as well as the issues I continually

reflected on while developing the *socially-conscious* portfolio, which is explored in the next chapter. I continually acknowledge that my experiences as a woman (in the field for this research and in general) play a significant role in my creative practice. Three themes emerged in the interview responses and fieldwork notes: respectable femininity, sexual harassment acts in public spaces, and culture of victim blaming and shaming and fear of sexual harassment.

Before discussing these themes, it is important for me to reflect on the interviews. These expert interviews led to a deeper understanding of the elements that might affect women's safety in public spaces and reinforced the importance of an intersectional approach to unpacking the context of the research. The expert interviews provided a mix of personal and professional opinions on the subject broadly related to gender issues within public transport, specifically sexual harassment within buses. As mentioned in Chapter 3, sexual harassment in buses falls under a broad umbrella of violence against women and girls in Nairobi. The expert interviews not only provided knowledge and experiences related to transport policies and politics that influence everyday use of public spaces and public transport but also offered their own personal experiences and the ways in which they protect themselves while using public transport. It is interesting to note that the responses from the participant who exclusively uses private transport skewed mostly towards policy issues, which aligned with their professional role as an NGO advocate. In contrast, the other participants provided a mix of professional opinions and their own personal experiences.

The next section discusses respectable femininity in Nairobi and how this impacted my experience and expectations of Nairobi bus soundscapes, as echoed by interview responses.

4.1.1. Theme 1: Respectable Femininity in Nairobi

In feminist studies, respectable femininity is interpreted as “the role that femininity plays in women’s social lives to make them legitimate or ‘good’ through preserving honour and virtue in the public” (Gupta, 2024: 216). In a patriarchal city like Nairobi, respectable femininity has been used to justify the continued subjugation and marginalisation of women. In Chapter 2, I give the example of certain tribes where women are confined to housework and educating young girls is seen as a waste of money as these families lose out on the cheap labour girls and women offer and in paying school fees. In those communities, anyone who goes against this “unspoken rule” is seen to be resisting cultural beliefs and traditions and risks losing their social standing and respect (Kenyatta, 2023: 9; Kivoi, 2014: 179). Girls in such a community are socialised to be good housewives, to sacrifice their education and to become dependent on a man. Men are socialised to leave the home, find a job, become independent, and provide for the family they will have later in life. It can then be surmised that when men within these communities are socialised to treat women in this manner, they may encounter a different dynamic when they travel or move to the city, leading to tension. These women from other communities who might be socialised to be independent and contribute economically become their competition. To these men, a woman working, occupying public space that they have been taught belongs to them, goes against their own beliefs. According to their traditional customs and beliefs, she is not fulfilling their “respectable femininity” standards. This is not to say that all men from such tribes will take it upon themselves to harass women who are out in public, but it begins to explore the bias, prejudice and stereotypes that might form due to a gender power imbalance as a result of certain practices stemming from socio-cultural beliefs and norms.

In the interviews, participants agree that sexual harassment is prevalent in urban Nairobi public spaces because women and girls are more prone to sexual harassment due to their gender, and that women are the largest victim population of sexual abuse (Pho, 2020). This might be as a result of an imbalance in gendered power and social relations, reinforcing fear of sexual harassment within these spaces, and further, gender inequality in society (Hsu, 2011: 87). Lyer supports this and mentions that women are seen as easy and softer targets, that it has nothing to do with how educated or economically empowered women might be, but because of the power imbalance between men and women. This echoes Kamau and Wright's (2022: 41) research that sexual harassment concerns control and power over women, particularly in public spaces.

Advo makes a link between sexual harassment and patriarchy, arguing that our prescribed gender roles and positions in society, which are often sexist and detrimental to women, makes women a target of men's entitlement. In the same vein, Lyer offers a lengthy explanation, arguing that within a patriarchal society, women are socialised to be:

...seen and not heard. You're supposed to be lady like, you know. Don't be so loud. You are supposed to be calm. You are supposed to be a bit shy. If someone shows interest in you, you are supposed to thank the Gods because somebody has noticed you. ... women are abused and harassed just because they are women, just because of that. It does not matter race, colour ... religion, dressing, education, background. What is the man seeing? "That's a woman. That's an object. That's a thing for my pleasure. Why should she refuse?"

Coord echoes this sentiment, arguing that men's entitlement is tied to how everyone might be socialised to behave in society, to accept and acknowledge some forms of harassment such as unwanted compliments, especially since there is no physical contact and one has not been physically hurt. This is evidenced in Obure's research (2017: ix, 21) in Nairobi, on the reasons why gender violence towards women in Nairobi buses is prevalent. 57.5% of the

215 respondents assert that oversexualisation of women's bodies is a form of men's entitlement and exacerbates gender inequality within the society.

This is further supported by my experience before boarding the first bus. I write in the fieldwork notes of my first journey:

The men in maroon who approached me belted out and pointed at the *matatus* [buses] they were in charge of. It felt like a race to who could get me to board their vehicle. I tensed. Knowing that some wouldn't stop at verbal means. Some of these men walked alongside me, as I searched for the most optimum vehicle to record in. Some grabbed my hand, alluded to my physical appearance, flirting and pressuring me to enter their vehicles. It was a race to make as much money as they could (Fieldwork Notes in the Appendices. Journey #1; July 2019: Crossroads to Junction Route).

Based on past experience, I knew I was likely to encounter the above behaviour, where conductors would attempt to go beyond verbal communication to ask if I was interested in using their buses. It was interesting to note that I would expect something like this to happen through the tension I felt and prepared myself for it. This learned reaction affected my "Imagination" and "Tension" phases of the ITPRA theory of expectation (Huron, 2007). It left me wondering if they would go beyond flirting because, in the past, I have experienced being physically pushed into a bus.

A society that continues to uphold patriarchy, particularly norms that are detrimental to women's well-being, is a society that will have a gender and power imbalance and, thus, create an environment that inadvertently increases the risk of women being sexually harassed when in buses. Advo mentions that one cannot separate gender when considering, broadly, any form of violence towards women and girls because how the different genders are positioned in society is intimately linked to how we might navigate and experience public spaces. The participant adds that:

... if people are socialised to feel like your gender is subordinate or ... like your gender belongs in a certain place, if society has described the sphere that your gender can operate in or the things your gender can and cannot do, where they can go, where they can't, what they can wear, what they can't, then what it means is that it affects everything including getting on a bus.

The same participant asserts that sexual harassment is part of a much broader issue concerning sexist gender norms and societal values, influenced by the patriarchal structures that Nairobi society still upholds. The participant adds that it can take time for people to understand the extent to which sexist ideologies are deeply rooted within society.

Sexual harassment in any form is unacceptable, and participants seem to agree that the lack of clarity between right and wrong stems from what is deemed socially acceptable (i.e., respectable femininity standards) and how both women and men are socialised. The unfortunate consequence of living in a society that does not have a clear-cut understanding of sexual harassment is a culture that continues to undermine the influence of such acts on women's experiences and expectations in public spaces.

The next section provides more context on sexual harassment within public spaces in Nairobi society, and what influences socialisation of women. I lay the foundation for the aesthetics and creative direction for the portfolio while also informing my in-situ expectations and experiences.

4.1.2. Theme 2: Sexual Harassment Acts in Public Spaces

All the participants echo that there is a general lack of awareness of sexual harassment and what it constitutes in Nairobi society. This reflects the research gap in this area: minimal research and studies related to sexual harassment in public spaces within Nairobi as well as violence against women and girls in public. Research on women's issues and everyday

experiences in Nairobi public spaces is still underdeveloped, which seems to translate to a lack of awareness of issues such as sexual harassment of women while in public.

Participants mention that most people, when they hear sexual harassment, think the acts only occur physically, and most think of sexual assault (the extreme). Lyster mentions that there is an unfounded belief that has been perpetuated within Nairobi society, that there is no abuse without serious physical contact that has left injuries. This continues to reinforce widespread acceptance of unfounded beliefs and myths surrounding sexual behaviour and male aggression towards women, “a function of living in a patriarchal society” (Caretta and Szymanski, 2019: 527, 529). It also ties to the broader issue of gender inequality, which has been briefly discussed in the previous section.

Lyster further echoes that there is a need to educate people that sexual harassment acts fall on a spectrum, and it is not only the physical aspect that we should acknowledge but visual and verbal as well. Exclusion of certain behaviours makes sexual harassment seem as if it is an ‘extraordinary’ event, rather than a routine expression of men’s power (Wise and Stanley, 1987: 67). Pho asserts that an inclusive approach is necessitated to understand complex issues such as sexual harassment and to cater to situations such as catcalling in public spaces. This point is echoed by Coord, who acknowledges that as long as the act is humiliating, offensive and/or unwelcome, it is sexual harassment.

Vera-Gray (2016: 10) argues that perhaps the lack of uniformity in succinctly defining sexual harassment acts is a consequence of the difficulty in identifying and labelling women’s experiences within public spaces. However, these ‘experiential realities’ such as catcalling, the impact of anticipation, or intrusions that are not ‘sexual’ in nature are issues that should be considered as ‘sexual harassment acts’ (Vera-Gray, 2016: 11). Vera-Gray

refers to “experiential realities” as lived, everyday experiences of individuals, in particular women’s experience of harassment in public spaces. In this context, she emphasises the actual realities that women face when occupying public space, how these experiences are understood within this frame, the gap between what people might experience and official/statistical accounts and the importance of taking seriously the ways in which women might interpret or try to make sense of these every day experiences.

Pho speaks about catcalling and visual sexual harassment, further mentioning how such acts can be difficult to report or prove in court because of how challenging it might be to relive the experience and attempt to explain what happened in a way that will legally build a case against the harasser. The participant further asserts that an understanding of sexual and gender-based violence is subjective. In the literature review in Chapter 2, it was presented that women have different tolerance thresholds, and sexual harassment acts can be overlooked and ignored until it crosses a certain threshold, which can be subjective and change from one woman to the next (Mitra-Sarkar and Partheeban, 2011: 76). This can lead to—though all forms of sexual harassment are harmful—less violent sexual crimes in public such as leering and suggestive comments being ignored and normalised while physical touch garners a response from the woman, and is likely to have more weight if the victim reports the incident (Chowdhury and Wee, 2020: 103; Mitra-Sarkar and Partheeban, 2011: 76). Without this uniformity in understanding what sexual harassment is, and what it entails, sexual harassment continues to be a malaise in Nairobi society.

Research participants mention that all aspects of harassment, including visual and verbal, need to be considered. The participants assert that visual (ogling, staring) and verbal harassment (indecent/suggestive remarks) are the most common forms of sexual harassment in public spaces, echoed in the studies discussed in Chapter 2 (Kishiue *et al.*, 2020; Women’s

Empowerment Link, 2015; Wafula *et al.*, 2018; Niboye, 2023; Obure, 2019). These forms of sexual harassment happen on a daily basis. Coord mentions how giving unsolicited compliments can be considered a form of verbal sexual harassment, particularly from bus drivers and conductors who work in the bus industry. The participant mentions how, in some cases, employees within the bus industry take the opportunity to harass once a conversation is initiated, such as when asking which bus is about to depart. The unwelcome nature and inappropriate timing can constitute as harassment.

Coord goes on to mention that understanding that unsolicited comments can be experienced as sexual harassment has not been normalised and that, in some cases, men are surprised when a woman vocalises that an unwanted compliment can be considered as a form of sexual harassment. Furthermore, the participant notes that a woman's response in this situation may leave her vulnerable to further unwanted attention and interaction. Displaying non-threatening behaviour by being courteous and accepting the comment is considered an example of an active coping strategy to avoid escalation (Carretta and Szymanski, 2019: 528). However, responding can lead to unwanted conversation, while ignoring the comment can escalate to verbal insults or even violence. In such cases, even being “good wives and homemakers, meek, dress modestly and behave appropriately in public”, as most women in Nairobi are socialised to behave, does not protect from such an encounter.

Sexual harassment is an abuse of power, unwelcome and exacerbates women's safety in public spaces (Sen *et al.*, 2018: 29; Ki-moon, 2008: 1). Participants are asked how they would define sexual harassment within the Nairobi context. Advo gives an extensive definition:

...things that are just basically unwelcome whether they are physical, whether they are verbal ... it's the unwelcome nature of it ... has to do with rights, can be persistent

but does not necessarily have to be ... can even just have happened once. Just something about the whole idea of ... sort of like individual personhood and boundaries. And it being about the victim or survivor and how they feel as opposed to just being about the fact that, "Well, I didn't do anything that I didn't think I, all I did was..." It has to be about, "Wait a minute. We need to listen to how it affected the person that it happened to," because sometimes, you don't have bad intentions, sometimes you do, but the bottom line is how does whatever you do whether in ignorance or whether deliberately affect the person that feels violated.

Echoing this, Lyer defines it as:

...as any action or threat of an action whether verbal or physical that tends to inflict, maybe pain or a feeling of uneasiness on another person purely because of their gender ... the definition of sexual harassment needs to include the act itself, the threat of an act or the mere insinuation. And should be codified in law.

Pho's definition includes other forms of sexual violence:

... sexual harassment, in my personal opinion means any form of sexual abuse against a person, which is anything from catcalling, to touching, to full blown gang rape. All that, in my view, are forms of sexual harassment.

The unwelcome nature of sexual harassment is clear in the participants' definitions, as Coord further adds:

... sexual harassment is just any form of unwelcome sexual behaviour that could be offensive, humiliating, or just intimidating. And this could be verbal. It could be physical. I mean, I think it could even be visual, you know, so long as I, the person, feels intimidated by it or harassed by it.

There seems to be an overwhelming indication that sexual harassment can be mental, verbal, visual and psychological. It can constitute a range of actions, including certain hand gestures, leering, catcalling, wolf-whistling, unwanted comments, flashing, groping, rubbing, and even verbal abuse. There is some agreement among the participants that sexual harassment goes beyond the physical, is unwelcome and almost always features intimidation and humiliation as key components.

The normalisation of sexual harassment, and broadly, violence against women and girls, stems from a culture (or mesh of cultures due to a confluence of people in the urban city from different socio-cultural backgrounds) that still upholds patriarchal norms and beliefs. Fear of sexual harassment manifests in such situations and is a theme that emerged in the interview responses and in my own reactions, as noted in the fieldwork notes. Caretta and Szymanski (2019: 526) assert that, in most cases, though some forms of sexual harassment might not be life-threatening, the stress it evokes is a constant reminder of threats to one's safety, thereby evoking feelings of defencelessness and vulnerability. Feelings that might be compounded by fear and uncertainty that the harassment will escalate to violence. The threat of further assault might lead to women feeling agitated or easily startled while in public because encounters of such nature can be "unpredictable, potentially uncontrollable and hence threatening" (Valentine, 1989: 386; Mitra-Sarkar and Partheeban, 2011: 74).

The next section discusses the link between victim blaming and shaming and fear of sexual harassment, a key research result. It lays a foundation for the emergence of transient sonic markers as an in-situ coping strategy as a way to remain aware within a triggering space.

4.1.3. Theme 3: Culture of Victim Blaming and Shaming and Fear in Public Spaces

A lack of awareness of what sexual harassment constitutes can lead to the normalisation of sexual harassment, as discussed in the section above. Pho refers to how sometimes women do not know they are being harassed, or if they are harassed, they go about their day and suppress the memory because it has become "almost order of the day". This is echoed in Lewis *et al.*'s (2021) research, as discussed in Chapter 2, on the link between the rhythm of the bus soundscape and the tendency to ignore harassment in favour of not disrupting others'

journeys. Acceptance of certain behaviours and treatment as “a normal part of life” correlates with continued victimisation of women while in public. This normalisation can resort to silencing victims and/or even continue to perpetuate patriarchal structures and male dominance such as being receptive to unwanted comments when you are clearly uncomfortable. Lyer adds to this:

...when you go [and] you tell your friends, “I was walking and somebody actually touched you.” I guarantee you ... very many people will tell you, “*Nasi ufurahi*”³⁹. You need to be proud that they noticed you. You see, you are not the only one who was walking on that street there and they noticed you. You are not the only one walking so you should be proud.” How does that leave the victim feeling? That next time I am going to be quiet ...

A culture of gender discrimination supports and reinforces violence towards women, further normalising certain behaviours (You, 2019: 223). Coord adds that normalisation can occur from both sides, from the victim and perpetrators, and that there are some cases where neither the victim nor the harasser is aware that what is happening is wrong. This is tied to a lack of awareness country-wide regarding sexual harassment and what it constitutes, further exacerbated when sexual and reproductive responsibility is expected more from girls than boys, as researchers Nyakangi *et al.* (2021) conclude in their study discussed in Chapter 1. Placing such responsibility solely on girls and women intensifies victim blaming and shaming practices.

Though experiences within transit environments (in this case, Nairobi bus stops and inside a Nairobi bus, which is a moving space) can be subjective and almost always contextual, the responses under this theme in the interviews support that there is a link. Answering from both a personal and professional perspective, the participants assert that victim blaming and

39 This is a slang word. In this context, it translates to ‘be happy’.

shaming, and further reinforcement of certain socialisation teachings within patriarchal dominant societies, lead to women having to almost always adjust their behaviour to remain safe within these spaces. The onus to prevent sexual harassment falls squarely on the woman. This is echoed throughout the literature presented in Chapter 2 (see: Srivastava, 2012; Mitra-Sarkar and Partheeban, 2011; Carretta and Szymanski, 2019; King *et al.*, 2023; Pedersen, 2020; Valentine, 1989).

While in and around this moving space, the Nairobi bus soundscape, Pho offers insights into moments of opportunity that harassers might take advantage of to commit a sexual crime, such as crowded buses. Pho asserts that crowded buses give the harasser an easy way to commit the crime and quickly escape, and if there is no surveillance or a witness, they get away with it. A crowded bus, a typical rhythm of a bus soundscape, can lead to instances where a woman is groped, brushed up against or ejaculated on and the harasser gets away quickly. Because it is an enclosed, moving space, harassers take advantage of the design of the space to commit sexual crimes due to the “cloak of anonymity” that the space can offer (Hsu, 2011: 90; Neupane and Chesney-Lind, 2013: 31). Studies conducted in Kenya, as discussed in Chapter 2, conclude that overcrowding is one of the major reasons that lead to sexual harassment (King *et al.*, 2023; Obure, 2017; Women’s Empowerment Link, 2015). Harassers might make a rational decision to harass, but the environmental conditions of a bus can play a huge role and give harassers frequent opportunities to sexually harass women (Madan and Nalla, 2016: 83).

From experience, getting in and out of a bus has always produced the expectation of urgency and dynamic soundscapes and thus a spike in attention levels to prevent being sexually harassed and/or robbed. During this research, my attention level was high so that I could capture my experience of when I was about to enter and leave a bus, as well as the

soundscape outside the bus. As part of my methodology, fieldwork notes were crucial to the process, and because I had kept my Zoom H4N recorder away towards the end for security reasons, I relied on memory. Later, I wrote down my experience in my travel diary to reflect on the moments immediately before and after entering the bus soundscape. A crucial element of this research is in understanding fear of sexual harassment and how it might manifest while in a bus, centring my own experiences. As argued in Section 2.1, auditory events within the soundscape impact how we navigate the space and our experience of these events is influenced by various factors, including past learned behaviour, associations and emotions.

Fear of sexual harassment is an ever-present worry for most women using public transport, an emotion that we might carry with us while entering and exiting these spaces. For me, this fear became clear to me when I read and reflected back on the fieldwork notes. Although I was aware that, to some degree, I was very vigilant while on a bus (as I had been socialised to be), I was not cognisant of the level of fear that I had within me. I acknowledge that other circumstances might have exacerbated this fear (carrying expensive equipment, being alone, amplifying the soundscape through the headphones, etc.).

Emotions can strongly influence not only how we perceive the sounds in an environment but the behaviour of those around us within the space (Zadra *et al.*, 2011: 676). According to Huron's (2007) ITPRA theory of expectation, we undergo this cycle in our day-to-day experiences, influenced by a combination of our biological and socio-cultural roots. The intensity of the emotions we might feel varies significantly between people, depending on the time of day, location of the soundscape, and other factors. How emotions manifest and are triggered within a soundscape is almost always a subjective experience, as our mental maps differ from person to person, something I realised while reading back the fieldwork

notes (Valentine, 1989). Just based on my writings and on reflection, the level of fear and attention heightened when the soundscape of the bus became busier and more crowded (for example, more passengers in the bus, loud music, and alighting/disembarking from the bus). Inversely, it also heightened when the soundscape was quieter than expected⁴⁰.

My past experiences as a traveller influenced certain moments when my fear was triggered, as observed in the diary entry below:

Clutching onto my bag that contained the audio recorder, I moved along the rows of *matatus* [buses]. The minute I gave the impression of needing this form of transport, a swarm of people, mostly men in maroon uniform, approached me. The *matatus* were anything but still. Drivers revved their engines, bellowing smoke in my face, encouraging customers to get on, trying to give the impression that they were ready to leave. It wasn't about filling the first *matatu* in line, it was about getting whichever *matatu* filled (Fieldwork Notes in the Appendices. Journey #1; July 2019: Crossroads to Junction Route).

