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**Friendly but pervasive: 'Manner posters' and the management of passenger
conduct on Japanese urban railways**

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Abstract

Signage communicating behavioural expectations is a common sight in contemporary cities. This is particularly evident in spaces of urban mass transit, as public transport providers frequently utilise media technologies such as posters and notices to tackle passenger behaviours they consider dangerous, deviant, or otherwise undesirable. Despite the prevalence of such semiotic interventions in passenger conduct in public transport environments globally (Bissell, 2018; Butcher, 2011; Moore, 2010), they have rarely become the focus of social scientific study. This thesis addresses this shortcoming through an in-depth examination of ‘manner poster’ initiatives by railway providers in Tokyo, which stand out globally due to their near-ubiquitous presence in trains and stations in the city, their often cute and/or comic design, and the broad range of micro-behaviours targeted by them. Drawing on expert interviews with individuals involved in manner posters’ creation, analysis of industry documents, visual analysis of posters, and transit ethnography, the thesis presents an comprehensive empirical examination of manner posters as a genre of communication and governmental technology. It zooms in on three aspects of the media phenomenon: 1) manner posters’ textual structure and history, 2) the corporate considerations and concerns driving poster design and deployment, and 3) the visual strategies poster designers employ to problematise passenger conduct. Contrary to prior research which framed interventions in passenger behaviour as a form of social control, the thesis highlights that manner poster initiatives are not driven by regulatory will, but rather guided by corporate considerations of customer service, sensibilities, and satisfaction. It presents a interdisciplinary study which is situated at the intersection (and advances our understanding) of four areas of scholarship: 1) routine incivilities and their regulation, 2) the production and regulation of urban mobilities, 3) signage in urban spaces, and 4) urban railways in Japan.

Declaration

I, Christoph Schimkowsky, confirm that the Thesis is my own work. I am aware of the University's Guidance on the Use of Unfair Means (www.sheffield.ac.uk/ssid/unfair-means). This work has not been previously been presented for an award at this, or any other, university.

Some parts of this thesis have already been published during the duration of the PhD programme or are currently under review for publication. They are listed below:

Chapter 5: Schimkowsky, Christoph (2021) 'Manner posters: a genre approach', *Japanese Studies*, 41(2), pp. 139–160. doi: 10.1080/10371397.2021.1925097

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Appendix A: Illustrating Anthropology (2020) *Chris Schimkowsky*. Available at: <https://illustratinganthropology.com/chris-schimkowsky/> (Accessed: 1 February 2022); and

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Note to the reader

This thesis takes a ‘publication format’, meaning that it incorporates chapters that have been written, structured, and formatted for journal publication (see also ‘Declaration’ at the very beginning of this thesis). The three empirical analytical chapters, collected in Part II of the thesis, have been published during the PhD programme in peer-reviewed journals (Chapters 5 and 6) or are currently under review (Chapter 7). They appear alongside regular thesis chapters (e.g. introduction, literature review, methodology, critical reflection, conclusion). All three chapters are single-authored publications. Chapters 5 and 6 have been published in an Open Access format (under a CC BY-NC-ND 4.0 licence) and can thus be reproduced here. Chapter 7 is under review by a ‘SAGE Choice hybrid’ journal and will, in case of acceptance, also be published under an Open Access license thanks to an agreement between SAGE Publications and the University of Sheffield. Only minimal adjustments have been made to the papers themselves, mostly to ensure that they fit into the larger thesis structure. Changes include adding continuous pagination and numbering of figures, tables, footnotes, and (sub-)headings; converting endnotes to footnotes; changing American English to British English; correcting minor errors (e.g. typos, missing words and macrons); moving the list of references to the bibliography at the end of the thesis and removing the acknowledgements and funding info which have been subsumed into the ‘Acknowledgements’ section on the following page; adding signposting to other thesis chapters; and making minor adjustment to wording (e.g. changing ‘this article’ to ‘this chapter’) and referencing style in the interest of internal consistency. To reduce the potential disjunction caused by including journal papers as thesis chapters, I have included a brief introductory and concluding section at the beginning and end of Part II that put the empirical chapters in context of each other and reflect on similarities and differences. Nonetheless, some minor overlaps between the three analytical chapters, as well as between Part II and the rest of the thesis, were unavoidable as Chapters 5-7 were originally designed as stand-alone publications.