The fear of sexual harassment while in a bus is an ever-present emotion for me. My first instinct was to clutch my bag and prepare myself to wade through the crowd of mostly male conductors to get onto a bus I could record in. I tensed, expecting the actions that they would take to try and convince me to enter their buses. The soundscape around buses tends to get busier and crowded, and with the added heightened emotion of fear, experience of the soundscape at that moment was altered. Each sound, or combination of sounds, such as chatter from the men, bus engines revving, music spilling out from the buses and nearby shops, can appear in the foreground during such situations as I experienced moments before I entered the bus in the first journey. Lyster mentioned their heightened state when discussing the psychological impact of sexual harassment:

⁴⁰ In the third journey, only 2 of us were in the bus as we travelled along for 10 minutes before picking up more passengers. This gave me a sense of unease and I kept looking around me.

You are walking on the streets, you're going to board a bus. Let's say you're at *Ambassador* [bus car park in Nairobi]. That famous bus stage there. Then, even you, when you left the house, you looked at yourself and said, "Wow, I am killing it. I'm slaying [I look good]." But when you walk, everyone is just saying, "Tss, tss, tss" [kissing one's teeth; catcalling] you know. It does not feel nice. You feel harassed. And that one is just sounds. Let's say somebody actually goes and touches you. How do you feel? You will feel disrespected.

As Huron discusses, incidents that happen before entering a fear-triggering space, such as a bus, can further compound in-situ experiences and alter the ITPRA theory of expectation.

Another diary entry of significance is:

Conversation within the matatu between travellers. My fellow passenger to my left fumbling with a packet of food. It was a female, to my relief (Fieldwork Notes in the Appendices. Journey #2; August 2019: Crossroads to Nairobi Academy Route).

In the second journey, a different situation emerges while listening to the soundscape through the H4N recorder. Earlier in the entry, I closed my eyes to immerse myself in the soundscape. During that time, a passenger sat next to me and it was only when I heard them fumbling with a plastic packet of crisps (a new sound introduced into the soundscape) that I turned and looked at them. It was interesting to note that I was relieved it was a woman. Reflecting on this entry exemplified to me the ever-present emotion of fear of being harassed, especially because I was more vulnerable wearing headphones and listening to the soundscape and concentrating on the aims of the fieldwork rather than applying my usual, often unconscious, coping strategies to protect myself. I also note in the second journey:

There were no bells, so to avoid the vehicle from passing your destination, a customer has to yell "*shukisha* [a slang popular term to let conductors know you want to disembark]" indicating that you want to alight, but in this case, because of the music, I had to disturb the passenger seated next to me, who was a female to my relief, and walk towards the front of the bus as it was moving (Fieldwork Notes in the Appendices. Journey #2; July 2019: Crossroads to Junction Route).

These two instances where I express relief that the passengers are women is a juxtaposition to when the passenger sitting next to me turns out to be a man. In the third journey, I write:

The passenger who sat next to me, looked at my hands curiously. I could see from the corner of my eye that he was wondering what I was doing, but I ignored him (Fieldwork Notes in the Appendices. Journey #3; August 2019: Tangaza College to Crossroads).

When the passengers are women, I do not pay much attention to them, while I am more hyperaware of the male passenger next to me. I did not reflect deeper about this at the time but I wondered if my reaction was possibly connected to deliberately thinking about sexual harassment and how it might impact my in-situ experiences and expectations.

There are a number of ways that the link between culture of blaming and shaming and fear of sexual harassment is reflected, including in how the dressing angle has been frequently used to justify male dominance and violence towards women. One of the participants, Pho, mentions that some harassers might see the way a woman is dressed as an invitation to harass or touch them. Studies in Kenya, as discussed in Chapter 2, cite provocative dressing as a major reason why a woman is sexually harassed (Obure, 2017; Niboye, 2023). This compounds the victim blaming and shaming issue because women are then further socialised to “blame themselves due to expectations that others will hold them responsible for being harassed” (Carretta and Szymanski, 2019: 527). Echoing this, Coord mentions the online #mydressmychoice campaign and protest in 2014. Coord says that because of situations like this, she applies a few modification behaviours (active coping strategy) to reduce her risk of victimisation in the following response:

And so, that’s just a constant fear that I have and it’s a fear that I think that a lot of Nairobi women do have. ... before you leave the house, you have to think through your routes first. Like, where am I going to pass, you know? Like, you have to really calculate that beforehand and, that of course, then informs what you’re going to wear. ... That also informs what time you’re going to go to that place. You can’t be there

too late at night. You can't be there too early in the morning. So, you need to always ... calculate all that. Something I don't think men ever have to think about, you know. And so, I just think that's, that's just every Nairobi's gals life, you know.

These active coping strategies are ways to “arm oneself” to seem busy and unavailable for any interaction (Stark and Meschik, 2018). These changes to behaviour and the way one presents oneself within a public space, through their dressing choices, have been used time and again as active coping strategies. However, these “respectable femininity rules” inadvertently continue to perpetuate and uphold male dominance and violence against women. Vera-Gray (2016: 14) posits that this acts like a form of social control, a constant reminder of how vulnerable and at risk women are while occupying these spaces.

The next section explores my experience during the soundsit-in-motion fieldwork, using fieldwork notes and secondary research to provide a comprehensive assessment of the Nairobi bus soundscape in context. I begin by exploring the features that make-up a Nairobi bus soundscape, in particular the three bus soundscapes I occupied. Further, I situate the emergence of transient sonic markers as checkpoints while travelling in a bus. This section provides a foundation for the sound material and aesthetics incorporated into the portfolio; it is this experience that I actively reflected on and incorporated into my methodology to create the socially-conscious portfolio.

4.2. Listening to the Nairobi Bus Soundscape

Sound studies researchers such as Barry Truax and Cain *et al.* argue that our listening habits, whether indifferent (“tuned out”) or alert (“tuned in”), interpret the auditory environment of a soundscape; the latter utilising “active involvement” while the former applies “passive detachment” (Truax, 2001: xviii; Cain *et al.*, 2011: 233). As a researcher exploring the

soundscape from a gender/feminist lens, I perceive the Nairobi bus soundscape, as Cobussen puts it:

...not as a fixed context or a preexisting void in which something happens, but as an active and unstable agent, participating and constituted in the moment the action takes place (2022: 13).

This perspective resonates with Zéco's (2021: 284), as discussed in the methodology chapter, assertion that listening is an entangled socio-political practice, where the act of hearing is inseparable from one's positionality within the environment. Before this research, whenever I entered a bus, my main priority was to get from point A to point B safely, remaining alert for any inconsistencies in the behaviour of those around me or in the auditory events in the soundscape. For this research, I adopted an active listening role in order to immerse myself in the "balanced" soundscape of the Nairobi bus.

When choosing the travel routes and the buses, I opted for practicality, selecting those that would allow me to record the soundscapes with minimal external interruption to the process. The following table provides more contextual information about the bus journeys:

[Table 2: Fieldwork Bus Journey Details](#)

Bus Journey, date and time	Route	Passenger occupation limit	Any relevant information
Journey 1: 14 th July 2019- 2pm	Crossroads to Junction Route	40+	Played loud music that masked most of the sounds; flooded the recording device, making it difficult to hear the other sounds in the soundscape.
Journey 2: 1 st August 2019- 3pm	Karen Crossroads to Nairobi Academy Route	14 passengers maximum	Played music/radio at a moderate level

Journey 3: 15 th August 2019- 3.30pm	Tangaza College to Crossroads	14 passengers maximum	Did not play any music/radio
--	----------------------------------	--------------------------	------------------------------

I entered the buses just after the lunch rush and before the evening. I also selected the buses based on how likely they were to leave the bus stop quickly. From past experience, it is possible to wait for the bus for nearly twenty minutes or more before the journey starts. Since I was carrying an expensive audio recorder, I needed to be able to enter and exit the bus quickly. On reflection, perhaps my reaction here was due to my socialisation and not wanting to draw attention to myself. This heightened self-awareness, including considerations of personal safety and ethics of recording while in public, is integral in embodied sound practice as highlighted by artists like Brandon LaBelle. LaBelle (2010: x) emphasises the social and political dimensions of listening and sounding in shared environments. Here, LaBelle (2021: 207) asserts that the listener within the soundscape is part of a “communication model” where the “recording in the environment means looping self and environment in a weave.” This weave is further extended by wearing headphones, which amplify the soundscape, meaning that my attention was solely on hearing the sounds in the soundscape and not on any innate coping strategies to protect myself from harassment or robbery. This deliberate immersion foregrounded the tension between research demands and personal vulnerability, a tension often explored in artists who navigate social realities through their auditory work.

In soundscape research, the distinction “balanced/imbalanced” has become more popular, as opposed to “hi-fi/lo-fi,” as Schafer proposed in the 1977 book *Our Sonic Environment and the Soundscape* discussed in Section 2.3. In some cases, these two ways of discussing the soundscape are used interchangeably. This thesis employs the “balanced/imbalanced” term, as discussed in Chapter 2, because it offers a more nuanced assessment of the Nairobi bus soundscape.

During my soundsit-in-motion fieldwork, for the most part, I experienced the bus soundscape as a balanced environment due to the dynamic sonic information on offer. Here is an illustration of the soundscape of the third journey:

The soundscape was interesting. Though the road was in good repair, it was bumpy. The *matatu* [bus], like the previous one, sounded like it was in desperate need of repair. ... The horn was a high-pitched squeak, that sounded almost every time the vehicle rolled to a stop. Another way of alerting customers. The conductor whistled. The *matatu* came to a stop. The door slid open, and more customers disembarked. ... The journey was slow, and most times we stopped in order for the conductor to pick more passengers. Soundscape from the outside seeped in, as cars passed us. (Fieldwork Notes in the Appendices. Journey #3; August 2019: Tangaza College to Crossroads Route).

This third journey lasted around 30 minutes, during which different sounds moved in and out of the space. These included the sound of the metal frame of the bus rattling as it drove over the bumpy roads and the sounds of traffic. In addition, there was the constant rumble of the engine as it accelerated/decelerated and occasional chatter from the passengers from within the bus soundscape. Each sound, or combination of sounds, had its place and role within the balance of the soundscape. However, it is important to note that when the fear of sexual harassment is triggered and the level of attention is heightened, the soundscape can feel overwhelming, especially if the environment is playing loud music or too silent. In the case of loud music, it can overwhelm the senses, and in these cases, the soundscape of the bus can take on an imbalanced nature. Masking can occur within a bus soundscape that plays loud music as illustrated in the entries below:

Due to the placement of the speakers in the vehicle, I couldn't escape the music. The music filled my recorder, but I wasn't deterred. Closing my eyes, I tried to tune into my other senses, listening to my environment, to the layers of sound masked by the music (Fieldwork Notes in the Appendices. Journey #1; July 2019: Crossroads to Junction Route).

Unfortunately, there was music playing, but not as loud to mask the soundscape (Fieldwork Notes in the Appendices. Journey #2; August 2019: Karen Crossroads to Nairobi Academy Route).

The loudness of the music and the fact that music tends to occupy a large frequency band contributed to this masking. However, as noted in the second journey, when the music is at a reasonable level, other sounds become clearer and more distinguishable. The level of music played a crucial role in shaping my experience of the soundscape. With headphones on, the soundscape was amplified, and thus the volume of the music increased. I did not comment in my fieldwork notes on whether there was a connection between the music (level) and my level of fear. However, I would say that in my experience, a loud soundscape can trigger an overwhelming sensation on the senses and, therefore, increase hypervigilance to the environment.

Though it is beyond the scope of research, there is an interesting link here between music and videos played on the bus and creating an environment conducive to sexual harassment. Playing music, graffiti on buses, and loud and rowdy conductors are part of the rhythm of Nairobi's bus soundscape and culture. In Nairobi, loud music and expressive art on buses are used to entice a young customer base, which is the largest customer population (see: Irungu, 2018; Okoth, 2015). In the studies in Chapter 2, the participants assert that such music and videos, and sometimes stickers and posters on the bus, reinforce prejudices and stereotypes towards women, creating an environment that deems it okay to demean and sexualise women (Obure, 2017: ix). Further research in this area might help to understand whether music can “encourage” someone to want to harass a woman or if it provides an opportunity for a harasser to get away with their behaviour. These justifications, however, exemplify how deeply rooted patriarchy and toxic gender norms are within Nairobi society.

The next section analyses the Nairobi bus soundscape, breaking down the layers of sound that I experienced in context. In this section, I highlight the sounds that stood out to me while in this heightened state, drawing out the transient sonic markers within this space.

4.3. Transient Sonic Markers and Fear of Sexual Harassment

Having used transport in the UK for over six years before this research, when I went on the fieldwork journeys in 2019, it was immediately clear to me that the Nairobi bus soundscape is unique in its properties and sonic qualities. Compared to the UK bus transport system, particularly in Kent, where I reside during this research, the soundscape of a Nairobi bus is busier and more dynamic as is part of the Nairobi bus culture. As a bus traveller in Nairobi, I found that a bus with a richer auditory environment (that is, plays loud music, engine revving as the bus moves back and forth, bus conductors calling out for passengers) tends to attract more passengers because of the expectation that these buses are ready to leave and will get you to your destination quicker. In hindsight, these are attributes of Nairobi bus culture that I had previously not considered. With this past knowledge, I aimed to enter three buses.

Assessing the significant features in the bus soundscape and how they influence the actions that passengers take was crucial in understanding the general auditory activity within a bus and further informing the compositional process. The compositional process focused on highlighting the prominent features and sound events of the bus soundscape within the research context.

In this research, each bus journey provided a different level of auditory activity intensity, but there were main sound features that stood out to me while applying the two listening attention levels: listen-in-search and listen-in-readiness. I refer to these features as transient sonic markers. These sound events were anchors that I held onto to remain present and aware of the changes in my auditory environment while dealing with the emotion of fear of sexual harassment. Based on my fieldwork notes and on reflection, I have experienced on a constant

basis that they have now created a learned behaviour and association and triggered an appropriate conditioned response.⁴¹

There are five main sound events that the portfolio highlights and which have been mentioned throughout this chapter: (a) low-frequency acceleration and deceleration of the engines; (b) whistling from the bus conductor; (c) a sharp click or tap on the side/window of the bus; (d) door sliding open and closed; and (e) mid-frequency jiggling of coins in hand. The dynamic (including loudness and intensity) of the bus engine depended on the size of the bus; the larger the bus, the more present the acceleration and deceleration of the engine. I entered one large bus (40+ passengers) and two smaller buses (maximum of 14 passengers). The engine sound was almost always in the background during my journeys, and only came to my attention when I made a conscious effort to listen to it or when the intensity increased (i.e., sudden spike in volume because of increase in speed). Whistling from the bus conductor and the sharp click to the side/window of the bus were signals between the bus conductor and driver, as well as between the conductor and potential customers (i.e., at a bus stop). In the first two journeys, loud music was being played. Therefore, the conductor would perform these actions to either alert the driver to stop for passengers to disembark, pick up more passengers at bus stops, or drive off once passengers had entered the bus. The door sliding closed and opened signified an enclosure to the moving space. The mid-frequency jiggling of coins in hand happened less frequently; only when the bus conductor would walk around (or, in the case of smaller buses, tap your shoulder and shake the coins in your ear) to collect the fare for the journey.

⁴¹ Such as playing close attention to the person sitting next to me. And being more cautious when a man sits next to me compared to a woman.

These were not the only sounds I experienced during this research; however, they stood out to me because of their association with the triggered fear at the time. Fear of sexual harassment heightened my awareness and listening attention while in these spaces. These transient sonic markers offered a way to anchor myself in the moment, helping to situate the sounds I expected to hear. The sounds resembled checkpoints within the journey and signalled what was about to happen next and what I should do to adjust my actions and behaviour within the space. For example, when the door opened/closed, there was a likelihood of an increase/decrease in the number of people in the space. Therefore, the appropriate response was to make space for other people to sit down. In my heightened state of awareness, I tended to check whether a man or a woman was about to sit next to me, an unconscious behaviour that, upon reflection, happens a lot while I am travelling.

Through the recording device, these sounds were amplified and I could easily place the source of the sound within the space. One aspect of this research was the ability to listen back and visualise the direction from which a sound was produced, something that did not always happen in my past journeys when I was “tuned out” of my environment (Truax, 2001: xviii; Cain *et al.*, 2011: 233). However, it is important to note that perhaps this amplification of these transient sonic markers may have had an impact on my heightened state of awareness, due to the enhanced clarity that the headphones and recording device offered compared to using my ears alone. With new sounds entering the amplified soundscape, while listening through the headphones, I found myself turning towards the sound for a visual confirmation of what I was hearing (as exemplified previously when a fellow passenger opened a packet of crisps).

4.4. Chapter Conclusion

This chapter explored the Nairobi bus soundscape, drawing on my soundsit-in-motion fieldwork experiences as noted in my fieldwork notes in the travel journey diary to contextualise expectations of the soundscape. Here, Huron's (2007) "ITPRA" theory of expectation was used to investigate two emergent themes. First, fear of sexual harassment, a key finding of the project, and how this fear influenced my experience of the "balanced" soundscape of the bus, drawing on interview responses regarding how emotions can change the way we interact with the environment. I argued that emotions are influenced by socialisation and context (sexual harassment), and can affect in-situ experiences and expectations of a soundscape. Moreover, I presented that there was a presence of transient sonic markers, "checkpoints," within this fear-triggering auditory environment, another key research finding. The section discussed applying a hierarchy when listening to the soundscape to navigate it safely. Transient sonic markers emerge as "checkpoints" in assisting to reduce chances of being victimised while in a heightened emotional state. These sounds are further discussed in the next chapter, which focuses on analysing each composition.

Chapter 5: Analysis of Compositions

This chapter primarily addresses research question two and offers an in-depth analysis of the compositions in the *socially-conscious* portfolio. It discusses the aesthetic direction, motivations, sound sources and structure of the compositions and how the context of the research has been explored in each piece. The compositions were developed thematically to better link with the emerging research results as discussed in Chapter 4. The first theme is the link between socialisation and sexual harassment, and how it might impact in-situ soundscape experiences and expectations. The second theme is the Nairobi bus soundscape and the link between soundscape properties (socio-cultural and physical) and fear of sexual harassment.

The next section explores the compositions developed in the first theme.

5.1. Theme 1: Sexual Harassment, Socialisation and Impact on *In-Situ* Experience

Respectable femininity, a lack of awareness of the impact of sexual harassment in women's lives, and a culture of victim blaming and shaming are examples of socio-cultural issues that reinforce fear of sexual harassment and play a role in women's socialisation and our experiences and expectations within a Nairobi bus. The compositions under this theme aesthetically draw on these issues. The first composition explores the #mydressmychoice campaign that trended as a result of the 2014 events as discussed in the Introduction.

5.1.1. *Less Than 140* (2019) Analysis

Less Than 140 centres the #mydressmychoice campaign, highlighting a historic moment in women's and girls' rights activism in Nairobi, Kenya. The composition premiered at the *Sharing Feminist Research and Practice* (2020) conference, hosted by the CHASE Feminist Network, as a mini-installation where participants could experience the composition through an audio-visual setup and share comments and thoughts directly with me or by leaving a note in a comment box. It was also played as a loop at the *Arts, Culture and Design Research Day* (2020) at the University of Kent. Since then, I have uploaded it to YouTube for public viewing.

Aesthetic Direction

Less than 140 is a stereo audio-visual piece composed in late 2019. To situate the theme, I focus on the responses to these incidents tagged with #mydressmychoice and #stripmenot on Twitter (now X).

Less than 140 attempts to recreate and mimic the fast-paced nature of technology, particularly on the microblogging platform X (previously Twitter). In this case, by “connecting individual messages to larger themes using the hashtag symbol”, such as #mydressmychoice and #stripmenot, X has been positioned as what feminist scholar Jessica Megarry calls a “public square... a space to disperse and seek information and connect with others through public debate and discussion” (2014: 47). Flone Initiative Director Naomi Mwaura argues that X continues to play a critical role through which persistent and “explosive” issues, in some cases—that could be as deeply rooted as social norms regarding gender—are discussed and debated, “spurring and expanding collective action” (Mwaura, 2018, Megarry, 2014: 47).

When I was composing this piece, I was reading a great deal on gender and feminist issues to strengthen the context of my project. Of interest was how, X, in the Nairobi context, has provided another way of discussing and framing the link between socialisation, sexual harassment and in-situ experiences and expectations, “expanding the range of voices contributing to public discourse” (Easteal *et al.*, 2015: 112). People post their opinions on X (sometimes unfiltered) regarding socio-cultural issues, paving the way for an additional forum to critically examine these issues that have impacted society and might have been overlooked in the past. However, Megarry suggests that women are susceptible to further abuse online due to their “transgression of traditional boundaries” (2014: 48). The scholar explains that the act of women articulating their lived experiences, their safety concerns and how their lives are affected undermines the “hierarchical system of gender” and the associated prescriptive roles placed on women (2014: 104). Though this line of research is beyond the scope of my research, this argument continues to reflect the restrictions placed on women, which can lead to inadvertently silencing women’s voices and reinforcing a culture of victim blaming and shaming. The divisive nature of sexual harassment in public spaces influenced the aesthetic and creative direction of this composition.

Sound Sources

Real-world sounds—keyboard typing, mouse clicks and Twitter incoming message tone—were recorded in the studio and strategically placed within the composition. Using real-world sounds that listeners might be familiar with pulls them in and offers a way to relate to these sounds. Familiarity can help to bring the listener closer to the context of the composition. In addition, the intention was to prepare the listener to delve into this virtual soundscape and further serve to contextualise and establish a “sense of place through sound” (Martin, 2018: 20).

Another sound source is the data collected from X as presented in Chapter 3. As part of the data collection process, I collated information from X, narrated the selected tweets and keywords and integrated these narrations at significant moments in the composition, as noted in the structure section below. Another sound source is the transformation of these recorded real-world sounds and the recorded narrations using synthesisers and samplers—a popular composition technique in electroacoustic music composition. The intention here was to generate other sounds to create a bed of shifting sound material that mimics the movement of digital information through the internet. The structure section below discusses this approach in-depth.

Structure

Less than 140 is divided into three sections: 0:00–2:18, 2:18–6:16 and 6:16–11:00. The texture incorporates layers of shifting mechanical motions, ambient and granulated drones. The main aim of this composition was to create a virtual soundscape where the listener could imagine themselves interacting with these hashtags on X, commenting and reacting to what happened in 2014 (Wilson, 2022: 47). In essence, to give the typical interaction on a social media a sonic identity.

Nikos Stavropoulos's *Topophilia* (2019) inspired the technical direction I used in *Less Than 140*. I was drawn to *Topophilia*'s rapidly shifting textures that entered and exited the soundfield as fast as they appeared. The composer spatialises the sound textures in an interesting way that made me think of how our interactions on the internet might “sound”; fast and fleeting, impactful (trending) but ultimately replaceable in terms of the hierarchy of importance at the time (another issue trends on the platform).

In *Less than 140*, I incorporate a feeling of urgency (the issue of sexual harassment and that it was a trending hashtag immediately after these incidents) as well as continued apprehension, which is sometimes present when someone uses a digital interactive platform like Twitter (now X). The composition begins with keyboard typing and mouse clicking sounds, shortly followed by then Twitter's notification tone (from 0:00–0:35). These sonic events predominantly reoccur at the beginning and end of the three sections. The intention is to give an impression of interconnectivity throughout the piece. The strategic re-occurrence of these sounds attempts to situate the listener in a semi-abstract world, moving them in and out of this imaginary space (Truax, 2012: 2104).

These initial sound events prompt the listeners to visualise themselves sitting in front of their computer or phone, navigating through X, and receiving messages and notifications from the Social Media site. This was the aim of *Topophilia*. Stavropoulos (2019) writes in the programme notes: "The concept of Topophilia relates to attraction or affinity to place, the bond between a person and a specific locality" (2019). Using real-world sounds in *Less Than 140* immerses the listeners in this specific digital realm. I include different reiterations of the X (then Twitter) sound notification, interspersed between the original recorded version, for example, from 5:35 to 6:01. These versions are processed to achieve multi-frequency and rhythmically fragmented sonic events to match the digital soundworld of the composition.

From 0:30, a low-pitched drone and short-crackly mid-range sonic events slowly fade in, laid on a bed of transforming sound layers. The symbolism here is the transformation of textual material into "digital-computer language", moving from the external world into this internal, unknown sphere. Additionally, these layered sounds highlight people posting and interacting about this issue (liking the post, reposting, etc). In particular, the agency that women have within this online forum to speak about something that affects them every day.

The use of sounds in this way reflects the emergence of hashtags (such as #metoo; #mydressmychoice, and #mystripmenot in my research) in the past couple of years as a way to bring awareness of important issues affecting women around the world. The first section of *Less Than 140* concludes with a reiteration of the real-world sounds, punctuated by a high-pitched alarm sound from 1:58 to 2:11 that increases in intensity.

The second section begins after a short period of silence at 2:19. It starts with a notification tone (a bird tweeting) to anchor the listener in the soundscape, followed by a Tweet that I narrated. There is an increase in urgency and volume in this section, coupled with more layers of sound and a reintroduction of real-world sounds. The symbolism here is connected to increased societal tension, the friction between socio-cultural norms and practices, and gender inequality. The tweet narration reflects this tension: “They back that claim with the threat of violence. See, it's not about clothes, it's about power and control. #mydressmychoice” (@Jackie @Jacquenna, 2014).

Nairobi is still very much a patriarchy, and although women are continually occupying public spaces to work and provide for their families, this is in direct opposition to some cultures who continue to reinforce and socialise that women's place is in the home, cooking, cleaning and taking care of children. I maintain a feeling of this tension and movement through the digital space (seeing other tweets, clicking on them to read responses and reposts) within the composition through oscillation of sounds in the stereofield, for example from 2:42–3:28 and 3:50–3:57. The approach here was inspired by the second section of *Topophilia*, from 1:19 to 3:22. Stavropoulos makes use of short, textured, high energy sounds that do not last too long in the soundfield. There is an intimacy and closeness with these sounds as they are in the foreground, spatialised differently across the ears, drawing you closer to the context of the composition.

In *Less Than 140*, there are numerous instances where a wash of high-energy sounds fades in and out of the listening space, almost like disruptive forces; for example, at 5:06 and 5:52. These abrupt sound events symbolise comments and opinions that reinforce abuse towards women and victim blaming and shaming tagged under these hashtags. For example, comments such as: “This hashtag #mydressmychoice is unnecessary. A lady should wear something decent, if you wanna show your thing then wait till K street time⁴²” (Miraj Mohamud @mirajmiskiz, 2014) and “mwanamke ni nguo kuvaa vibaya ni kuvunja heshima [loosely translated: a woman’s respect comes from what she wears and if she does not wear appropriately, she loses her self-respect]” (Joshua Caleb @Joshua_Caleb, 2014). These comments reflect the link between socialisation and sexual harassment within public spaces and echo participants’ responses in Section 4.1.

The third section of the composition also begins with a narration recorded in my voice: “#stripmenot the thought that men can determine what we should or should not wear is unacceptable” (Faith Mutule @Fayfefeh, 2014). Using this narration symbolises a rejection of these negative opinions that continue reinforcing harmful behaviour within public spaces. The narration gives way to a short-punctuated sound, then slow-evolving sounds, layered over each other. Much like the second section, it features a selection of the recorded narration, for example, at 6:19–7:05, and includes keywords such as ‘sexual harassment’, ‘Nairobi’, ‘strip me not’, ‘twitter’, and ‘mydressmychoice’. The tweets included are: “#mydressmychoice #stripmenot Don't tell me what to wear, teach them to respect my choices” (Shiroh @ShirohNjau, 2014) and “My take on this whole issue is simple...Your rights come with responsibilities...for both sexes #mydressmychoice” (Bwibz @MsBwibo,

⁴² K street refers to a street in Nairobi where it is known there are brothels and sex workers offer their services.

2014). The third section symbolically gives space to the recorded text. This shift symbolises the increased awareness of women's everyday experiences and a need to centre those experiences in order to put in place measures that will protect women while in public. The section also highlights the collective voices coming together to devise solutions to make it safer for women to travel in a bus.

A climactic moment occurs from 8:17 to 8:54, as multiple layers of recorded text, altered and manipulated, repeat keywords introduced earlier. I draw on Stavropoulos's approach at the end of the second section of *Topophilia*. This section in Stavropoulos's composition ends with a high-energy impact, climactic moment, from 2:55 to 3:22 before giving way to a much slower shifting bed of granulated sound in the third section. The third section in *Topophilia* brings the listener even closer to the "micro-space" of sound (Stavropoulos, 2019). Aside from a few moments of impact, including what seems like an iteration of the previous climactic moment from 7:38 to 8:00, the rest of the composition (to 8:23) gives the impression of getting "closer" and more "intimate" with the concept of the composition: "attraction or affinity to place, the bond between a person and a specific locality" (Stavropoulos, 2019).

In *Less Than 140*, I take cue from Stavropoulos on how he uses different textures to create these impactful climactic moments within the composition. The climactic moment in my composition from 8:18–8:54 is overwhelming in frequency and speed, occupying the stereofield entirely. This is to draw on the gravity of sexual harassment and its impact on women. This part of the composition builds up until it reaches a breaking point and the composition drops to near silence at 8:54, much like in *Topophilia*. This section and the composition then slowly fades out with a burble of distorted voices (10:03–11:00) reflecting the continued conversation surrounding sexual harassment in Nairobi buses.

The following section discusses the visual component.

Visual Aspect of the Composition

A number of considerations were made when creating the visual component. I collated the tweets, removed identifying information and used the site <https://wordart.com/> to develop the word cloud (Word Art, unknown). The following figure is the generated word cloud:

Figure 4: Word Cloud Art for Visual Media for Less Than 140 (2019)



The shape resembles the Twitter Logo (this has now changed to the X logo). The data used to fill the word cloud was sourced from the content analysis presented in Section 3.4. The purpose of incorporating a word cloud as a visual representation and accompaniment to this

piece is to highlight keywords frequently used by the individuals who tagged their tweets with the two main hashtags: #mydressmychoice and #stripmenot. The larger the letters, the higher the frequency of usage in the collected data. Visualising these anonymised tweets provides a representative glimpse into how divisive sexual harassment is in Nairobi society, especially following the incidents in 2014, based on the opinions surrounding sexual harassment in Nairobi buses.

When played, the visual aspect resembles dancing shadows in shades of green and gray that randomly emphasise different sections of the screen, complementing the complexity of the piece. I also input visual cues, especially when the recorded texts appear. During these moments, a dark screen blurs out the word cloud, and then the recited words appear on screen.

The next section explores the aesthetic direction for the next two compositions under this theme.

5.1.2. Aesthetic Direction for *Listen and Let's Talk About It* (2023) and *Listen and Let's Do Something About It* (2024)

The aesthetic direction of *Listen and Let's Talk About It* (2023) and *Listen and Let's Do Something About It* (2024) are guided by the interview responses that explore the link between socialisation, sexual harassment and impact on in-situ experiences of the bus. Narration plays a critical role in providing context to each piece. Both pieces centre two responses from Huron's (2007) ITPRA theory of expectation: *Listen and Let's Talk About It* (2023) centres the "Prediction" response and *Listen and Let's Do Something About It* (2024) centres the "Tension" response. Sound shapes and forms our experiences and has the ability to tighten our connection with a place (Fiebig, 2015: 15; Bull and Back, 2003: 4).

Salomé Voegelin posits that there is a reciprocity when you are in a space, that when experiencing a space and listening in it, the process “transcends solitary and passive reception” (2024: 5). In her paper, Voegelin explores sound experiences in-situ, and asks: “How does sound travel? How does sound connect? How does sound produce knowledge?” (2024: 4) The next two compositions under this theme begin to examine sound in this way to further extrapolate what aspects influenced the result that emerged from the research: fear of sexual harassment.

Listen and Let’s Talk About It (2023) and *Listen and Let’s Do Something About It* (2024) situate the connection between lived experience and present-moment in-situ experience, further embroiling interview responses, fieldwork notes, and soundscape recordings. I sought consent from the participants I interviewed to include their voices in these two compositions.

5.1.3. *Listen and Let’s Talk About It* (2023) Analysis

Listen and Let’s Talk About It is a stereo composition released in 2023. It centres the Prediction response from Huron’s (2007) ITPRA theory of expectation, exploring some responses related to socialisation and patriarchy in Nairobi society. *Listen and Let’s Talk About It* is now available on Soundcloud for public listening.

Sound Sources

The composition features two sound sources: fieldwork soundscape recordings and audio recordings from the interviews. The soundscape was recorded during the third journey of the *solo soundsit-in-motion* fieldwork; the quieter bus with no music. The recordings display some of the key features of the bus soundscape, even though they are not the focus of the

composition. For example, when the soundscape recording is introduced between 00:43 to 2:09, you can hear the sound of the bus engine in motion, the door of the bus closing at 1:18 and, at 3:38, a beep followed by a tap on the exterior of the bus.

Nairobi bus commuters typically listen-in-readiness for these signals while in the bus. Another example is a conductor announcing variations of the word “*Beba*” (loosely translated to carry) at 8:19–8:28, which is a call out to passengers at the bus stop that the bus has space available to take them to their destination. Bus users listen-in-search for announcements from conductors to alert them not only if there is space in the bus but also, for those inside the bus, that more people are about to enter the bus.

The audio recordings for the interviews were used in two ways: first, a clear response from an interviewer. Second, all the recordings were developed and spatialised in the stereofield to act as background chatter throughout the composition. For example, between 0:00–4:05 and 7:44–9:44. The intention was to give the impression of people discussing this issue. The interview responses are in the background and the voices and words are sometimes indistinguishable as they merge with the soundscape recordings and other sounds within the composition. I also transform interview responses using GRM Tools to spatialise the sounds in the soundworld of the composition⁴³.

Structure

The composition is divided into two sections: 0:00–7:41 and 7:41–14:10 marked out by the interview responses. The aesthetic direction and structure of this composition are influenced by the uncertainty and apprehension a woman might feel when entering a soundscape, not

⁴³ GRMTools are electroacoustic music creation software.

knowing what might happen (in the context of sexual harassment). We use mental maps to navigate public spaces safely, which are shaped and formed from a combination of past learned behaviour and familiarity with the space (Valentine, 1989). This past learned behaviour is informed by societal expectations, further influencing the Prediction phase of Huron's (2007) ITPRA theory of expectation as it is likely that a woman will have prepared herself by reinforcing, consciously or not, individual coping strategies to enter the soundscape. I filter this apprehension and uncertainty into the types of sounds I used and in developing the soundworld for this composition.

The composition begins with a response from one of the interviewers when asked about sexual harassment awareness within Nairobi society, specifically in public spaces. Advo remarks (from 0:00–0:43):

Because of the ways in which we are socialised, if you're a female and you're trying to use public transportation or you're just walking along the road to get a bus, people are busy wolf-whistling and you're supposed to, I guess, be flattered that people are whistling. "I should be flattered that you think I'm attractive," for instance, right? It's just the way in which we've been socialised and the way in which things are portrayed in various aspects of life, not just the media, that end up making certain genders [men] feel like there's no harm in doing certain things.

As the narration progresses, there is a sound with a swirling motion in the background that ends at 0:43 to symbolise the divisiveness of this subject within Nairobi society. This swirling sound gesture pans slowly from left to right accompanied by background chatter. The narration then gives way to a soundscape recording of a bus in motion from 00:43 to 2:28 while long-sustained, metallic sounds occupy the stereofield. This section is slow-moving, with a careful interplay of granulated textures, high-pitched swells, and rhythmic mechanical textures that warp around the background chatter. I intended for this section to give the listener space to contemplate the interview response while situated in this virtual soundscape, creating a sense of uncertainty and apprehension. An impact sound appears at

3:16, symbolising an unexpected interruption within the soundscape. The sound is quick and fleeting. Between 4:00 and 5:22, I make use of spatialisation and short, impact sounds to pull the listener into a contemplative trance, similar to Jonty Harrison's approach in *Afterthoughts* (2007).

Afterthoughts is an 8-channel composition that uses soundscape recordings of a "suburban garden in early summer" to, as Harrison writes in the programme notes, "evoke more disturbing memories and imaginings as the listener drifts into semi-slumber" (2007). The composition begins with soundscape recordings before gradually introducing transformed sounds. This gradual enmeshment between the "real" and the "virtual" helps to first situate the listener into the space and place, before drawing them deeper into the context of the composition. In *Afterthoughts*, from 4:19, it becomes challenging to unpick the sound layers. At 5:15, there is a complete shift into the virtual soundscape; the sound folds into itself, giving the impression of a merge within the soundscape. From 9:55, the sounds of birds flapping their wings pull the listener back into the soundscape. This approach, of using the soundscape recordings to guide the listener through the composition, even momentarily, inspired the first section of my composition. *Listen and Let's Talk About It* structurally flows between the narration, soundscape recordings and virtual soundscape to give the impression of connectivity between socialisation, sexual harassment and in-situ experiences and expectations of a bus.

This section has another response from Advo on defining sexual harassment (from 5:58–6:25):

The victim or survivor and how they feel as opposed to just being about the fact that, "Well, I didn't do anything that I didn't think, all I did was..." It has to be about, "Wait a minute. We need to listen to how it affected the person that it happened to," because sometimes, you don't have bad intentions, sometimes you do, but the bottom

line is... how does whatever you do whether in ignorance or whether deliberately affect the person that feels violated.

After the narration, a mid-frequency sound gesture pans quickly throughout the soundfield as a way to return the listener to the virtual soundscape. The sounds begin to evolve faster, becoming more prominent in the soundfield, and exhibit increased granulation as the composition builds up to a climactic moment, marked by an abrupt silence at 7:41. Here, the intention was to intensify the uncertainty and apprehension that a woman might feel the longer she remains in a triggering soundscape.

There are about 3 seconds of silence before the second section begins with a soundscape recording of a bus in an idle state. I use silence to convey the impression of assessing an event that has occurred and attempting to determine how to better protect oneself. The silence symbolises a quick mental check on how to proceed; I attempted to draw out Huron's conclusion regarding the Prediction response. That is, when our predictions are confirmed, there is a generally positive emotional response (Huron, 2007: 13). The silence can also be interpreted as relief, especially when the next section begins with a gradual reintroduction of the soundscape.

From 7:45 onwards, the background chatter is prominent to give the impression of ongoing conversations about this socio-cultural issue. A conductor announcement from 8:19 to 8:31 is repeated from earlier to firmly situate the listener within the soundworld as it is spatialised and floats between the speakers. Long sustained sounds are slower to evolve in this section, with moments of subtle interruption to gently coax a deeper immersion; for example, the compressed sound from 9:54 to 10:06 that is released intermittently and undulates within the soundfield. A rhythmical, stuttering mechanical sound gradually enters the soundscape, building from 10:44 to 11:48, symbolising the overall texture of the sounds within the bus

soundscape and the continued apprehension while travelling in the bus. The final narration appears towards the end of section two from 12:13–13:10. Here, Advo responds to a question regarding a major barrier to reeducating and spreading awareness of sexual harassment:

Part of the hindrance is there are so many defenses up already when you mention the word “gender”. Now, you add “violence”, there are so many misconceptions and so on and so forth about it. You’ll find certain, maybe men and so on and so forth feeling immediately defensive and uncomfortable, and yet a lot of people you’re going to need to work with and through happen to be male. And it’s not just the men. There are women too that are very... that have not really understood because what they know is comfortable. What they know is what they have always known. It’s hard to... there’s also the issue of religion. There are so many issues that come in that make people take a certain position which they haven’t examined critically.

The narration is then proceeded by a high-frequency sound gesture and a reintroduction of the rhythmical, stuttering mechanical sounds until the section ends on an abrupt silence. The abrupt ending denotes the continued conversation on sexual harassment in public spaces as well as a link to the next composition.

The next section discusses *Listen and Let’s Do Something About It*.

5.1.4. *Listen and Let’s Do Something About It* (2024) Analysis

Listen and Let’s Do Something About It is an 8-channel composition completed in 2024. It centres the Tension response from Huron’s (2007) ITPRA theory of expectation. It explores some interview responses on respectable femininity in Nairobi society. *Listen and Let’s Do Something About It* is now available on Soundcloud for public listening.

Sound Sources

The composition uses four sound sources: soundscape recordings from the second journey, studio narrations for the transient sonic markers, X (then Twitter) responses to the #mydressmychoice campaign, and responses from an interview participant: Pho. These

sound sources were also used to generate sounds and develop the soundworld. Here, the transformation of these sounds was influenced by the aesthetic of the composition: tension. Narration plays a crucial role in establishing the creative direction of the composition and appears three times: between 0:00–0:45, 4:33–4:49, and 9:48–10:25.

Structure

The composition is divided into two sections: 0:00–4:50 and 4:50–10:32.

The composition begins with a response from Pho regarding the prevalence of sexual harassment in public buses and the impact on women’s daily lived experiences. Pho says:

It's like almost order of the day. Because even as you're minding your business, on the road, people, will you, you know, do all sorts of things to get your attention, call you out and ask for phone numbers, it happens on a daily basis.

I remember even women generally in you... when you were having discussions since I was a child, it's something that's always coming up, you know, this person did this to me in the past, I don't use buses because of this reason. And it's usually someone rubbing himself against your backside. And then you are wet and you don't understand it, so it happens a lot.