The adopted ‘publication format’ is supported by University of Sheffield research degree Code of Practice. Guidance regarding the format can be found at <https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/rs/code/thesisformats> (accessed 21 December 2021). The bibliographical information of the three journal articles is listed below:

Chapter 5: Schimkowsky, Christoph (2021) ‘Manner posters: a genre approach’, *Japanese Studies*, 41(2), pp. 139–160. doi: 10.1080/10371397.2021.1925097

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Part I

Chapter 1 Introduction

1.1 Arrival in the city of signs

After arriving back in Japan for fieldwork, I took a train to the city centre from the Keikyū railway station at Haneda airport's Terminal 3 to get to my university guesthouse. The station at Terminal 3, where most international flights to Haneda airport arrive, is the second stop on the Keikyū Airport Line. On weekdays, about 12 trains leave from here every hour between 7 am and 10 pm. Outside of these times, service is reduced to eight departures per hour, until the last train of the day (*shūden*) leaves ten minutes after midnight, around which time Tokyo's passenger train network shuts down until the early morning hours. If you arrive, like I did, on a workday around noon, there should be a train leaving every five minutes on average, so you won't have to wait for very long. But you'll need to make sure to catch the right train. There are *Local* trains which stop at every station, faster *Tokkyū* and *Kaitoku* trains (both of which Keikyū, the train company, somewhat confusingly translates to *Limited Express*), the *Airport Express*, and the *Airport Limited Express*. Trains from here head in the direction of 16 different locations in the Greater Tokyo area. You can, for example, transfer to the larger Narita airport in Tokyo's neighbouring prefecture of Chiba, or catch a train to Sengakuji station in Tokyo's Minato ward, which is just a brief walk away from the Rainbow Bridge crossing northern Tokyo Bay. Sengakuji station is also close to the circular Yamanote Line, one of Tokyo's most-used train lines, which links most of the metropolis' major urban centres and stations – including Shinjuku station, often described as the world's busiest railway station. In other words, planning a train trip from the airport to the city centre already gives you a first taste of the complexity of Tokyo's railway network, and the degree to which it is entwined with the rest of the city.

While Tokyo is known for its crowded stations and trains, the Keikyū train station at Terminal 3 was not that busy. This was because of the time – Tuesday around 12 pm – and its literal end-of-the-line location, but also because Keikyū's Airport Line has to compete for passengers to the city centre with express buses, and with the Tokyo Monorail, which offers even more convenient access to the Yamanote Line. The train, too, was fairly empty by Tokyo standards. Although all seats were already taken when I got on, some freed up after a few stops. This was a relief since I had just arrived on a red-eye from Frankfurt with a large suitcase and a heavy backpack. The reverse route, going from the city centre to one of Tokyo's two large international airports, can be a bit of a nightmare if you do not (or cannot) opt for a special train such as the Narita Express, which has special facilities for storing luggage, but has a limited seat contingent and tends to be more expensive. Heading to the airport on a regular commuter train during rush hour is sure to be a stressful experience as you not only have to constantly attend to your suitcase (to make space for fellow passengers and keep it from rolling away) but likely will also have to endure judgmental glances from other passengers for taking up a disproportionate amount of space on an already crowded train and timing your journey so badly – a reason why many Tokyo parents traveling with a baby buggy try to avoid taking a train during the morning and evening commuter crush, and an example of the behavioural expectations shaping passenger conduct on Tokyo's public transport network.

Rapid Limited Express trains on Keikyū's Airport Line consist of eight carriages, which, depending on where you are from, might sound like a lot for an inner-city train, but is actually not that long for the Greater Tokyo area, where many commuter trains have 10-15 carriages. The carriage layout is very similar to other passenger trains in the Japanese capital. Instead of box seats or rows of neighbouring seats, each carriage is equipped with cushioned benches. In the centre section of the carriage two long benches stretch alongside the carriage walls below large windows, facing each other. They are separated by a spacious

aisle for passengers to move through, or to stand in when the train inevitably fills up during rush hour. To make this easier, straps are hung from the ceiling close to the benches for standing passengers to hold on to. Metal luggage racks are also found above the benches, but their narrow size and relatively light build makes them unfit for larger pieces such as bulky suitcases.

The carriage doors are located to both sides of the benches. Next to them, towards the left- and right-hand ends of the carriage, are two additional, smaller seating areas with cushioned benches. These are usually designated as priority seating for elderly, pregnant, disabled, or ill passengers. However, it is not unusual to see commuters who do not appear to belong to any of these categories occupying priority seats (they often seem keen to avoid eye contact with fellow passengers by burying their heads in a mobile device or pretending to be asleep). When trains start to fill up, standing passengers quickly gather in the square-shaped space in front of the automatic carriage doors and between priority seating and centre benches. As they can easily get in the way of (de)boarding passengers, railway companies encourage commuters to move further into the carriage through posters and announcements. If passengers cannot do this because the carriage is already completely crowded, it is common courtesy (and again, encouraged by railway companies) for passengers who stand directly in front of the doors to step aside, if need be by briefly joining commuters queueing on the platform. This is meant to speed up the (de)boarding process and is another example of the code of passenger etiquette in place on Tokyo's urban railway network.