The narration “Whenever we slowed to a stop” immediately follows Pho’s response to pull the listener into this soundscape as well as position my presence within the soundscape. The soundfield contains a mixture of low-frequency sounds, swooshing gestures and impact sounds intermittently interspersed in the soundfield, for example, transformations of the door of the bus closing between 1:10 to 1:53 and a hit at 3:17. A high-frequency swell that begins at 2:18 elevates the tension some more in the 8-channel setup as it travels in a clockwise motion in the soundfield. This section almost feels like a wall of sound pressing into the ears, unstable and unnerving, with moments of reprieve when a sound peaks through (for example the horn beeps from 2:46 to 2:48 and the hit at 3:18). Symbolically, I wanted to

highlight the gravity of this issue and how women's voices can be drowned out about how this issue could be affecting them.

Home Truths by Manuella Blackburn showcases this unstable, ever-shifting concept. From 2:16, the soundfield is a steady multi-frequency note before the sound of footsteps and a closing door is introduced at 2:33. Shortly, this sound fades into the background as other shorter fragments take centre stage, interrupting the steady flow. This aligns with the intentions of the composition, as Blackburn writes in the programme notes: "Interruptions are temporal states where continuity is ceased but then resumed or returned to after the interrupting event is over" (2024). In my composition, disruptions occur frequently to symbolically show the need to continuously speak about the effects of sexual harassment while in a public space. My approach is perhaps in reverse of Blackburn's, but within the same line of thought. Blackburn "positions the interruptions as the main event; acting as focal points and instances to explore the creative potential of these typically unwanted occurrences" (2024). Whereas I position interruptions as disruptors to what has been normalised within Nairobi society and continued sexual harassment. I do this through the use of narrations and careful interplay of sharp, impactful sounds and voices in the soundfield.

The second narration is from a response from Pho:

And you feel violated just by what someone does or even, you know, figuratively does with their hands. It can be violating and you don't know how to explain that in a way that it constitutes an offense that someone can actually do something about.

From 5:06 to 6:27, there is a greater interplay between the sounds in the soundfield. This is to tap into the disorientation that a woman might feel trying to remain aware while in a noisier, typical soundscape of most Nairobi buses. Also, where it can be challenging to

distinguish the sounds one needs to listen-in-readiness and listen-in-search for while travelling, highlighting Pho's narration that exemplifies the continued need to evaluate one's safety within this space.

This disorientation can be experienced in *Home Truths* from 5:23 to 6:37 as these sound interruptions become "successful" at "forcefully breaking down sound's continuous presence" (Blackburn, 2024). *Home Truths* and *Listen and Let's Do Something About It* both use a mix of long-sustained sounds in the background with short, impact sounds occasionally peeking through the soundfield. Blackburn uses sounds captured in an internal environment, within the home, to highlight home life (for example, sounds frequently used include the sound of a door closing at 2:33, footsteps from 2:43 to 2:45, and ringing sounds throughout, which may represent a phone ringing). In my case, I develop short, impact sounds from the transformation of the transient sonic markers captured in a public space, as discussed in the next section.

After the hit at 6:27 in *Listen and Let's Do Something About It*, tension increases with less interplay and more overwhelm, reminiscent of a wall of sound with peaks of narration. Here, the composition incorporates the tags #stripmenot and #mydressmychoice, drawing the listener back to the first piece in the portfolio. This symbolises the end of the portfolio, as this was the final composition that was created. These narrations appear from 7:44 to 8:55 and contextually tie both compositions together. Towards the end, from 8:27, the soundfield becomes somewhat stable with clear voices in the foreground. These voices ping-pong around the soundfield to symbolise voices of reason being heard from this chaotic environment. This section is then punctuated by a hit at 9:32 and a fluttering sound before the soundscape recording is reintroduced. I end the composition with this powerful response from Pho, with the soundscape of the bus in the background:

There are gaps in understanding, just the science aspect of it all. And you know, if you don't get that part right, then you won't have the scientific evidence you need to put the perpetrator behind bars.

And so you'll constantly have these campaigns of, you know, end child abuse, end sexual abuse, end this, end that but you're not understanding why this is not working out. So, we need to have a better understanding of the problem in a practical, technical way so that we can actually... that needs to be communicated to the public and policymakers so that we can feel the real impact of it all.

The next section discusses the second theme of the portfolio.

5.2. Theme 2: The Bus Soundscape and Transient Sonic Markers

In this theme, the compositions creatively explore the bus soundscape during the soundsit-in-motion fieldwork, using fieldwork notes and secondary research to highlight the aesthetics of each composition. Additionally, I consider how deliberate reflection of the context of the research, in the field and the studio, influenced the creative decisions. I begin with an exploration of the bus soundscape in its entirety, then by assessing the transient sonic markers.

5.2.1. Aesthetic Direction for *Aware* (2020) and *Still Waters Run Deep* (2023)

Aware (2020) and *Still Waters Run Deep* (2023) focus on the interplay and duality between the “real” external bus soundscape and “imagined” internal emotions related to the fear of being sexually harassed. This approach is deeply informed by an understanding that sound is intrinsically relational and it can be “traced through modes of spatiality because sound and space have a dynamic relationship” (LaBelle, 2010: ix). The intention was to create a duality by utilising the recorded soundscapes as perceptual constructs that were in dialogue with my emotions at the time, influenced by the link between my socialisation and experiences in-situ. “Imagined” refers to my intention to vividly portray this fear by channelling it into the creation of sounds, transformed and manipulated to fit the aesthetics of each composition.

This process directly reflects LaBelle’s view of sound as a “social acoustic event”, whereby “multiplying and expanding space, sound generates listeners and a multiplicity of acoustical ‘viewpoints’” (2010: x). Compositionally, in these two compositions, my goal was to craft a soundworld that reflected moments in my real-world experiences, to use sound in a way that articulated the emotional and social layers of my experiences. I create a duality between the recorded soundscape and my experience, developing auditory events that range from granulated mechanical textures to subtle rhythmic patterns. As if one moment, I was aware of my surroundings and the next, my focus shifted to contemplating the mechanics and issue of sexual harassment within such a space.

The next section discusses *Aware*.

5.2.2. *Aware* (2020) Analysis

The focus of this composition is on the concept of the “outer reality” of the sounds within these bus soundscapes while exploring the “inner reality” of the intended context and sexual harassment (Rennie, 2014: 117, 123). This interplay (inner/outer) is integral to highlighting the crucial link between socialisation and experiences and expectations of the Nairobi bus soundscape (internal reality) and sound activities in the soundscape, including external influences and actions within the space (outer reality). *Aware* was completed in 2021 and submitted to a number of conferences and concerts but was not accepted to any. It is now available on Soundcloud.

Sound Sources

The primary sound source for this piece is a soundscape recording of the third journey. This soundscape was not playing music/no radio. *Aware* combines the intricate sonic events that

form a bus-related soundscape in Nairobi with imagined-world sounds that reflect the context, as discussed later in this section. The recorded soundscape appears three times (0:00–2:39, 5:43–6:44, and 8:40–10:12).

Structure

The scene opens with the bus soundscape to centre and ground the listener within the real-world before gradually introducing abstract sounds. The opening soundscape has a distorted feel similar to Emma Magertson’s *Distorted Illusions* (2018). *Distorted Illusions* explores the conscious-unconscious confluence and highlights a distorted feel in the composition by dipping in and out of field recordings and “blurring and shifting between abstract and real-world sounds” (from the programme notes, Magertson, 2018). *Distorted Illusions* begins with a slow, gradual invitation into the composition, warping and merging real-world and abstract sounds, almost like a mirror of the other. The gentle and soothing quality of the sounds coaxes you into a lull before being interrupted by ascending, multi-layered gestures that zoom into the soundworld, sometimes out of nowhere, before lulling you back into a sense of calm. This approach resonated with my approach in *Aware*. Sexual harassment, or fear of it, can be likened creatively and symbolically to those ascending sounds interrupting my presence within a soundscape. Throughout the composition, I utilise sound textures that allude to specific elements within the bus, such as left-to-right oscillating repetitive sounds to convey the repetitive nature of being in the soundscape, and tinkling and static sounds to create an unsettling atmosphere.

The soundscape begins to take a background role after the first thirty seconds, giving way to an interplay of sound textures and, further, the inner and outer reality of sounds between 2:00–3:42 and 3:47–7:05. In the former, there is an emphasis on short-granulated sonic

events to give a disjointed feeling. These sounds serve as an extension of the general sonic ambience of the bus, as introduced in the first part of the composition. This section is then punctuated by an alarming sound occupying the foreground, signifying a heightened state of awareness. The sounds slightly pan to each side to give a ping-pong effect because the sonic events evolve from each other and cocoon the listener within the soundscape (produces a greater effect when the composition is listened to through headphones). Here, the intention was to create a sense of reverting inward, contemplating the context of the piece. In the latter, there is an emphasis on long-sustained sounds, layered and interwoven with each other. At 3:49, a bell-like sound that is irregular in rhythm is introduced.

Inside and out... again by Adrian Moore (2016) follows a similar aesthetic approach to *Distorted Illusions* and *Aware*. *Inside and out... again* is a multi-channel composition that focuses on the interplay between real-world, recognisable sounds and abstract sounds that are transformations of these sounds. Moore draws heavily on the concept of “real (unknown, interior) and unreal (known, exterior)” to create a virtual soundscape where both exist at the same time (2016). In *Aware*, I illustrate this approach from 3:47 to 8:52. When the composition starts back again, a buzzing texture is introduced, layered with filtered drones at 4:32 to create instability. Here, I wanted to portray psychological distress that is accompanied by the fear of victimisation. Magertson does something similar in *Distorted Illusions* at 6:03 after what sounds like a false ending. However, Magertson’s approach is much more urgent and grabs your attention with a multi-band wash of sounds before reintroducing the subtle, complex soundscape from earlier in the composition.

In *Aware*, a noise resembling static subtly fades in from 4:32–6:52 and occupies the foreground, pervading the listening field. I draw on Ma and Thompson’s (2015), Reymore’s (2018) and Huron’s (2015) research on the link between film music and everyday

experiences. Tinkling and static sounds are often used in place of a silent soundtrack in horror films to evoke an unsettling feeling before something is about to happen. Much like *Distorted Illusions*, *Aware* attempts to delve into the complex emotions that might emerge when in a Nairobi bus soundscape, particularly when deliberately thinking about the context of the research. I wanted to create “the calm before a storm” effect to draw out the emotion of fear and anticipation from the listener.

When the field recordings return from 5:43–6:35, it repeats like an echo to depict how one might feel when in a heightened state. Applying this technique in the middle of the composition showcases the tension and overwhelm when in the middle of a journey. From 8:52, the recorded soundscape occupies the foreground, accompanied by a reiteration of the buzzing texture to give the impression that I am about to leave the soundscape soon. *Inside and out... again* finishes the same way, from 11:10 after a tense interplay of overlapping and transformed sounds that gives way to real-world sounds at 12:01, bringing us back to the present. In *Aware*, the sounds from 8:52 to the end are stable in terms of spatialisation and more “peaceful”, giving way to a kind of relief that one is about to depart from this triggering space and back to a less volatile soundscape. The soundscape slowly fades away, signifying an escape from this space, but not a finality to attempting to answer the question: what is my social standing and how does that, and my presence in a space where I am at risk of being harmed, impact my experience of this soundscape?

The next section analyses *Still Waters Run Deep*.

5.2.3. *Still Waters Run Deep* (2023) Analysis

The composition focuses on the “Appraisal” phase of Huron’s (2007) ITPRA theory of expectation. It picks up from the ending of *Aware* and analyses elements of Nairobi bus

culture and the soundscape. The aesthetics are influenced by assessing the soundscape based on learned behaviour and my own mental map of the bus soundscape. *Still Waters Run Deep* was completed in 2023 and made available to the public through Soundcloud.

Sound Sources

The primary sound sources for this piece are soundscape recordings of the first two journeys. Music was heavily present throughout my journey, as both vehicles played loud music from the radio, encapsulating the Nairobi bus culture.

The recorded soundscapes have a consistent presence throughout the composition, maintaining varying depths within the soundfield. In the first section of the piece, from 0:00–2:20, and the final section, from 7:30–9:12, the recorded soundscapes are at the forefront of the piece. These soundscapes were split into 30 second chunks and randomly placed within these sections. Some sounds have been transformed to create a granulated soundscape and add spatial depth. In the middle section of *Still Waters Run Deep*, between 2:20 and 7:30, the composition gives way to soundscape clips that are placed in the background to provide an anchor as other sound elements manifest and signify a shift.

The field recordings have also been split sequentially according to the following parameters: 24 seconds, followed by 3 seconds and 94 seconds and repeat. This sequence ties in with my position as a composer because it is my birth year and date. The split soundscape audio has then been arranged to better fit the aesthetic of the composition. Here, I draw on Emerson's Language Grid framework as my composition combines mimetic discourse with abstracted syntax. According to Emerson's 3x3 grid system, mimetic elements are represented by the soundscape recordings while using the above organisation approach. "24 seconds, then 3 seconds, then 94 seconds" highlights the abstracted syntax as the structure is derived from a

non-musical source; that is, my birth year and date (Emmerson 1986: 17–19). Further, I split the soundscape recordings, demonstrating what Emmerson describes as the tension between “organisation systems and perceptual experience in electroacoustic music” (Emmerson, 1986: 20–21).

Structure

Still Waters Run Deep has three distinct sections, with the first and last sections being shorter than the middle one: 0:00–2:23, 2:24–7:30 and 7:30–9:12, respectively. This was deliberate to highlight the typical emotive responses that might stem from taking a journey as well as developing the composition from a post-event point of view where the “Appraisal” phase lies. For this particular composition, my emotive responses were: excitement at finding out if I would be able to record in such a space, followed by lethargy at fearing that I would be asked what I was doing/target of any sort of harassment, and finally, relief at reaching the end and getting to alight the bus/being able to capture sound material.

The first section primarily features an extended soundscape highlighting the main sonic feel of a busy Nairobi bus environment. There is some stability in the first 50 seconds of the piece and you can hear conversation between the conductor and a passenger at 0:46–0:51 as the passenger makes a request for the bus to stop at a specific bus stop. I have also subtly incorporated split audio samples (according to the approach discussed earlier) of different parts of the journey to segue the piece into the next part of the section, where some sound gestures are introduced to signify the beginning of an inward immersion. These snippets of the soundscape repeat intermittently to pull the listener deeper into the composition until the section ends. I use repetition in how I have layered the soundscape recordings to emphasise an “echo” effect to the soundscape, where the sounds can be overwhelming to the senses, especially if you have been travelling for a while already.

Here, I draw on *Sweet Anticipation* by John Young (2018), which focuses on the spatial depth and energy that sounds he recorded while in the NYC Subway (a public space) could afford him.⁴⁴ The composer utilises these real-world, recognisable sounds to create a dynamic soundscape that explores the confluence and interaction between “sound, silence, and timbral blending,” and how this confluence “might evoke implications, expectations and questions” (Young, 2018). The first section of Young’s *Sweet Anticipation* pulls you into a fast-paced, high-energy environment with fluttering, mid-range sounds that almost seem like they are attempting to communicate with you. From 2:45, you are thrust back into the real-world intermittently when the soundscape recordings are introduced. They do not last long but have an impact on the context of the piece. You can feel the full effect around 7:20 to 7:40. The approach inspired the structuring of some of the soundscape recordings used in *Still Waters Run Deep*.

The second section of *Still Waters Run Deep* is a longer, much busier section that interplays transformed sounds and soundscape recordings. I wanted to offer an ‘internal-to-external-to-internal’ experience of being within this space. I attempted to create a soundworld that would give the impression of looking through the lens of an everyday commuter, acknowledging that not all experiences are the same.

One particular sound features prominently in this section: I use undulating mid-frequency sounds that softly pan from left to right, like tiny millions of scratches against the mind. Young (2018), in *Sweet Anticipation*, applies a similar gesture and technique to sounds that appear between 3:26 and 4:44. In *Still Waters Run Deep*, this sound gesture begins at 2:22

⁴⁴ Young mentions that the title and concept of the composition is loosely based on Huron’s book, *Sweet Anticipation* (2007), where the ITPRA theory of expectation concept has been discussed.

and fades out at 3:54 before the gesture fades in again from 3:54 to 4:35 but at a higher frequency. This sound gesture, in particular, represents being in oneself, contemplating my vulnerability of being a woman and how those feelings bring different emotive responses, such as fear, to the front. At some point, this sound gesture overwhelms the soundfield before giving way to the soundscape recordings and other gestures such as drawn-out, low-frequency swells to represent the ebb-and-flow of a bus engine and high-frequency tittering to represent human and nonhuman entities present within the soundscape. Further, there are sound gestures that mimic communication from 4:58 to 6:00 and 6:20 to 6:58, representing human communication within the bus, echoing the conversations and dialogue heard in the soundscape recordings. I draw on Young's approach in the first section of *Sweet Anticipation* to bring out this aspect of the soundscape: my interaction with human and nonhuman entities (such as music playing on the bus) while travelling in the bus and how this interaction shapes my behaviour in-situ.

The soundscape recordings tend to appear and disappear, quite quickly in some cases, such as between 4:00 and 4:46, to create tension and signify competing sound textures within an everyday transient environment. Music or announcements being made through the radio is very much present to showcase Nairobi bus culture and its influence on experience and expectations of the bus soundscape. These soundscape snippets demonstrate an awareness of the external world and a continued vigilance, while also reflecting on my presence within the space. The "Appraisal" phase engages a more conscious and "thoughtful" analysis of any sound event, taking into consideration any social and environmental factors (Huron, 2015: 13, 14). As Huron (2015: 15) asserts, Appraisal responses can be reshaped and adjusted based on the contextual and social factors that have been assessed after the Reaction response.

The third section starts immediately at 7:30, with even shorter snippets of the soundscape. These are reiterations of the soundscape recordings used earlier to reflect on the repetitive nature of being on a bus. This signifies the end of the journey as you prepare to leave the environment. The sonic textures are light, but end abruptly. In further exploring duality in this composition, certain sound gestures reappear more than once. A mid-frequency granulated sound that pans slowly between the left and right appears between 2:22 and 5:08 and returns at 8:02 and 9:11, which is the end of the piece. Though shortened and quicker in the second appearance, the intention was to signify the lingering effects of this heightened sense of awareness, even when one is preparing to leave what might have been a place of threat. Additionally, a soft alarm swell is present in the background, beginning at 7:30 and fading out by 8:23, accompanied by the soundscape recordings. In comparison, structurally, *Sweet Anticipation* is much slower to highlight perhaps a deeper assessment of the “energy and spatial depth” of the soundscape recordings (Young, 2018). The sounds evolve much slower and are spatialised in the soundfield. Seeing as Young’s composition was intended to be listened to through 16-channels, I can only imagine the gradual interplay of the sounds within the soundfield, which can afford a deeper immersion within the listening space and the opportunity for the listener to get closer to the aesthetics of the composition. Altogether, the interplay of these soundscape recordings and transformed sounds in *Still Waters Run Deep* highlights a culmination of the experience in the “ITPR” portion of the journey after entering a soundscape: what has been learned and how it might influence and shape my “mental maps” and behaviour the next time I enter a bus (Huron, 2007; Valentine, 1989).

The next section highlights the aesthetic direction for the final two compositions in this theme.

5.2.4. Aesthetic Direction for *Mashine* (2023) and *In-situ* (2023)

*Mashine*⁴⁵ (2023) and *In-situ* (2023) share a similar aesthetic theme. The compositions explore the “balanced” soundscape of a Nairobi bus and the present transient sonic markers that emerged from the soundsit-in-motion fieldwork (Schafer, 1977; Truax, 2001). Nairobi buses have a distinct sonic identity that changes in intensity and influences the emergence of the transient sonic markers as well, depending on the chosen route, the time of day and whether it encapsulates Nairobi bus culture (playing loud music, graffiti, etc.). The transient sonic markers are not constant and occur randomly throughout a bus journey. Although one cannot adequately prepare for them because it is difficult to anticipate when something will happen, they are integral to a bus user’s “mental map” of the soundscape and ingrained into expectations of the space (Valentine, 1989; Huron, 2007). Exploring these transient sonic markers is key to understanding how they are culturally significant and create a link with the digitally created sounds (Truax 1999).

Here, Zećo’s (2021: 284) assertion regarding the entanglement between the individual and the socio-political complexities of the soundscape is particularly poignant. I draw on my familiarity with a typical bus soundscape and use my past experience to critically evaluate my fieldwork experience as well. Here, I understood that my experiences and expectations are shaped by my gender and cultural identity, and the sounds I was drawn to (transient sonic markers) while in this heightened state were influenced by those aspects (Zećo, 2021: 288–289).

⁴⁵ *Mashine* is a Swahili word for Machine to allude to the bus as a mechanical machine.

Mashine and *In-situ* highlight the five main transient sonic markers: (a) low-frequency acceleration and deceleration of the engines; (b) whistling from the bus conductor; (c) a sharp click or tap on the side of the bus; (d) door sliding open and closed; and (e) mid-frequency jiggling of coins in hand. The approach in creating these compositions aims to highlight that my own preconceptions and experiences are integral to the in-situ recording process and contribute to the knowledge created (and the resulting portfolio) (Zećo, 2021: 289). The Fieldwork Notes in the Appendices shows extracts from the fieldwork notes related to these transient sonic markers. The next section discusses *Mashine*.

5.2.5. *Mashine* (2023) Analysis

Mashine is an 8-channel composition that explores one of the most prominent transient sonic markers within the bus soundscape: the bus engine. The aesthetic of this composition is influenced by the role of the bus engine within the soundscape and the link to experiences and expectations of the moving space. What does the sonic character of the bus engine, experienced in-situ, reveal about impending changes in the soundscape? Can the sound help safely navigate this fear-triggering space? *Mashine* was debuted at the Sound/Image23 Conference at the University of Greenwich and due to be performed at BEAST FEaST 2025. I have also created a binaural version that is available on Soundcloud.

Sound Sources

The composition, with a duration of 7:25, is a deep dive into the bus engine as a transient sonic marker and a keynote sound within the bus soundscape. The engine produces a typical diesel-engine sound that is common across the world, but the spontaneity when it accelerates and decelerates can alter the soundscape and, consequently, affects how one might react while in a heightened state of awareness due to fear of being sexually harassed. For example,

from past experience in Nairobi, the acceleration and deceleration can be further unpredictable as sometimes drivers do not stop at designated bus stops within the city. There are often non-designated stops along the way to drop off and pick up passengers from the side of the road, or in non-designated areas due to construction or not adhering to traffic rules.⁴⁶ Often, based on past experience, I find myself listening-in-readiness when it comes to the role of the bus engine in what I should do next while in the bus soundscape (Truax, 2001: 22). I use narration to further embroil my experiences within the research which can be found at 0:00–1:34, 1:34–4:10 and 4:10–7:25. The narration content is derived from fieldwork notes and is discussed later on in this section.

Structure

The composition is not meant to be strictly sectionalised but free-flowing, marked out by narration. I intended to recreate the experience of being in a bus, with the engine as the central anchor, while tackling the internal emotions that emerge with the fear of being sexually harassed.

Soundscape researchers like Annie Mahtani have created compositions centred on a prominent keynote sound/sonic marker within the soundscape. Mahtani's 24-channel composition *Aeolian* was created between 2014–2015 and uses soundscape recordings she recorded in North Northumberland, UK. In the programme notes, Mahtani writes: "On this particular weekend, the weather was not conducive to dawn choruses but instead displayed

⁴⁶ I observed this during two of my fieldwork journeys and wrote in the first journey: "In some cases, there weren't proper bus stops. The driver had to drive off-road to let passengers alight or pick them up" and, in the second journey: "Route was bumpy. Under construction. Slight traffic, causing the driver to drive off-road" (Fieldwork Notes in the Appendices. Journey #1; July 2019: Crossroads to Junction Route; Journey #2; August 2019: Karen Crossroads to Nairobi Academy Route)

spectacular winds which were ever present and consequently a feature in all recordings” (2019). Her approach and sound choices when creating *Aeolian* attempts to match her lived experience of the physical space as she utilises long-sustained, multi-band sounds that shift and merge into each other as the composition progresses. From 7:20 to 9:41 is perhaps the clearest indication of how prominent the winds were in her experience while recording the soundscape(s) as well as to the aesthetics of the piece.

For *Mashine*, the composition begins with a soundscape of a bus starting up with the radio in the background (from 0:00–0:44). As mentioned in the previous section and in Chapter 4, music playing through the radio is an aspect of Nairobi bus culture; though not all buses play radio/music. The engine starts up and accelerates, departing from the bus stop. In Chapter 3, I explore the basis of the soundsit-in-motion methodology; in that, I sat in a moving space that would traverse through other soundscapes and where sounds from those spaces would temporarily become part of the bus soundscape. In *Mashine*, external sources of sound entered the bus soundscape. For example, between 0:14–0:19, a motorbike passes by before the door audibly clicks shut at 0:23. The door clicking shut signifies the beginning of the inward immersion.

The sound of an engine is very constant and granulated, and the larger the bus, the louder and more prominent the sound of the diesel engine becomes within the soundscape. Between 0:42 and 1:33, the granulated buzzing sound dominates the soundscape, showcasing the power of a bus engine, especially in the absence of competing sounds, such as loud music. In this case, this journey reflects a “balanced” soundscape.

This section of the piece is short, followed by narration. In the narration, I say: “Closing my eyes, I tried to tune into my senses. I listened to my environment, to the layers of sound

masked by the music playing in the bus. My headphones amplified the soundscape” (Fieldwork Notes, in the Appendices. Journey #1; July 2019: Crossroads to Junction Route).⁴⁷ The narration is intended not only to further immerse the listener in the composition but also to emphasise my presence as the composer within the soundscape and music as part of my methodology. Just after the narration, I introduce another snippet of the recorded soundscape, this time with music, offering a competing sound to the bus engine. Here, I intended to show an interruption of the immersion that had already begun when the bus departed at 0:42—an interruption into trying to manage one’s fear of being sexually harassed as the bus slows down.

While 0:00–0:46 is a departure (through the bus engine accelerating), 1:51–2:36 is an arrival, then a departure (the engine slows down then picks back up towards 2:36). This ebb-and-flow signifies an experience within this soundscape; a constant assessment and reassessment of the signals and keynote sounds from the moving space and one’s presence within the space and, depending on what is happening in the bus at the time, signifying an adjustment of Huron’s (2007) ITPRA theory of expectation. For example, when the bus comes to a stop, people are leaving and/or entering, and therefore, if one is continuing on their journey, they might need to adjust their seating position to either accommodate someone who has entered the space or is about to alight. Within the context of sexual harassment, uncertainty can filter into the decision-making process here. Using “mental maps” forged from learned behaviour and expectations of the space, the person sitting next to you might either trigger a need to remain hypervigilant or to be relieved (Valentine, 1989; Huron, 2007). This is something I experienced as discussed in Chapter 4, where I mention being relieved when a woman was

⁴⁷ Recorded in a bus that played loud music and generally had a noisier soundscape compared to the other two journeys, with a capacity of 40+ passengers. Loud music was played throughout and it was difficult to hear some of the sounds within the soundscape.

sitting next to me in the first two journeys, while remaining aware of the presence of the man in the third journey.

From 2:36–4:10, the granulated texture gives way to a smooth gesture; almost like the constant metallic sound has merged with the subconscious as another round of immersion begins. Various textures are then introduced and interlaced into the composition to deepen immersion and explore this triggered fear not only through contemplating the role of the bus in my in-situ experiences but also, in hindsight, feeding into the “Imagination” phase of Huron’s (2007) ITPRA theory. As discussed in Chapter 2, the “imagination” phase focuses on the initial stage before something happens. We might use our “mental maps”, past learned behaviour and familiarity of the space to “imagine” what might happen. Women might imagine a situation emerging where they are likely to be sexually harassed and therefore prepare themselves before entering the soundscape by reinforcing their “mental maps” and thinking through their coping strategies (i.e., pre-planning a route, wearing headphones but not playing anything through them, etc.). The responses of the interview participants in this project illustrate this.

In this middle section, the sounds are constantly shifting and, in some cases, appear and reappear within the piece at different points in the listening space. For example, the mid-range, stuttering sound gesture in the foreground between 3:03 and 3:13 shifts and trails around in the piece, moving in a clockwise then anticlockwise motion within the 8-channel set up. Even when the sound takes a background role from 3:13–4:10, when other sounds are introduced, it appears and disappears, giving the impression of sounds that enter and exit the bus soundscape as it traverses through other soundscapes (for example, sounds from outside, traffic, or sounds created by other passengers). Mahtani’s *Aeolian* makes use of this approach: the subtle shifting between the abstract sounds and soundscape recordings. At

some points in *Aeolian*, it is difficult to differentiate the sound layers, which might have been the intention of the composition, especially the stereo version of it. Or perhaps when listened to through the intended 24 channels, there is better segmentation of the sound layers. For example, at 1:40, there is a high-pitched swell sound gesture that seems to introduce the soundscape before the recording gradually merges into the composition. It then seems to fade out at around 3:33. This happens again from 4:00 and lasts until 6:48 before giving way to what seems to be a soundscape recording. In using this approach, both *Aeolian* and *Mashine* exemplify the subtle shifts that can happen in-situ between the various sound activities within the soundscapes (Mahtani, 2019).

In *Mashine*, the third section begins with the following narration: “the rumbling of the engine as the *matatu* made its way through my journey, it grabbed at my attention. As it accelerated, the engine revved. I quite enjoyed the escalation and de-escalation. It reminded me of a musical movement (Fieldwork Notes in the Appendices. Journey #2; August 2019: Karen Crossroads to Nairobi Academy Route). A short snippet of the soundscape follows this to place the listener back into the soundscape (reminding listeners of the unique features of a Nairobi bus soundscape) and reaffirm the narration. From 4:10, the textures become less granulated and move towards an abstract transformation of the real soundscape. Immersed in the intricacies of the sounds of the bus, it feels as though the boundaries between the tangible soundscape and the realm of imagination briefly converge, as discussed above. For example, this is exemplified by how the soundscape recording fades into a broad-range sound, and the separation is almost imperceptible: listen from 4:57–5:11. This imagined space features several high-pitched sounds with steady mid- to low-range gestures supporting it. From 5:40, I utilise the multi-channel space to situate the listener within the

sounds evolving around the listening space.⁴⁸ The piece ends with a high-pitched oscillating sound in the foreground to further highlight the triggered feelings in this environment, as well as to connect with *In-situ*, which further explores the other transient sonic markers.

5.2.6. *In-situ* (2023) Analysis

In-situ explores the other prominent transient sonic markers and includes transformations of these sounds when developing the soundworld of the composition. The composition will be performed at *Composing (with) Systems 2025*. I created a binaural version that is available on Soundcloud.

Sound Sources

Much like *Mashine*, *In-situ* continues to highlight these transient sonic markers, which are an integral find of this research. The composition is 12:05 in duration and focuses on four transient markers: (a) whistling from the bus conductor; (b) a sharp click or tap on the side of the bus; (c) door sliding open and closed; and (d) mid-frequency jiggling of coins in hand⁴⁹. In the studio, I then use technology such as GRMTools to transform these sounds to develop a soundworld that immerses the listener into the bus soundscape, while the transient sonic markers are introduced and appear throughout. The soundscape recordings for this composition are specific sonic events that were captured from the fieldwork. The main aim was to choose snippets of the soundscape recordings that brought these transient sonic markers to the foreground. Narration also plays a crucial role in introducing the sections within this composition, and rather than taking direct quotes from the fieldwork notes, I draw

⁴⁸ The experience is more profound when listening to the composition in the middle of the 8 speakers as intended; though the effect is maintained even in the binaural version.

⁴⁹ The specific location where they first appear in the composition is listed in the next section.

inspiration from the entries to write a narrative that amplifies the importance of these sonic markers within the soundscape in the context of sexual harassment.

Structure

In-situ is divided into four sections and each section focuses on one transient sonic marker, with narration used to introduce each section. Within the Nairobi bus environment, whistling is mainly used to alert the driver to either stop or drive off and draw the attention of customers who are at bus stops when the bus is approaching. It is a signal that one has to listen-in-readiness for. In the first section, from 0:00–2:55, whistling is explored. I was not able to capture a conductor whistling in-situ, and therefore, recorded myself whistling and integrated it into the piece. Prior to the narration, the composition begins with a slow fade-in of a full spectrum smooth, stable sound to set the scene. In the narration, from 0:09 to 0:33, I state:

Whenever we slowed to a stop, I remember the conductor whistling. This was another way to let the driver know that people wanted to get out. That they had reached their destination. So, after the whistle, the bus would stop. Then the door would slide open, and people would leave.

This narration draws on two particular fieldwork notes that read:

The conductor whistled. The matatu came to a stop. The door slid open, and more customers disembarked. (Fieldwork Notes in the Appendices. Journey #3; August 2019: Tangaza College to Crossroads).

Method of signalling the driver was different this time. A tap on the exterior followed by a whistle. One tap to signal to continue moving. (Fieldwork Notes in the Appendices. Journey #2; August 2019: Karen Crossroads to Nairobi Academy Route).

While the narration is being spoken, additional gestures are introduced to pull the listener into this virtual bus soundscape. Throughout the composition, the narration provides more context and situates my position within the soundscape and in the research. The

transformations of the sound of my whistling in the studio helped to explore the tonal signal within this abstract soundscape, an approach that Emma Margetson applies in *Isochrone*.

Isochrone is a 16-channel piece that uses field recordings from the Elbe tunnel in Hamburg with close-up microphone recordings of a bicycle, presumably recorded in a studio. Here, the cyclic nature of both sources of sound (the motion of the wheels of the bikes and the tunnel designated for bikes, cars and people) are explored. This motion is prevalent within the composition, illustrated from 2:34 to 4:10, where sound gestures converge to morph and reshape to give the impression of continuous movement. Margetson (2020) writes in the programme notes:

Drawing on the cyclic, continuous nature of the material, the evolving sounds reference the never-ending structures found within such spaces. The spatial environment subtly transitions and morphs between the two sound sources, taking the listener on a journey to different places...

In *In-situ*, the whistling denotes an arrival to (one's destination, a bus stop, more people entering the soundscape, etc.), and departure from (heading towards one's destination if they are continuing their journey, a bus stop, no more people entering the soundscape, etc.) the bus soundscape. Towards the end of this section, a final whistle is called out before the listener is pulled out of this world with a soundscape recording. At 2:56, the conductor taps on the bus (another signal to show that the bus is about to slow down) and announces the destination before the bus comes to a stop and the conductor says "keep time, keep time" to prompt the passengers to move quickly and leave the bus.⁵⁰ Shortly after, the next transient marker is introduced.

⁵⁰ From past experience, conductors tend to rush passengers if the bus has made an illegal stop along the route (that is, not at a bus stop).

The door closing and opening (sliding) is highlighted in the second section from 2:55–5:28, which signifies that customers are alighting or entering; thereby, new people are entering the soundscape, and thus, the potential risk of being sexually harassed has increased. Listeners are thrust back into the previous soundworld, but this soundworld has a different feel that illustrates intensifying tension. For example, I take a cue from horror movies that use high-pitched swirling, stuttering sounds and static sounds within the film track to subconsciously cue the person watching that something is about to happen (based on Ma and Thompson's and Lindsay's research in Chapter 2). This happens from 3:12 to 4:12 to illustrate the heightened fear at this stage of the journey. A constant rhythmic sound like a mechanical heart beat is introduced at 4:38 and gradually fades into the foreground before the soundscape recording of the door sliding closed reappears at 5:12 to signify the end of this section.

The narration for the next section begins at 5:28 to 5:33, followed by the jiggling of coins. Similar to the whistle, the jiggling of coins is recreated in the studio. In the narration, I state:

Conductor shook coins in his hand, which signalled passengers for payment.

This narration draws on two particular fieldwork notes that read:

Conductor shaking coins in his hands as he approached customers to indicate that he wants payment. Uttering your destination, determined how much change you would get. (Fieldwork Notes in the Appendices. Journey #1; July 2019: Crossroads to Junction Route).

Soon the conductor tapped me on my shoulder, his hand outstretched jiggling some coins. I knew what this signalled, he was asking for payment, I gave him a note and relayed my destination "Nairobi Academy". He gave me change. (Fieldwork Notes in the Appendices. Journey #2; August 2019: Karen Crossroads to Nairobi Academy Route).

5:28–8:11 highlights coins jiggling in the hand, which is a way that the conductors use to signal customers that they are approaching and to prepare to pay the fare. This is a signal that passengers listen-in-search for and is quite distinctive due to the nature of the coins when they come into contact with the hand. The metallic texture of the coins inspired the evolution of this section. Compared to the previous section, more high-energy and impact sounds draw out the quality of the sound of the coins in the hand. I intended to make it seem like a slow-motion interaction of this transient sonic marker, something that Margetson (2020) does in her composition: to draw out the “never-ending structures found within” the material she uses in the composition.

In *Isochrone*, this is illustrated poignantly from 7:02 to 7:46 before the soundscape recording is introduced. Even with the short moments of silence interspersed between the sounds in this section, there is a sense of evolution and movement, particularly with the use of spatialisation within the soundfield. Though I was listening to what seemed like a stereo reduction, I could imagine how these sounds moved between the channels in Margetson’s composition.

The final transient marker, explored in the fourth section, is tapping on the exterior of the bus from 8:11 to 12:05. The narration lasts from 8:37 to 8:56, which is a direct quote from the fieldwork notes. I state:

Constant taps against the side of the bus. Conductor used this as a signal to attract more customers. And also alert the driver to slow down and pick up passengers or drive off after passengers have settled in the bus (Fieldwork Notes in the Appendices. Journey #1; July 2019: Crossroads to Junction Route).

This transient marker has a similar meaning to whistling and is sometimes used at the same time, especially if loud music is being played on the bus. Tapping the exterior of the bus or the window alerts the driver to slow down to let customers exit or to pick up more

passengers. The aesthetic direction of this section was guided by the anticipation of leaving a triggering space. For example, the sound texture that appears from 10:34 to the end intermittently pulses into the foreground before trailing back into the background. I chose to keep the sound for the entire duration to give the impression of winding down, being pulled back to “reality” and preparing to arrive at one’s destination. A soundscape recording then appears at 11:57, pulling listeners back into the “real-world” of the soundscape before it gradually fades out. *Isochrone* (2020) finishes off in a similar fashion: a one tone sound that begins at 10:16 to the end, highlighting the “never-ending” concept of the composition.

Bird’s eye view of In-situ

Throughout the composition, the soundworld gradually becomes chaotic, fragmented and distorted as the piece unfolds. The intention here was to move from smooth, gentle-like textures and gestures reminiscent of someone whistling and the sliding of a door closed, and become increasingly urgent and sporadic to exemplify the textures and gestures produced by coins jiggling in a hand or tapping on the exterior of a metallic structure. Due to the nature of the sound sources within the bus environment, the composition lends to metallic textures and gestures, with varied intensity.

The transient sonic markers also reappear in altered variations in the sections in which they are explored. For example, whistling, as introduced in the narration at 0:09 reappears again between 1:50 and 2:10. This is not only to exemplify how the transient sonic markers might appear often while travelling in one journey but also how their significance within the soundscape might change depending on what is happening within the bus at the time (for example, the whistle and tap might fade into the background as passengers settle into the

bus, and the focus shifts from people entering the bus to their actions as the bus picks up speed as it leaves the bus stop).

There are three key moments in this composition. The first moment occurs from 1:35 to 1:50, characterised by a gentle undulation with a vocal element. The intention was to signify a shift from the external soundscape into internal immersion. The other key moment is the mechanical, rhythmic sound that mimics a heartbeat from 4:25 to 5:36. This heartbeat sound lasts a long time and is quite repetitive, signifying a heightened state while in this environment. The final key moment is the ending, which fades off with a snippet of a soundscape recording. I intended to tie it aesthetically and thematically to *Mashine*, which starts with a snippet of a soundscape recording of a bus starting up and accelerating, while *In-situ* ends with a fade out to signify the bus departing. Additionally, the gradual fade-out slowly brings the listener out of this soundworld and back to “reality,” giving them a chance to digest what they have experienced.

5.3. Chapter Conclusion

This chapter provided an in-depth analysis of the 7 compositions in the portfolio. It discussed the aesthetic direction, motivations, sound sources, and structure, as well as how the context of the research was explored in each piece. The compositions were grouped thematically to better link with the emerging research results, as discussed in Chapter 4. The first theme was the link between socialisation and sexual harassment, and how it might impact in-situ soundscape experiences and expectations. The second theme was the Nairobi bus soundscape and the link between its properties (socio-cultural and physical) and sexual harassment.

The next chapter is the conclusion of the thesis.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

6.1. Research Study Conclusion and Contributions

This research aimed to create a portfolio that explored experiences and expectations of a Nairobi bus soundscape through a sexual harassment lens. Motivated by the #mydressmychoice protests, a pivotal moment in the history of activism for women's and girls' rights in Nairobi, Kenya in 2014, I embarked on an intersectional and iterative approach to developing a socially-conscious portfolio, where sexual harassment in public buses pre-COVID-19 was the main thematic context.

The strength of this research lies in how it brings together different fields (from sonic geographies, gender/feminist research, sound studies and electroacoustic music research and composition). In sociology and gender studies, my work uniquely shines a light on experiences and expectations of a Nairobi bus soundscape through a sexual harassment lens. This contribution encourages a consideration of the full range of sensory experiences in people's lives, particularly women who use public transport. For sound studies and soundscape research, this research and its resulting portfolio push the field. It is an early and important study of using soundscape approach to a crucial social issue, especially within Nairobi, demonstrating that soundscapes are active spaces of social struggle and personal vulnerability. This approach notably challenges conventional, often more detached, approaches and centres my experience within a Global South context. By bridging these distinct fields, new methodological and concepts emerged, including the soundsit-in-motion fieldwork methodology and transient sonic markers, as discussed below.