Tokyo trains are important advertising spaces. On every train, you can see dozens of 'car cards', glossy posters in a landscape format which are slid into frames below the ceiling and above the luggage racks. This is a prime advertising location: seated passengers – if they are not immersed in a smartphone screen or book – are likely to look here in order to avoid eye-contact with the commuters on the bench opposite of them. Even more popular among advertisers are *nakazuri*, horizontal posters that are hung from the ceiling above the aisle between benches, because they tend to attract even more passenger 'eyeballs', especially on crowded trains. In addition, there are large stickers next to and on carriage windows and doors, as well as digital displays showing advertising shorts, news, and transit information above automatic doors, and, on newer trains, below the ceiling (instead of car cards). This is not an exhaustive list, but it illustrates that boarding a train in Tokyo means stepping into a vibrant media environment. You'll see promotions for a frequently-changing array of consumer products and services ranging from magazines, beauty products, and hair removal services to modern urban ossuaries which allow their clients to be inhumed together with their pets' remains. On my train to the city centre however, my eyes were drawn to a series of five blue car cards above the right-hand priority seating area: colourful illustrated posters encouraging desirable passenger behaviour. All five of them were in a dark blue colour scheme with some yellow and white splashed in, and carried simple stylised illustrations of commuters engaging in behaviours that were presented as problematic. Each poster took up a different kind of misconduct. A pair of loudly talking passengers. A woman applying make-up on the train. A little boy climbing onto the carriage seat bench with his shoes on. A wet umbrella dripping onto the carriage floor. A man littering. Every illustration was accompanied by a white speech bubble with text in deep blue and red font which clarified the poster message. These car cards are 'manner posters': railway company-issued verbal and visual reminders of good passenger etiquette. They are a frequent sight on Tokyo's urban railway network and the media phenomenon I had come to Japan to study.

With the Rapid Limited Express train, the journey from Haneda airport to Nihonbashi station, a centrally located station close to Tokyo Station and the Imperial Palace, only took 30 minutes. From Sengakuji station onwards, the Keikyū Corporation train seamlessly continued as a train on Toei Transportation's

Asakusa subway line to facilitate direct train service through strategic sharing of railway infrastructure. This arrangement, known in Japanese as *noriire*, is one reason why Tokyo's urban railway network feels like an integrated whole even though it really is a patchwork of train and subway lines operated by various companies. At Nihonbashi station, however, I eventually did need to change trains. I moved through the station's underground corridors, the wheels of my suitcase rattling on the concrete floor, though the noise quickly disappeared into passenger crowd's echoing sound of the footsteps. Like trains, subway and railway stations in Tokyo are plastered with posters, but there is a higher share of advertisements by public organisations rather than private companies, promoting not consumer products but anti-terror and anti-yakuza¹ initiatives, or calling for earthquake preparedness and seeking to recruit disaster volunteers. Posters by railway companies themselves – such as posters advertising special ticket types or promoting sightseeing locations along the railway network to encourage leisure use of train services – are also common.

To get to my university guesthouse I had to change to the Tōzai Line, one of the city's most-used subway lines. As this line is operated by Tokyo Metro, a different company than Keikyū and Toei which run the Airport and Asakusa lines, I needed to pass another automated ticket gate by tapping my Suica smart card, like I did when I first entered the train station at Haneda airport. Suica (and the nearly identical Pasma) cards are IC cards which function as prepaid tickets and can be charged at station terminals or linked to a credit card. They are accepted by all major public transport operators in Tokyo and are another reason why the city's urban railway network feels like a seamless whole. Sparing passengers the trouble of having to buy individual tickets, travel cards like these make taking public transport in Japan a smooth and effortless experience, and, unsurprisingly, have found near universal adoption by passengers since their introduction. They function as a kind of key to movement not just in Tokyo but in most major urban areas in Japan, and can also be used for an ever growing range of other commercial activities, such as paying at vending machines, convenience stores, and *gyūdon*² restaurants; all of which are ubiquitous in the Japanese capital.

The next manner poster I spotted addressed the 'correct' use of travel cards. Posted on a pillar next to the Tokyo Metro ticket gate and much larger than the 'car card' posters on the Keikyū train, it featured a cute cartoon drawing of a duck attempting to open the automated ticket gate with an IC card but being bounced back when the gate remains closed. Five ducklings follow the duck in single file. The first two bump into the adult duck when it comes to an unexpected stop. The other three offer potential explanations for what happened: 'Have you perhaps not properly tapped the sensor?', 'Is another smart card lying on top of it?', 'Is there perhaps not enough money on the card?' A message below the illustration read 'We humbly ask for your cooperation to ensure the smooth use of the automatic ticket gates' (*sumūzu ni jidōkaisatsuki wo goriyō itadaku tame ni gokyōryoku wo onegai itashimasu*). The poster, which had been jointly issued by all of Tokyo's major railway providers, is a visual reminder of the mistakes passengers can make when using travel cards. It highlights that the smooth operation of the urban railway network depends on intricate mobility practices.