The results of the research highlighted the link between how we experience a bus soundscape, our auditory expectations of the space, and our understanding of sexual harassment. The combination of the space (Nairobi bus) and the context (sexual harassment) leads to developing an auditory acuity to certain sounds within the environment (transient sonic markers) to remain hypervigilant and aware within this space. Two concepts played a crucial role in unpacking this theme: sound studies David Huron's (2007) ITPRA theory of expectation, and geography feminist Gill Valentine's (1989) 'spatial expression of patriarchy'. These concepts allowed me to explore how past experiences might shape our in-situ experiences and the extent to which socio-cultural issues such as respectable femininity, lack of sexual harassment awareness, socialisation and socio-cultural practices might influence expectations of the soundscapes we occupy every day.

I developed a novel *soundsit-in-motion* fieldwork approach, adapting the traditional soundwalking and soundsitting techniques to collecting soundscape data in sound studies. This approach adopted soundwalking and soundsitting techniques, adapting them to record sound data within a moving space. During these in-situ fieldwork in three bus soundscapes, I captured auditory environments that were dynamic, changing, and immersive. I remained continuously immersed in the soundscapes while also paying attention to all the shifts that naturally happen on public journeys. This approach is especially useful for studying mobile places where how we move, interact with others, and hear sounds all play a key role in in-situ experiences and expectations. This pioneering methodological contribution has significant applicability for future research, providing a robust approach for situated soundscape projects.

In evaluating the data collected from the fieldwork and analysed from the fieldwork notes and qualitative interviews, two discoveries emerged: fear as a major emotion and contributor

to experiences and expectations of a soundscape, and transient sonic markers. The emotion of fear, as a finding in my research, contributes to understanding the deep emotional and psychological layers of how people might engage in triggering soundscapes. My research showed that, whether you are expecting it or reacting to it in the moment, fear fundamentally changes how someone understands and navigates the space, especially when safety is uncertain. This insight shifts the focus of soundscape analysis, highlighting that soundscapes are not merely perceived but deeply felt, subconsciously or not. And this is where transient sonic markers play a role in helping to navigate a triggering space.

As a new concept in sound studies, transient sonic markers are specific sounds that manifested as checkpoints in this fear-triggering environment and were indicators of specific socio-emotional responses during heightened emotional states. Transient sonic markers are tied to subjective experience and embodied vulnerability, particularly in my research. Future research could evaluate whether these sounds manifest the same way across a larger pool of participants or even in other Global South countries and beyond.

Research question one was: *To what extent does an experience of a bus soundscape in-situ impact understandings of sexual harassment?* Throughout this thesis, I established a clear link between socialisation practices, in-situ soundscape experiences, the rising fear of sexual harassment, and the manifestation of transient sonic markers. Research question two was: *How can the portfolio imbue and communicate the nuances of sexual harassment within Nairobi's bus soundscapes while actively engaging with and contributing to the ongoing socio-cultural dialogue surrounding this issue?* In developing the portfolio, I translated complex social issues into compelling electroacoustic compositions. The portfolio was divided into two themes: 'Sexual Harassment, Socialisation and Impact on *In-Situ* Experience' and 'The Bus Soundscape and Transient Sonic Markers'. The first theme

primarily explored fear as the primary emotion, while the second theme focused on sonically exploring transient sonic markers and the bus soundscape.

Several of the compositions have been presented at significant conferences, including *Sharing Feminist Research and Practice* (2020) hosted by CHASE Feminist Network; *Arts, Culture and Design Research Day* (2020) at the University of Kent; *Sound + Environment* (2021) conference and *Sound/Image23 Conference* at the University of Greenwich with planned debuts at *BEAST FEaST 2025* and *Composing (with) Systems 2025*. These presentations signify the recognition and impact of the portfolio in both academic and artistic communities, further showing my contribution to electroacoustic music research and composition.

This research is particularly valuable to several research areas. I demonstrated an iterative and reflective approach to creatively engaging with social issues. My research has also provided insights into how soundscapes impact public transport experiences, especially for women. Through the interviews and in documenting my experiences, I have provided primary evidence and artistic expression of lived experiences in connection with women's everyday experiences.

The next section evaluates the conceptual framework for my research.

6.2. Evaluating the Conceptual Framework: Valentine and Huron

The conceptual framework of this research relied critically on the application of Huron's (2007) ITPRA theory of expectation and Valentine's (1989) concept of the 'spatial expression of patriarchy.' This combination proved integral to unpacking the interplay between experiences and expectations of a space, including aspects such as socialisation and

the specific power dynamics within public spaces that might lead to the perpetuation of sexual harassment. These concepts helped to unpack the theme of my research project; expectations and experiences of Nairobi bus soundscapes through a sexual harassment lens.

Huron's (2007) ITPRA theory provided a robust approach to understanding how one might process and respond to sonic information within a space based on past learned expectations. It offered a temporal approach to discussing and mapping the experiences of a soundscape through a sexual harassment lens. I applied Huron's concept to assessing the three soundscapes that I occupied during the fieldwork phase. Valentine's (1989) 'spatial expression of patriarchy' offered a social and spatial lens. Her work highlighted how public spaces are not neutral spaces but inherently structured by gendered power relations, often leading to experiences of fear, restriction and vulnerability for women.

By integrating these two concepts, filtering Huron's model through Valentine's feminist geography lens, my research evaluated why certain auditory expectations (particularly those related to threat such as sexual harassment) might arise within women while in public spaces. Socio-cultural issues shape auditory expectations and experiences of bus soundscapes. Applying both concepts allowed for a nuanced and intersectional analysis of the link between socialisation practices, in-situ soundscape experiences, sexual harassment (fear of it, risk of it) and auditory experiences of the space. Here, adapting these concepts helped to draw out why specific sounds within the bus became critical "checkpoints" while navigating this triggering space (transient sonic markers).

However, it is important to note that though Huron's theory was effective, it was originally developed for musical expectations and responses. Its application in my research required a careful and significant extension of the original purpose of the concept. The model helped

to describe and analyse the process of expectation, the temporal unfolding of a bus journey, but did not provide a deep account for the specific source of expectation, which was where Valentine's work provided deeper context. Extending Huron's concept demonstrated how Huron's framework can be re-conceptualised to highlight emotional processing beyond music.

Similarly, my research, due to centring sound and experience of it, adapted and extended Valentine's concepts to analyse the bus soundscape. Here, Valentine's concept was expanded to showcase how auditory analysis can deepen understanding of the link between socialisation practices, patriarchy, and in-situ experiences and expectations while in a bus soundscape. The unique context of the study pushed the boundaries of both concepts, revealing new layers of understanding and applications beyond their original purpose by the researchers. This highlighted the necessity of adapting these existing concepts to capture the complexities of embodied, situated experiences in specific socio-cultural contexts, particularly through the lens of sexual harassment.

The next section discusses research considerations and future directions.

6.3. Research Considerations and Future Directions

The research presented several methodological considerations that highlight opportunities for future research. While sexual harassment in Kenya falls under the broader context of violence against women and girls, the focus of the research on bus environments revealed a specialised research niche. To my knowledge, Flone Initiative is currently the only organisation that researches sexual harassment in the public transport system, including in buses. This unique position shows the importance of expanded research in this area. Additionally, despite reaching out to both male and female participants, my participants were

all female. Although this provided valuable insights into gendered perspectives, it also highlighted opportunities for further research that incorporates male perspectives and experiences. Further, my research is scalable and offers opportunities to research other means of transport within Nairobi, such as *boda boda*'s (bikes) and even walking.

My position as a choice rider with alternative transportation options offered a distinct perspective. While this might have heightened my awareness of the soundscape, it enabled me to identify subtle patterns that frequent travellers might overlook due to familiarity with the space. My inconsistency in occupying this space frequently might have elevated my fear. I can only presume that someone who uses buses regularly has grown accustomed and is familiar with what to expect when travelling in a Nairobi bus, which in and of itself poses the issue: normalisation of certain behaviours that ultimately put women at a higher risk of sexual harassment. This highlights the need for comprehensive research into how socialisation practices influence women's experiences and coping strategies in buses, particularly when it comes to sexual harassment awareness and prevention.

My training as a soundscape artist likely influenced the emergence of transient sonic markers through my ability to analyse a soundscape in greater detail. I am intimately aware of soundscape aspects and ways to listen deeply to the environment. I acknowledge that this may have resulted in the ability to easily separate the layers of sounds within the bus soundscape and being able to distinguish the transient sonic markers. It is, therefore, likely that bus users might not experience or have expectations of the soundscape the way I did. Future research could explore whether regular bus users without this specialised training can identify and pinpoint these or other transient sonic markers in Nairobi buses. Additionally, there is an opportunity to investigate the relationship between the typical rhythm of the Nairobi bus soundscape/Nairobi bus culture elements (such as loud, suggestive music) and

increased risk of sexual harassment. Such research would provide valuable insights into sexual harassment prevention strategies and awareness campaigns.

Future research could investigate the intersection between sonic geography and soundscape studies in Nairobi as this area is underexplored in existing literature. Integrating Valentine's (1989) 'spatial expression of patriarchy' concept with Huron's (2007) ITPRA theory of expectation has established a foundation for future studies. Building on the established links between transient sonic markers and fear of sexual harassment, future research could expand on our understanding of how women might experience and cope with sexual harassment while travelling in buses (or other means of transport, with necessary adjustments). These research directions would contribute to a broader understanding of how sound, gender and public space intersect, potentially informing policy changes and awareness programs to enhance women's safety and experience in public transport. My research on Nairobi buses serves as a complete case study.

Appendices

Fieldwork Notes

Journey #1

Details: 14th July 2019- 2pm; Crossroads to Junction Route; Bus #1

Crossing the Zebra crossing towards the bus stop, memories flashback to previous experiences. I knew what was going to happen before it did. It was going to be business as usual. Matatus [buses], big and small, lined up, waiting for customers to arrive. I had to admit to myself that the last time I was at this bus stop, there was a lack of organisation that was being depicted today. But the customer acquisition techniques remained the same.

Clutching onto my bag that contained the audio recorder, I moved along the rows of matatus. The minute I gave the impression of needing this form of transport, a swarm of people, mostly men in maroon uniform, approached me. The matatus were anything but still.

Drivers revved their engines, bellowing smoke in my face, encouraging customers to get on, trying to give the impression that they were ready to leave. It wasn't about filling the first matatu in line, it was about getting whichever matatu filled.

The men in maroon who approached me belted out and pointed at the matatus they were in charge of. It felt like a race to who could get me to board their vehicle.

I tensed. Knowing that some wouldn't stop at verbal means.

Some of these men walked alongside me, as I searched for the most optimum vehicle to record in. Some grabbed my hand, alluded to my physical appearance, flirting and pressuring me to enter their vehicles. It was a race to make as much money as they could. I knew the destination and I knew I wanted to enter a bus that was semi-full, and preferably a window seat.

Unfortunately, all the matatus were blasting music, so I knew recording the interior of the vehicle would be a hard task. I chose one big matatu that looked somewhat empty and entered.

Having sat down, I looked around. The matatu played hip-hop music, with speakers at each corner, and four more at each side. There were 4 tiny screens that showed the music videos. The vehicle desperately needed to be repaired, as the seats were torn and it was dusty.

The temperature outside was around 17 degrees. But once inside, it felt hotter. I had to sit down and wait. It's routine at such bus stops to wait until a bus is full or somewhat filled so we can proceed with the journey.

I started to record, cradling the recorder in my hand, and wondered if someone was to ask me what I was doing what I would say. I put my headphones over my ears, and prepared to immerse myself.

Due to the placement of the speakers in the vehicle, I couldn't escape the music. The music filled my recorder, but I wasn't deterred.

Closing my eyes, I tried to tune into my other senses, listening to my environment, to the layers of sound masked by the music. My headphones amplified the soundscape.

The engine revved as the vehicle lolled back and forth. The timing of the day was beginning to prove difficult as my attention diverted to my hunger and the heat in the vehicle. It felt like I was in a tin can with an empty stomach. The temperature intensified my hunger, and the music assaulted my senses. Complete immersion would prove difficult.

My eyes closed again, trying to ignore these two obstacles, but they only sort to intensify my sensorial experience. There was no way of ignoring them, as they were now part of the experience.

Breathing in the stuffy and dusty air, I experienced: Constant taps against the side of the vehicle. From experience, the conductor used this as a signal to attract more customers.

Then we began to move. Route was bumpy. Under construction. Slight traffic, causing the driver to drive off-road.

Conductor shaking coins in his hands as he approached customers to indicate that he wants payment. Uttering your destination determined how much change you would get.

Three taps to stop the vehicle for a customer to alight and one tap to go. These signals to the driver helped in situations where music was being played.

The journey was short and uneventful. The music masked the sounds emitted by the vehicle, and my hunger and the heat prevented an immersion.

Reaching closer to my destination, I put the recorder away. There were no bells, so to avoid the vehicle from passing your destination, a customer has to yell "shukisha" indicating that you want to alight, but in this case, because of the music, I had to disturb the passenger seated next to me, who was a female to my relief, and walk towards the front of the bus as it was moving. I stood near the open door and waited for the man in maroon to indicate to the driver.

Three taps to the side of the vehicle.

Details: 1st August 2019- 3pm; Karen Crossroads to Nairobi Academy Route; Bus #2

Having learnt my lesson from the previous immersion attempt, this time I went fed and in suitable clothing. I had an idea of the route I was going to use, and knew what my stop would be.

Observing from across the road, this particular bus stop resembled the previous one to the tee. The difference was, that there was better order. The front matatus had to be filled first. It was a slow day, and no people in maroon approached me.

At first, I walked towards a big matatu, which looked quiet [no music/radio playing]. I approached the female conductor and asked if they were headed towards my destination. They were not, but she kindly directed me towards the first matatu that would be leaving the bus stop.

It was a small matatu, and I was the second passenger on it, out of the needed 14 before it left the stop.

Unfortunately, there was music playing, but not as loud to mask the soundscape. Relaxed, I switched on my recorder and put on my headphones. Closing my eyes, I listened.

Conversation within the matatu between travellers. My fellow passenger to my left fumbling with a packet of food. It was a female, to my relief.

The outside ambience leaked into the interior as the door was opened.

Five minutes later, the matatu was full and we were on our way.

Immersion was easier this time. The rumbling of the engine as the matatu made its way through the route grabbed at my attention. As it accelerated, the engine revved, and I enjoyed the escalation and de-escalation. Reminded me of a musical movement.

The road was bumpy, owing to construction. I opened my eyes and witnessed the ongoing construction.

Soon the conductor tapped me on my shoulder, his hand outstretched jiggling some coins. I knew what this signalled, he was asking for payment, I gave him a note and relayed my destination "Nairobi Academy". He gave me change.

The matatu moved along, as local music blared through the speakers.

I closed my eyes once again, trying to tune into my sense of smell.

Dusty and stuffy, the matatu was in need of a wash. The smell of roasted maize, a popular snack, wafted my way. One of the passengers was in the midst of enjoying a snack as we travelled.

Method of signalling the driver was different this time. A tap on the exterior followed by a whistle. One tap to signal to continue moving.

The creak of the brakes.

Going over a bump, it felt like the matatu was about to split in half.

Cars from outside zoomed past. In some cases, there weren't proper bus stops. The driver had to drive off-road to let passengers alight or pick them up.

It wasn't too long until I had to alight.

Journey #3

Details: 15th August 2019- 3.30pm; Tangaza College to Crossroads; Bus #3

I waited at the bus stop for 5 minutes. It was empty, and surrounded by shops. There were barely any cars around. I reached into my purse to get a 100 kshs note, in preparation to pay for the fare.

The next matatu was small, without music. I was ecstatic. I can finally record the ambiance without music masking it. This was my first chance to record a music-free soundscape of a matatu journey.

I sat on the second row, with my recorder in my hand. By this point, I was comfortable enough to use it without fearing someone would ask what I was doing. There were curious glances.

The soundscape was interesting. Though the road was in good repair, it was bumpy. The matatu, like the previous one, sounded like it was in desperate need of repair. Unfortunately, it's what most Kenyans have come to expect. Zero comfort.

The horn was a high-pitched squeak, that sounded almost every time the vehicle rolled to a stop. Another way of alerting customers.

The conductor whistled. The matatu came to a stop. The door slid open, and more customers disembarked.

Out of the allowed 14 customers, we were only 2. It was a slow afternoon, building up to peak time at 5 pm.

The journey was slow, and most times we stopped in order for the conductor to pick more passengers. Soundscape from the outside seeped in, as cars passed us.

The passenger who sat next to me, looked at my hands curiously. I could see from the corner of my eye that he was wondering what I was doing, but I ignored him. The temperatures had slightly dipped, and the wind was chilly now. A welcome breeze.

I was enjoying listening to the world around me that I forgot to change the batteries. Listening back, the recording was just almost three quarters of the journey ☹️.

Interview Materials

Interview and Distress Protocol

The following table shows the guiding principles that were included in the interview and distress protocol:

<i>Interview Protocol</i>	
• Participants will be given the option to indicate the questions they would like to be skipped. • Participants will be instructed to read the questions prior to agreeing to the interview and signing the consent form. • Participants will be given the option to receive a transcript of their interview. • Participants will be given the option to opt-out of having their recorded text used in the music but still participate in the interview and only have direct quotes extracted as textual material.	
<i>Distress Protocol</i>	
If the researcher initially detects that the participant is experiencing anxiety or distress during the interview, the researcher will intervene with the following options at hand:	• Ask participant if they would like to take a break. • Ask participant if they wish to stop recording the interview.
If the participant continues to show signs of being upset, the researcher will intervene with the following options at hand:	• Ask participant if they would like the interview to end. • Ask participant if they would like the researcher to call someone to spend time with them, such as a family member or friend.
If the participant shows unduly stress, the researcher will intervene with the following options at hand:	• Remain with the participant until they are calm and composed. • Ask participant if they would like for the interview to continue or be terminated.
If the participant chooses to terminate the interview:	• The interview will be terminated. • Researcher will offer details of useful numbers and support groups. • Researcher will gain permission, if appropriate, from participant to contact them later in the day or the following day to ensure they are no longer distressed.

	• Ask participant if they would like a family member or someone from the local community to call them to offer support.
--	---

Interview Questions

The table below shows the set of questions under the themes used in this project. The order of the questions was changed to better suit the participants' expertise. Based on the participants' responses, the sequence was also altered to improve the flow and uphold the semi-constructive approach. At the time of creating these interview questions, I had not considered how I can use them to steer the compositions or structure in a way that guides my creative process. The expert interviews were mostly a fact-finding approach to understand more about sexual harassment in Nairobi and socialisation of women in Nairobi society. It was only post-interview that I realised the potential of using these responses when developing the socially-conscious portfolio.

<i>Defining and understanding sexual harassment in Nairobi buses and the impact on women's mobility</i>
1. In your opinion, what do you think constitutes gender-based sexual harassment within the Kenyan context? 2. Do you think the current definition in the constitution reflects what harassment is? 3. In your experience, why do you think sexual harassment is prevalent in Urban Nairobi public spaces particularly buses? 4. How would you define sexual harassment? 5. Based on the stories or encounters that you have had, with people who have either experienced or witnessed sexual harassment within a bus, what is the most common explanation for this type of behaviour?
<i>How, and if, ongoing activism work is making an impact; and if not, what more can be done</i>
6. Do you consider yourself as an activist? 7. What motivated you to pursue this line of work or take part in a protest highlighting this issue?

8. In your opinion, what do you think greatly affects initiatives that attempt to highlight sexual harassment?
9. What are some of the campaigns that you have been involved in? In your opinion, do you think these campaigns are/were successful?
10. Do you think more can be done to redress sexual harassment and violence in Nairobi public spaces?
11. In your work, in what ways have the new laws—noise pollution and allowed passenger numbers in a vehicle—impacted the occurrences of sexual harassment?

Glossary

The following terms are some of the key terms/technical and abbreviations used throughout the thesis and have been defined based on the context of my research. This section functions as a reference point while reading the thesis.

Bricolage technique

This is a qualitative methodology approach. Researcher Helen Kara (2015: 27–28) defines the “bricolage technique” as combining several qualitative methodologies to make sense of the chosen research theme. Methods and techniques best suited to assessing the aims of the research can be chosen across different disciplines.

Coding (in relation to analysing the interview data)

Coding data is a “process that involves reading each data item closely and tagging the segments relevant to the research question” (Braun and Clarke, 2022: 53). Coding led to the emergence of the three themes in the data as discussed in Chapter 4: Respectable Femininity in Nairobi, Sexual Harassment Acts in Public Spaces and Culture of Victim Blaming and Shaming and Fear in Public Spaces.

Content Analysis

In sociology, content analysis is a research method for interpreting and analysing visual or textual communication (such as social media posts) to understand themes, patterns, or socio-cultural phenomena (Wilson, 2022: 40; Drisko and Maschi, 2015: 6).

In-situ

This refers to examining the research subject matter while being present in the original context/physical location (i.e., in a Nairobi bus).

ITPRA (Huron’s theory of expectation)

The acronym ITPRA stands for the various types of responses that shape expectations: *Imagination, Tension, Prediction, Reaction* and *Appraisal* (Huron, 2007: 17).

Intersectional

In both soundscape and sociology (gender/feminist research), an intersectional approach analyses how factors that underpin oppression and marginalisation, such as gender, social

strata/class, sexuality and socio-cultural practices and beliefs, shape everyday experiences (Gatwiri and McLaren, 2016: 265; Ingleton, 2015: 63; Nyambura, 2018: 430).

Socially-conscious approach

A *socially-conscious* approach to creating music considers the intersectional ways that issues might overtly affect a person's being and, therefore, calls for some reflectivity while researching.

Soundsit-in-motion

A primary data collection approach in this research that is a derivative of soundwalking practice. It involves listening while in a predominantly mobile environment that moves through other soundscapes, i.e., sitting in a bus as it moves through the route. Changes to the immediate soundscape (bus) could be influenced by other environments while in motion (bus stops, traffic etc.).

Thematic Analysis

Kiger and Varpio describe thematic analysis as a method of analysing qualitative data to “seek to understand experiences, thoughts, or behaviours” (2020: 846). The researchers (2020: 849-85) provide a six-step thematic analysis framework: 1) data familiarisation; 2) generating codes; 3) theme selection; 4) reviewing themes; 5) theme defining and naming; 6) writing a report.

Transient sonic markers

Transient sonic markers are an example of an auditory coping strategy that manifested in my case while I was in the field. They are key sonic events within the bus soundscape that were very prominent and became focal points in my experience as a female commuter. These sounds drew attention more than any other sounds while in the bus soundscapes.

Bibliography

Discography

Blackburn, Manuella (2024). *Home Truths*. Available at:

<https://empreintesdigitales.bandcamp.com/track/home-truths> (Accessed 1 Jan 2025)

Harrison, Jonty (2007). *Afterthoughts*. Available at:

<https://empreintesdigitales.bandcamp.com/track/afterthoughts> (Accessed 10 January 2023)

Mahtani, Annie (2016). *Aeolian*. Available at:

<https://empreintesdigitales.bandcamp.com/track/aeolian> (Accessed 10 January 2023).

Margetson, Emma (2018). *Distorted Illusions*. Available at:

<https://empreintesdigitales.bandcamp.com/track/distorted-illusions> (Accessed: 10 October 2024).

Margetson, Emma (2020). *Isochrone*. Available at:

<https://empreintesdigitales.bandcamp.com/track/isochrone> (Accessed 10 October 2024)

Moore, Adrian (2016). *Inside and out... again*. Available at:

<https://influxacousmatic.bandcamp.com/track/inside-and-out-again> (Accessed 10 October 2024).

Stavropoulos, Nikos (2016). *Topophilia*. Available at:

<https://empreintesdigitales.bandcamp.com/track/topophilia> (Accessed 16 October 2019).

Westerkamp, Hildegard (1989). *Kits Beach Soundwalk*. Available at:

<https://empreintesdigitales.bandcamp.com/track/kits-beach-soundwalk> (Accessed: 1 October 2018).

Young, John (2018). *Sweet Anticipation*. Available at:

<https://empreintesdigitales.bandcamp.com/track/sweet-anticipation> (Accessed 10 October 2020).

References

- Agak, R. (2024) *Nairobi's matatus, pimped-up rides like no other*, *Africanews*. Available at: <https://www.africanews.com/2021/06/17/nairobi-s-matatus-pimped-up-rides-like-no-other/> (Accessed: 28 September 2024).
- Aletta, F., Kang, J. and Axelsson, Ö. (2014) 'Soundscape descriptors and a conceptual framework for developing predictive soundscape models', *Landscape and Urban Planning*, 149, pp. 65–74.
- Ansari, N. (2016) 'Respectable femininity: a significant panel of glass ceiling for career women', *Gender in Management*, 31(8), pp. 528–541.
- Axelsson, Ö. (2020) 'Soundscape revisited', *Journal of Urban Design*, 25(5), pp. 551–555.
- Babinard, J. and Scott, K. (2011) 'What Do Existing Household Surveys Tell Us About Gender and Transportation in Developing Countries?' in *Transportation Research Board. Women's Issues in Transportation*, Volume 2. Washington, DC. World Bank.
- Bakare-Yusuf, B. (2003) 'Beyond Determinism: The Phenomenology of African Female Existence', *Feminist Africa*, 2. Available at: https://feministafrica.net/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/fa_2_feature_article_1.pdf (Accessed: 01 October 2019).
- Barnes, A. (2019) *Creative Representations of Place*. 1st edn. London and New York: Routledge.
- Biancorosso, G. (2008) 'Whose Phenomenology of Music? David Huron's Theory of Expectation', *Music & Letters*, 89(3), pp. 396–404.
- Bhattar, K. (2023) *Understand the Impact of Poverty on Kenyan Society: Unveiling the Struggles Faced by Vulnerable Communities*. Available at: <https://sites.uab.edu/humanrights/2023/09/12/understand-the-impact-of-poverty-on-kenyan-society-unveiling-the-struggles-faced-by-vulnerable-communities/> (Accessed: 5 October 2024).
- Bosma, H. (2017) 'Unsettling Performances, Soundwalks and Loudspeakers: Gender in Electroacoustic Music and Other Sounding Arts', *The Routledge Companion to Sounding Art*, (eds.) Marcel Cobussen, Vincent Meelberg, and Barry Truax, Routledge: Taylor & Francis, pp. 304–319.
- Botteldooren, D., Boes, M., Oldoni, D., and Coensel, D.B., (2012) *The role of paying attention to sounds in soundscape perception*. Acoustic 12 Conference Proceedings. <https://hal.science/hal-00811391>

- Bowman, C.G. (1993) 'Street Harassment and the Informal Ghettoization of Women', *Harvard Law Review*, 106 (3), pp. 517–580.
- British Broadcasting Corporation. (2023) 'The Radio 3 Documentary: Tuner of the World,' presented by John Drever. Available at: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p0ftnnxs> (Accessed: 5 October 2023).
- Braun, V., and Clarke, V. (2022) *Thematic Analysis: a practical guide*. London: SAGE.
- Broad, L. (2024) 'Women Composers and Feminism,' in *The Cambridge Companion to Women Composers*. Cambridge University Press, pp. 76–92.
- Brooks, B.M., Schulte-Fortkamp, B., Voigt, K.S. and Case, A.U. (2014) 'Exploring our sonic environment through soundscape research & theory', *Acoust. Today*, 10 (1), pp. 30–40. Available at: <https://acousticstoday.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/Exploring-Our-Sonic-Environment-Through-Soundscape-Research-Theory.pdf> (Accessed: 20 October 2023).
- Brown, L. and Durrheim, K. (2009) 'Different Kinds of Knowing: Generating Qualitative Data Through Mobile Interviewing,' *Qualitative Inquiry*, 15(5), pp. 911–930.
- Bruce, N.S., Davies, W.J., and Adams, M. (2009) *Expectation as a factor in the perception of soundscapes*. Euronoise Conference, Edinburgh, Scotland. Available at: <https://salford-repository.worktribe.com/output/1466011/expectation-as-a-factor-in-the-perception-of-soundscapes> (Accessed 7 June 2022).
- Bruce, N.S., and Davies, W.J. (2014) 'The effects of expectation on the perception of soundscapes', *Applied Acoustics*, 85, pp. 1–11.
- Bruce, N. S. (2023) 'Extending Soundwalking Practice: Soundsitting as an Inclusive and Complementary Method to Soundwalking,' *Acoustics*, 5(3), pp. 788–797.
- Bull, M. and Back, L. (2003) *The Auditory Culture Reader*. 1st edition. London, Routledge.
- Cain, R., Jennings, P., Poxon, J. (2011) 'The development and application of the emotional dimensions of a soundscape', *Applied Acoustics*, 74 (2), pp. 232–239.
- Carras, C. (2019) 'Soundwalks: An experiential path to new sonic art,' *Organised Sound*, 24(3), pp. 261–273.
- Carretta, R.F. and Szymanski, D.M. (2019) 'Stranger harassment and PTSD symptoms: Roles of self-blame, shame, fear, feminine norms, and feminism', *Sex Roles*, 82(9–10), pp. 525–540.
- Ceccato, V. (2017) 'Women's victimisation and safety in Transit Environments', *Crime Prevention and Community Safety*, 19(3–4), pp. 163–167.

- Ceccato, V. and Loukaitou-Sideris, A. (2022) 'Fear of sexual harassment and its impact on safety perceptions in Transit Environments: A global perspective', *Violence Against Women*, 28(1), pp. 26–48.
- Chowdhury, S. and Wee, B. (2020) 'Examining women's perception of safety during waiting times at public transport terminals', *Transport Policy*, 94, pp. 102–108.
- Cobussen, M. (2017) 'Introduction', *The Routledge Companion to Sounding Art*, (eds.) Marcel Cobussen, Vincent Meelberg, and Barry Truax, Routledge: Taylor & Francis, pp. 11–15.
- Cobussen, M. (2022) *Engaging with everyday sounds*. Open Book Publishers. Available at: <https://www.openbookpublishers.com/books/10.11647/obp.0288> (Accessed: 22 September 2023).
- Coddington, K. (2017) 'Voice Under Scrutiny: Feminist Methods, Anticolonial Responses, and New Methodological Tools AU - Coddington, Kate', *The Professional Geographer*, 69(2), pp. 314–320.
- Corbin, J., and Morse, J. M. (2003) 'The unstructured interactive interview: Issues of reciprocity and risks when dealing with sensitive topics' *Qualitative Inquiry*, 9, pp. 335–354.
- Cowling, N. (2023) *Distribution of the population of Kenya as of 2019, by ethnic group*. Available at: <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1199555/share-of-ethnic-groups-in-kenya/> (Accessed: 5 October 2024).
- Cowling, N. (2024) *Kenya: Women in the National Parliament 2004-2023*, Statista. Available at: <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1248316/proportion-of-seats-held-by-women-in-kenya-national-parliament/> (Accessed: 01 October 2024).
- Dempsey, L., Dowling, M., Larkin, P., and Murphy, K. (2016) 'Sensitive Interviewing in Qualitative Research,' *Research in Nursing & Health*, 39(6), pp. 480–490.
- Dosekun, S. (2007) Defending feminism in Africa. *postamble*, 3(1), pp.41–47.
- Dosekun, S. (2021) African Feminisms. *The Palgrave Handbook of African Women's Studies* (eds.) Olajumoke Yacob-Haliso and Toyin Falola, Springer. pp. 47–63.
- Drever, J. L. (2017) 'Field Recording Centered Composition Practices: Negotiating the "Out-there" with the "In-here",' *The Routledge Companion to Sounding Art*, (eds.) Marcel Cobussen, Vincent Meelberg, and Barry Truax, Routledge: Taylor & Francis, pp. 70–80.
- Drever, J. L. (2019) 'Primacy of the Ear – But Whose Ear?: The case for auraldiversity in sonic arts practice and discourse,' *Organised Sound*. 24(1), pp. 85–95.

- Drever, J. L. (2020) 'Listening as Methodological Tool: Sounding Soundwalking Methods,' *The Bloomsbury Handbook of Sonic Methodologies*, (eds.) Michael Bull and Marcel Cobussen, London: Bloomsbury Academic, pp. 599–613.
- Drisko, J.W. and Maschi, T., (201) *Content analysis*. Oxford University Press.
- Easteal, P. Holland, K. and Judd, K. (2015) 'Enduring themes and silences in media portrayals of violence against women', *Women's Studies International Forum*, 48, pp. 103–113.
- Ellis, C., and Bochner, A. P. (2000). Autoethnography, personal narrative, reflexivity: Researcher as subject. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (2nd ed., pp. 733–768). Sage Publications.
- Emmerson, S. (1986) The Relation of Language to Materials. In S. Emmerson (Ed.), *The Language of Electroacoustic Music* (pp. 17–39). London: Macmillan Press.
- Emmerson, S. and Landy, L. (2016) 'The analysis of electroacoustic music: differing the needs of its genre and categories.' *Expanding the Horizon of Electroacoustic Music Analysis*, (eds.) S. Emmerson & L. Landy, Cambridge University Press, pp. 8–28.
- Fenster, T. (2005) 'The Right to the Gendered City: Different Formations of Belonging in Everyday Life', *Journal of Gender Studies*, 14(3), pp. 217–231.
- Fiebig, A. (2023) 'Soundscape: A Construct of Human Perception,' in B. Schulte-Fortkamp *et al.* (eds.) *Soundscapes: Humans and Their Acoustic Environment*. Springer Nature Switzerland: 2023, pp. 23–48. Available at: <https://link.springer.com/book/10.1007/978-3-031-22779-0> (Accessed: 10 October 2023).
- Fiebig, A., Jordan, P. and Moshona, C.C. (2020) 'Assessments of acoustic environments by emotions – the application of emotion theory in Soundscape', *Frontiers in Psychology*, 11, pp. 1–13.
- Fiebig, G. (2015) The Sonic Witness: on the political potential of field recordings in acoustic art. *Leonardo Music Journal*, 25, pp. 14–16.
- Flone Initiative (2019) *Flone Initiative*. <https://floneinitiative.org/index.php/home/> (Accessed: 9th December 2019).
- Gardner, N., Cui, J. and Coiacetto, E. (2017) 'Harassment on public transport and its impacts on women's travel behavior', *Australian Planner*, 54(1), pp. 8–15.
- Gatwiri, J., and McLaren, J. (2016) 'Discovering my Own African Feminism: Embarking on a Journey to Explore Kenyan Women's Oppression', *Journal of International Women's Studies*, 17(4), pp. 263–273.

- Geertz, C. (1973). *Thick Description: Toward An Interpretive Theory Of Culture. The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays*. New York: Basic Books. pp. 310–323.
- Grinfeder, E., Lorenzi, C., Hauptert, S. and Sueur, J. (2022) ‘What Do We Mean by “Soundscape”? A Functional Description’, *Frontiers in Ecology and Evolution*, 10, pp. 1–14.
- Gupta, S. (2024) ‘Risk and the everyday: potentialities, gendered mobilities and women’s worlds in Banaras,’ *Gender, Place and Culture*, 31(2), pp. 216–239.
- Hagen, T. (2014) ‘Learning from sonic encounters: Listening emplacement and belonging in Osaka’, *Presentation at Invisible Places, Viseu, Portugal, July*, pp.18–20.
- Hammersley, M. (2004) ‘Teaching qualitative methodology: Craft, profession or bricolage.’ In: Seale C, Gobo G, Gubrium J, et al. (eds) *Qualitative Research Practice*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, pp. 549–560.
- Hinkle-Turner, E. (2003) ‘Women and music technology: pioneers, precedents and issues in the United States’, *Organised Sound*. Cambridge University Press, 8(1), pp. 31–47.
- Hoor-Ul-Ain, S. (2020) ‘Public sexual harassment mayhem on public transport in megacities - Karachi and London: A comparative review’, *Aggression and Violent Behavior*. 52.
- Howes, D. (2020) Embodiment and the senses. In: M. BULL, ed, *The Routledge Companion to Sound Studies*. 1 edn. Oxon: Routledge, pp. 24–34.
- Hsu, H. (2011) ‘How Does Fear of Sexual Harassment on Transit Affect Women’s Use of Transit?’ National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine., ed. In: *Women’s Issues in Transportation: Summary of the 4th International Conference, Volume 2: Technical Papers*, October 27–30, 2011, The National Academies Press, pp. 85.
- Huron, D. (2007) *Sweet Anticipation: Music and the psychology of expectation*. London, England: A Bradford Book.
- Huron, D. (2015) ‘Affect induction through musical sounds: An ethological perspective’, *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society B: Biological Sciences*, 370(1664), pp. 1–7.
- ISO (2014) International Organization for Standardization. ISO 12913-1:2014: *Acoustics —Soundscape Part 1: Definition and conceptual framework*. ISO, Geneva. Available at: <https://www.iso.org/standard/52161.html> (Accessed: 18 October 2023).

- Ingold, T. (2007) 'Against soundscape' in A. Carlyle, ed., *Autumn leaves: Sound and the environment in artistic practice*, pp.10–13. Available at: <http://www.mediateletipos.net/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/tim-ingold-against-soundscape-1.pdf> (Accessed: 14 December 2023).
- Ingleton, H. (2015) *Composing Paradoxes Feminist Process in Sound Arts and Experimental Musics*, Doctorate edn, City, University of London, London.
- IPU Parline (no date) *Kenya | National Assembly | IPU Parline: Global Data on national parliaments*. Available at: <https://data.ipu.org/parliament/KE/KE-LC01/> (Accessed: 01 October 2024).
- Järviluoma, H., Moisala, P. and Vikko, A. (2003) 'Not only Vision- Analysing Sound and Music from the perspective of Gender' in Järviluoma, H., Moisala, P. and Vikko, A. (eds.) *Gender and Qualitative Methods*. 1st edn. SAGE publications, pp. 84–106.
- Kacharo, D.K., Teshome, E. and Woltamo, T. (2022) 'Safety and security of women and girls in public transport in Ethiopia', *Urban, Planning and Transport Research*, 10(1), pp. 1–19.
- Kamau, A. and Mitullah, W. (2022) 'Women entrepreneurs creating value in informal public transport enterprises in Kenya', *Research Handbook of Women's Entrepreneurship and Value Creation* [Preprint].
- Kamau, A. and Wright, T. (2022) 'Tackling gender-based violence and sexual harassment in the public transport sector: The role of key actors', *Transport and Sustainability*, pp. 37–51.
- Kang, J. and Aletta, F. (2018) 'The impact and outreach of Soundscape Research', *Sound Environments*, 5(5).
- Kara, H. (2015) *Creative Research Methods in the Social Sciences: A practical guide*. Bristol: Policy Press.
- Kara, H. (2019) *Little Quick Fix: Do Your Interviews*. 1st ed. London: SAGE.
- Karahan, E. S. (2019) 'Social reproduction of space and soundscapes,' in *INTER-NOISE and NOISE-CON Congress and Conference Proceedings*, 259 (3). Institute of Noise Control Engineering. Available at: <https://www.ingentaconnect.com/content/ince/incecp/2019/00000259/00000003/art00089>
- Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (no date) *Kenya's Data At A Glance*. Available at: <https://www.knbs.or.ke/> (Accessed: 5 October 2024).

- Kendall, G.S. (2014) 'The feeling blend: Feeling and emotion in electroacoustic art', *Organised Sound*, 19(2), pp. 192–202.
- Kenyatta, G.N. (2023) 'Toward Inclusive Advancement: An Analysis of Gender Equity in Kenya', *Journal of International Women's Studies*. Available at: <https://vc.bridgew.edu/jiws/vol25/iss2/9>.
- Ki-moon, B. (2008) *Prohibition of discrimination, harassment, including sexual harassment, and abuse of authority*. Secretary-General's bulletin. UN Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, pp.1–8. Available at: <https://www.un.org/womenwatch/uncoordination/antiharassment.html> (Accessed 1 February 2021).
- Kiger, M. and Varpio, L. (2020) Thematic Analysis Of Qualitative Data: AMEE Guide No. 131', *Medical Teacher*, 42(8), pp.846–854.
- King, J., King, M., Oviedo-Trespalacios, O., Watling, H., Carroll, J-A., Bull, M., Grant-Smith, D., Anam, M., Pen, S., Davidson, D. (2023) 'Women's empowerment through access to safe transport: The impact of sexual and nonsexual victimization on female commuters in Bangladesh and Cambodia', *Violence Against Women* [Preprint].
- Kishiue, A., Gonzalez, K. D. and St. John, E. (2020) *Gender in Urban Transport in Nairobi, Kenya Volume I: Mobility*. © World Bank. Available at: <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/entities/publication/10054cbe-63cb-563b-8403-797309c2f077> (Accessed: 13 December 2023).
- Kivoi, D.L. (2014) 'Factors Impeding Political Participation and Representation of Women in Kenya,' *Humanities and Social Sciences*, 2(6), pp. 173–181.
- Knight-Hill, A. (2017) 'Listening for Context: Interpretation, abstraction and the real', *Organised Sound*, 22(1), pp. 11–19.
- LaBelle, B. (2010) *Acoustic territories: Sound culture and everyday life*. Continnum.
- Lee, J., Hicks, D., Henriksen, D., Mishra, P., Cain, W., Fahnoe, C., Good, J., Keenan, S., Mehta, R., Richardson, C. and Terry, C. (2015) 'Historical soundscapes for creative synthesis,' *TechTrends*, 59(5), pp. 4–8. (Accessed: 1 November 2023).
- Lercher, P. and Schulte-Fortkamp, B. (2003) The relevance of soundscape research to the assessment of noise annoyance at the community level. In *Proceedings of the Eighth International Congress on Noise as a Public Health Problem*, pp. 225–231.

- Lewis, S., Saukko, P., and Lumsden, K. (2020) 'Rhythms, sociabilities and transience of sexual harassment in transport: mobilities perspectives of the London underground', *Gender, Place & Culture*, 28(2), 277–298.
- Ma, W. and Thompson, W.F. (2015) 'Human emotions track changes in the acoustic environment', *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 112(47), pp. 14563–14568.
- Madan, M. and Nalla, M.K. (2016) 'Sexual harassment in public spaces', *International Criminal Justice Review*, 26(2), pp. 80–97.
- Makama, G.A. (2013) 'Patriarchy and gender inequality in Nigeria: The way forward', *European scientific journal*, 9(17).
- Mama, A. (2011) 'What does it mean to do feminist research in African contexts?', *Feminist Review*, 98(1), pp. e4–e20.
- Martin, B. (2018) 'Soundscape Composition: Enhancing our understanding of changing soundscapes,' *Organised Sound*, 23(1), pp. 20–28.
- Meireles, M. (2017) 'Extended Phonography: Experiencing place through sound, a multi-sensorial approach,' *Organised Sound*, 23(1), pp. 101–111.
- McCartney, A. (2002) 'Circumscribed journeys through Soundscape composition', *Organised Sound*, 7(1), pp. 1–3.
- McCartney, A. (2014) 'Soundwalking: Creating Moving Environmental Sound Narratives', in Sumanth Gopinath, and Jason Stanyek (eds), *The Oxford Handbook of Mobile Music Studies, Volume 2*, pp. 212–237.
- Mc Sirchuti (2014) 'PRIMITIVITY ALERT!!! Woman stripped in The Streets of Nairobi by Touts', YouTube video. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TMzSMCck9nM> (Accessed: 12 March 2019)
- Megarry, J. (2014) 'Online incivility or sexual harassment? Conceptualising women's experiences in the digital age', *Women's Studies International Forum*, 47, pp. 46–55.
- Mitchell, A., Aletta, F., Oberman, T., Cobussen, M. (2023) 'Engaging with Everyday Sounds and Marcel Cobussen', *The Rest is Just Noise Podcast: Season 2, Episode 11*. Available at: <https://www.justnoisepod.com/1438372/episodes/12965829-engaging-with-everyday-sounds-and-marcel-cobussen> (Accessed: 23 October 2024)
- Mitra-Sarkar, S. and Partheeban, P. (2011) 'Abandon all hope, ye who enter here: understanding the problem of "eve teasing" in Chennai, India', in *Transportation Research Board Conference Proceedings*. Available at: <https://www.trb.org/Publications/Blurbs/165294.aspx> (Accessed: 12 February 2021)

- Mohanty, C.T. (1988) 'Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses', *boundary 2*, 12/13, pp. 333–358.
- Mwangi, S. (2011) Gender Relations In Public Road Transport In Africa. Master's Thesis. University of Nairobi. Available at:
http://erepository.uonbi.ac.ke/bitstream/handle/11295/77715/Mwangi_Gender%20relations%20in%20public%20road%20transport%20in%20Africa.pdf?sequence=3&isAllowed=y (Accessed: 01 June 2024).
- Mwaura, M and Lawhon, M. (2024) 'Infrastructure in Formation: The Politics and Practices of Making Progress with Infrastructure', *Urban Geography*.
- Mwaura, N. (2018) 'Before #MeToo there was #MyDressMyChoice', *Sustainable transport*, Winter Issue (29), pp. 25.
- Mwaura, N. (2020) 'Making urban transport and public spaces safer for women,' *Towards the Just City in Kenya*, pp.101–112. Available at:
https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Anne-Kamau-4/publication/358510960_Is_Kenya's_Public_Transport_Socially_Just_in_'Towards_The_Just_City_In_Kenya'/links/62057091afa8884cabd71bcd/Is-Kenyas-Public-Transport-Socially-Just-in-Towards-The-Just-City-In-Kenya.pdf#page=109
 (Accessed: 13 December 2023).
- Mumbi, C. I. A. (2020) 'Challenges And Opportunities Of Women's Peace Building Activities In Nairobi County Kenya', *Journal of Public Policy and Administration*. Available at:
<https://www.iprjb.org/journals/index.php/JPPA/article/view/1102?srsId=AfmBOopCmhpPGH0nWUA5kK-JAzqoyL6mUKw81HCBwje6lFgFOSv0F7h0>
- National Council for Law Reporting (2008) *The Sexual Offences Act. No 3 of 2006 Revised Edition (with the Authority of the Attorney General)*. Nairobi: National Council for Law Reporting with the Authority of the Attorney General. pp.4–5. Available at:
https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_protect/---protrav/---ilo_aids/documents/legaldocument/wcms_127528.pdf. (Accessed 29 January 2021).
- Neupane, G. and Chesney-Lind, M. (2013) 'Violence against women on public transport in Nepal: sexual harassment and the spatial expression of male privilege', *International Journal of Comparative and Applied Criminal Justice*, 38(1), pp. 23–38.
- Niboye, E.P. (2023) 'Universal or specific? - violence against women in public spaces in Tanzania: Experiences from public bus stations in Dar es Salaam City', *Social Sciences; Humanities Open*, 7(1).

- Nieder, C., Muck, C. and Kärtner, J. (2019) 'Sexual Violence Against Women in India: Daily Life and Coping Strategies of Young Women in Delhi,' *Violence Against Women*, 25(14), pp. 1717–1738.
- Noor, S. and Iamtrakul, P. (2023) 'Women's access to urban public transport: Toward addressing policy constraints in combating sexual harassment,' *Transport Policy*, pp. 14–22.
- Nyambura, C. (2018) 'Repolicising women's rights in development: young African feminisms at the cutting edge,' *Gender & Development*, 26(3), pp.423–437.
- Nyambura, Z. (2017) *Kenya: Politics split on ethnic divide*. Available at: [Uhttps://www.dw.com/en/in-kenya-politics-split-on-ethnic-divide/a-37442394](https://www.dw.com/en/in-kenya-politics-split-on-ethnic-divide/a-37442394) (Accessed: 5 October 2024).
- Nyakangi, V.N., Maina, B., Mbuthia, M. and Bangha, M. (2021) 'Gender Differences in Parenting of Early Adolescents in Viwandani Informal Settlement, Nairobi: a Qualitative Study,' *Research Squarespace*. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.21203/rs.3.rs-154056/v1>.
- Obure, C.W. (2017) *Factors influencing gender violence against women in public transport sector in Kenya: The case of Nairobi County public transport system* (PhD thesis). University of Nairobi. Available at: <http://erepository.uonbi.ac.ke/handle/11295/104254> (Accessed: 20 November 2023).
- Okoth, E. (2015) *Loud music, rude touts make ride in matatus trying for passengers*. *The Nation*. Available at: <https://nation.africa/kenya/life-and-style/dn2/loud-music-rude-touts-make-ride-in-matatus-trying-for-passengers--1057114> (Accessed: 21 October 2024).
- Owiti, D.O. (2021) *Determinants of Gender-based Violence in Public Transport: A Case of Women experiences in 'Boda' Public Transportation in Kilelwet Sub-location, Nakuru County, Kenya*, Master's Thesis, St. Paul's University, Kenya. Available at: <https://repository.spu.ac.ke/xmlui/bitstream/handle/123456789/3017> (Accessed: 1 June 2024).
- Pain, R. (2000) 'Place, social relations and the fear of crime: A Review', *Progress in Human Geography*, 24(3), pp. 365–387.
- Parker, M. and Spennemann, D.H. (2022) 'Classifying sound: a tool to enrich intangible heritage management', *Acoustics Australia*, 50(1), pp.23–39.

- Parry, A.S. (2000) *Limits of Abstraction in Electroacoustic Music.*, City University London (Unpublished PhD thesis). City University of London. Available at: <https://openaccess.city.ac.uk/id/eprint/1129/> (Accessed: 5 April 2024).
- Pasoulas, A. (2020) 'The art and science of acoustic ecology,' *ent and audiology news*, 28(6). Available at: <https://www.entandaudiologynews.com/features/audiology-features/post/the-art-and-science-of-acoustic-ecology> (Accessed: 10 October 2023).
- Pedersen, L. (2020) 'Moving bodies as moving targets: A feminist perspective on sexual violence in transit', *Open Philosophy*, 3(1), pp. 369–388.
- Polli, A. (2017) 'Soundwalking, Sonification, and Activism', *The Routledge Companion to Sounding Art*, (eds.) Marcel Cobussen, Vincent Meelberg, and Barry Truax, Routledge: Taylor & Francis, pp. 80–90.
- Pink, S. (2015). *Doing Sensory Ethnography*, 2nd edn, SAGE, London.
- Pink, S. (2020). *Doing Visual Ethnography*. SAGE, London.
- Pratt, M. G., Sonenshein, S., and Feldman, M. S. (2022) 'Moving Beyond Templates: A Bricolage Approach to Conducting Trustworthy Qualitative Research,' *Organizational Research Methods*, 25(2), pp. 211–238.
- Quinones, L.M. (2020) 'Sexual harassment in public transport in Bogotá', *Transportation Research Part A: Policy and Practice*, 139, pp. 54–69.
- Radicchi, A. (2017) 'A pocket guide to soundwalking: some introductory notes on its origin, established methods and four experimental variations,' In *Stadtökonomie–Blickwinkel und Perspektiven: ein Gemischtwarenladen/Perspectives on urban economics: a general merchandise Store*, pp. 70–73.
- RELX. (n.d.). Sexual harassment. Available at: <https://sdgresources.relx.com/sexual-harassment-0> (Accessed: 19 June 2025).
- Rennie, T. (2014) 'Socio-Sonic: An ethnographic methodology for electroacoustic composition', *Organised Sound*, 19 (2) pp. 117–124.
- Rennie, T. (2021) 'Editorial: Socially engaged sound practices', *Organised Sound*, 26(2), pp.163–165.
- Rennie, T. (2023) 'Editorial: Socially engaged sound practices, part 2', *Organised Sound*, 28(1), pp. 1–2.
- Reymore, L. (2018). 'Musical affect and embodiment: fear, threat, and danger in the music of The Lord of the Rings.' *R. Parncutt, S. Sattmann (a cura di), Proceedings of ICMPC15/ESCOM10, Graz, Centre for Systematic Musicology, University of Graz*, pp. 378–383.

- https://www.academia.edu/download/60294243/ICMPC_LOTR20190814-68376-1r9tygg.pdf (Accessed: 29 September 2023).
- Robinson, D. (2020). *Hungry listening: Resonant theory for Indigenous sound studies*. U of Minnesota Press.
- Robson, N. Bryan-Kinns, N., McPherson, A. (2021) 'On Mediating Space, Sound and Experience: Interviews with situated sound art practitioners', *Organised Sound*, 28(1), pp. 25–34.
- Rothbart, P. (2012) 'Ethno-Electro – A Framework for Examining Cultural Influences,' *Meaning and Meaningfulness in Electroacoustic Music 2012*. The Royal College of Music and Elektronmusikstudion, Stockholm, Sweden, 11–15 June 2012. Electroacoustic Music Studies Network. Available at: http://www.ems-network.org/IMG/pdf_EMS12_rothbart.pdf (Accessed: 4 April 2024)
- Royo, M. G., Parikh, P., Walker, J. and Belur, J. (2023) 'The response to violence against women and fear of violence and the coping strategies of women in Corregidora, Mexico', *Cities*, 132, pp. 1–11.
- SACCO SPACE (no date) 'Unveiling Registered and Licensed Saccos in Kenya 2024.' Available at: <https://saccospace.co.ke/unveiling-registered-and-licensed-saccos-in-kenya-2024/> (Accessed: 6 October 2024).
- Saldaña, J. (2016) *The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers*. SAGE: London.
- Salon, D. and Gulyani, S. (2010) 'Mobility, Poverty, and Gender: Travel 'Choices' of Slum Residents in Nairobi, Kenya,' *Transport Reviews*, 30(5), pp. 64–657.
- Salon, D. and Gulyani, S. (2020) 'Commuting in urban Kenya: Unpacking travel demand in large and small Kenyan cities', *Sustainability*, 11(14), p. 3823.
- Sen, P., Borges, E., Guallar, E. and Cochran, J. (2018). *Towards an end to sexual harassment: The urgency and nature of change in the era of #MeToo*. United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women). Available at: <https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2018/11/towards-an-end-to-sexual-harassment> (Accessed 1 February 2021).
- Schafer, R.M. (1977) *The Soundscape: Our Sonic Environment and the Tuning of the World*. 1st edn. Rochester: Destiny Books.
- Schafer, R.M. (1994) *The Soundscape: Our Sonic Environment and the Tuning of the World*. 2nd edn. Rochester: Destiny Books.

- Schäfer, T., Huron, D., Shanahan, D., and Sedlemeier, P. (2015) 'The sounds of safety: Stress and danger in music perception', *Frontiers in Psychology*, 6.
- Schulte-Fortkamp, B. and Fiebig, A. (2023) 'Soundscape: The Development of a New Discipline', in B. Schulte-Fortkamp *et al.* (eds) *Soundscapes: Humans and Their Acoustic Environment*. Springer Nature Switzerland: 2023, pp. 1–21. Available at: <https://link.springer.com/book/10.1007/978-3-031-22779-0> (Accessed: 09 October 2023).
- Schulte-Fortkamp, B. and Jordan, P. (2023) 'Soundscape: The Holistic Understanding of Acoustic Environments', in B. Schulte-Fortkamp *et al.* (eds) *Soundscapes: Humans and Their Acoustic Environment*. Springer Nature Switzerland: 2023, pp. 49–79. Available at: <https://link.springer.com/book/10.1007/978-3-031-22779-0> (Accessed: 13 October 2023).
- Shannon, D. (2019) 'What could be Feminist about Sound Studies?', (in) *Audibility in Young Children's Soundwalking*, Journal of Public Pedagogies: WalkingLab Journal of Public Pedagogies, pp. 97–107.
- Sieber, J. (1993). The Ethics and Politics of Sensitive Research. In: R. Lee and C. Renzetti, ed., *Researching Sensitive Topics*, 1st ed. London: SAGE, pp.14–26
- Silverman, D. (2024). *Interpreting Qualitative Data*. 7th edn. London: Sage.
- Southworth, M. (1969) 'The Sonic Environment of Cities', *Environment and Behavior*, 1(1), pp. 49–70.
- Srivastava, S. (2012) Masculinity and its role in gender-based violence in public spaces. L. Prabhu, & S. Pilot, *Fear that Stalks: Gender Based Violence in Public Spaces*, pp.13–50.
- Stark, J. and Meschik, M. (2018) 'Women's everyday mobility: Frightening situations and their impacts on travel behaviour', *Transportation Research Part F: Traffic Psychology and Behaviour*, 54, pp. 311–323.
- Stead, M. (2009). 'Examining Intention and Reception in Electroacoustic Music: An Empirical Enquiry and Post-structural Analysis', *Heritage and Future 2009*. Buenos Aires, 22–27 June 2009. Electroacoustic Music Studies Network.
- Steingo, G., & Sykes, J. (Eds.). (2019). *Remapping sound studies*. Duke University Press.
- The World Soundscape Project. <https://www.sfu.ca/sonic-studio-webdav/WSP/index.html>
- Thomson Reuters Foundation (2018) *India most dangerous country for women with sexual violence rife - global poll*, Reuters. Available at: <https://www.reuters.com/article/idUSKBN1JM075/> (Accessed: 29 December 2023).

- Truax, B. (1974) 'Soundscape Studies: An Introduction to the World Soundscape Project', *Numus West*, 5, pp. 36–39. Available at:
https://www.academia.edu/1355513/Soundscape_studies_An_introduction_to_the_World_Soundscape_Project (Accessed: 14 December 2023).
- Truax, B. (2001) *Acoustic Communication*. 2nd edn. London: Ablex Publishing.
- Truax, B. (2012) 'From Soundscape Documentation To Soundscape Composition', In *Acoustic12 Conference Proceedings*. Nantes, France: HAL Open Science, pp. 2103–2107. Available at: <https://hal.science/hal-00811391>
- Truax, B. (2022) 'Speech, music, soundscape and listening: interdisciplinary explorations,' *Interdisciplinary Science Reviews*, 47(2), pp. 279–293.
- Uimonen, H. (2011) 'Everyday sounds revealed: Acoustic Communication and Environmental Recordings', *Organised Sound*, 16(3), pp. 256–263.
- UN Women Strategic Plan. (unknown) Available at:
<https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/Headquarters/Attachments/Sections/Library/Publications/2021/UN-Women-Strategic-Plan-2022-2025-brochure-en.pdf>
 (Accessed: 29 December 2023).
- UN Women (n.d.). *SDG 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls*. Available at: <https://www.unwomen.org/en/node/36060> (Accessed: 19 June 2025).
- Valentine, G. (1989) 'The geography of women's fear', *The Royal Geographical Society (with the Institute of British Geographers)*, 21(4), pp. 385–390.
- Vandsø, A. (2018) 'Four Key Concepts for Studying Context-based Compositions', *Organised Sound*, 23 (1), pp. 3–11.
- Vera-Gray, F. (2016) 'Men's stranger intrusions: Rethinking street harassment', *Elsevier*.
- Voegelin, S. (2024). 'Sonic Epistemologies: Confrontations with the Invisible', *Open Philosophy*, 7(1), pp. 1–13.
- Wanjiku, W. W. (2023) 'The Shocking Realities of Social Class in Kenya', *Medium*, 21 Feb 2024. Available at: <https://wairimuwanjiku.medium.com/the-social-realities-of-social-classes-in-kenya-e5cca0c827f5>
- Wafula, P. (2018) *Violence Against Women and Girls in Public Road Transport and Connected Spaces in Nairobi County, Kenya*. Baseline Report, Edited by Naomi Mwaura and Lucy Kihonge. Available at:
https://issuu.com/floneinitiative/docs/violence_against_women_and_girls_in
 (Accessed 10 January 2021)

- Warren, C. and Hackney, J. (2000) *Gender Issues in Ethnography*. 2nd Edn. London: Sage Publications Inc.
- Westerkamp, H. (no date) *Hildegard Westerkamp—Inside the Soundscape*. Available online: <https://www.hildegardwesterkamp.ca/sound/installations/Nada/soundwalk/> (Accessed: 20 September 2024).
- Westerkamp, H. (1974) 'Soundwalking,' *Sound Heritage* 3(4), pp. 18–27.
- Westerkamp, H. (1994) 'The Soundscape on Radio,' *Radio Rethink: Art, Sound and Transmission* (eds.) D. Augaitis and D. Lander, Banff, AB: Walter Phillips Gallery, pp. 87–94.
- Westerkamp, H. (1998) Speaking from Inside the Soundscape. *Conference on Acoustic Ecology*, 8–13 June. Available at: https://hildegardwesterkamp.ca/writings/writings-by/?post_id=10&title=speaking-from-inside-the-soundscape (Accessed: 8 October 2024).
- Westerkamp, H. (2002) 'Linking soundscape composition and acoustic ecology', *Organised Sound*, 7(1), pp. 51–56.
- Westerkamp, H. (2021) *The Microphone Ear: Field Recording the Soundscape*. Available online: https://hildegardwesterkamp.ca/writings/writings-by/?post_id=74&title=the-microphone-ear:-field-recording-the-soundscape (Accessed: 20 September 2024).
- Wilson, S. (2022) *Social Media as Social Science Data*. Cambridge University Press.
- Wise, S. and Stanley, L. (1987) *Georgie Porgie: sexual harassment in everyday life*. Pandora Press, London.
- Women's Empowerment Link. (2015) *Assessment on the Magnitude of Violence against Women and Girls in Public Transport in Kenya*. Nairobi: Women Empowerment Link. Available at: <http://www.daogewe.org/index.php/publications/reports/43-violence-against-women-and-girls-in-public-transport-by-wel> (Accessed: 3 April 2023).
- Word Art (unknown). <https://wordart.com/>
- Yoganathan, N. (2021) 'Soundscapes of resistance: Amplifying social justice activism and aural counterpublics through field recording-based sound practices', *Organised Sound*, 26(2), pp.201–210.
- You, S. (2019) 'Women's unsafe mobility in public transport in Phnom Penh, Cambodia,' *Journal of Peacebuilding and Development*, 14(2), pp. 222–227.
- Zadra, J.R. and Clore, G.L. (2011) 'Emotion and perception: The role of Affective Information', *WIREs Cognitive Science*, 2(6), pp. 676–685.

Zećo, M. (2021) 'Listening and Recording in Situ: Entanglement in the sociopolitical context of place', *Organised Sound*, 26(2), pp. 284–290.