As I made my way down to the Tōzai Line platform, I was surprised by a somewhat disorderly atmosphere unusual for central Tokyo's mostly modern and usually clean subway stations. Due to construction work, parts of the platform were sectioned off with white metal walls on which station staff had pasted paper

¹ Japanese organised crime syndicates.

² A Japanese dish consisting of a bowl of rice topped with beef and onion, alongside potential other toppings.

notices apologising for the inconvenience caused, warning of dripping water, and asking people not to stand in certain areas as the ongoing construction work had temporarily narrowed the platform, which made it easy for waiting commuters to accidentally obstruct the passenger flow. Signs, signs, signs.

The Tōzai Line train was just as filled with visual media and advertising texts as the Keikyū/Toei one had been. Next to the usual promotions of consumer products and services, there were posters advertising an emergency crisis counselling telephone hotline, an annual nationwide crime prevention campaign, and a Tokyo Metro initiative seeking to alleviate morning and evening congestion on trains by encouraging people to commute outside of rush hour through a point-based reward system. There were also advertisements by a university seeking students and a humanitarian organisation calling for donations, as well as a text-only, notice-style poster which announced a ticket fare increase due to a tax rise. And of course there was a manner poster; this time in form of a *nakazuri* above the aisle. Tokyo Metro is well-known for its manner poster campaigns and in fact sometimes credited with inventing the genre in the 1970s. Each year, the company issues a new series with a distinct design theme and visual style, with a new poster coming out each month. The 2019-2020 manner poster series featured drawings by the successful artist and illustrator JUN OSON³ who also does design work for anime shows and apparel companies such as Zara. The pastel-toned poster encouraged passengers to offer their seats to passengers in need, conveying its message through an illustration of a woman yielding her seat to an elderly man, and the English word 'SHARE' written in large, capitalised black letters below it.

I got off at Waseda, a lively university neighbourhood just a few stops from Nihonbashi station, and the location of my fieldwork accommodation. I had lived in this area for a couple of years before and didn't need much time to orient myself. Instead, I took a moment to let the feeling of being back sink in. I looked around the platform: the place looked very much like I remembered it. Here too, station walls and pillars were plastered with posters and notices. A larger version of the JUN OSON poster I had seen on the train. A poster with a cartoonish drawing of a boar which got stuck between carriage doors because it had tried to rush onto the train at the last minute. A campaign poster highlighting the dangers of traversing station platforms when intoxicated. Notices explaining which areas of the platform crowd easily and asking passengers to avoid them. Other components of the station infrastructure too carried inscriptions instructing commuters in 'correct' conduct: to prevent accidents, the platform was separated from the train tracks through a barrier consisting of automatic screen doors, on top of which were stickers asking people not to touch or lean over it. In addition, digital screens were integrated into the barrier which not only displayed the weather forecast and information about upcoming trains, but also animated versions of manner posters. Again: signs, signs, signs. I had just arrived in Japan a few hours ago, but what I had come here to study was already all around me.

1.2 Studying manner posters

This thesis is an attempt to make sense of manner poster initiatives by Japanese railway providers. While such text- and image-based reminders of desirable conduct are, as demonstrated in the above ethnographic opening vignette, a frequent sight in public transport environments in Tokyo, they are hardly an exclusively Japanese phenomenon. Instead, posters, signage, and notices proscribing 'appropriate' or 'correct' conduct are a pervasive presence in the 'semiotic landscape' of contemporary cities in general (Hermer and Hunt, 1996; Jaworski and Thurlow, 2011), and are used by public transport providers around

³ Following Japanese convention, Japanese names are written last name first in the this thesis. This name is an exception as it is a pseudonym and usually written using Latin script rather than Japanese script.

the world to promote good mobility practices (Bissell, 2018; Butcher, 2011; Moore, 2010; Ureta, 2012). However, analyses of the logics of such endeavours as institutional interventions in inappropriate conduct and organisational attempt to order everyday urban space are rare (but see Lazar, 2003; Padoan, 2014; Ureta, 2012).

Taking the ubiquitous yet understudied socio-cultural artefact of transit etiquette posters in Tokyo as a case study, this thesis inquires into the management of everyday (mis-)behaviours in urban public space through mundane media technologies. I examine posters as semiotic devices that inscribe behavioural expectations into the urban environment, and analyse the logics driving poster production and deployment. Accordingly, the thesis presents an exploration of posters as one of the technologies of 'mundane governance' enrolled in the management of contemporary urban space and society (Lippert, 2009; Woolgar and Neyland, 2013). Studying urban inscriptions such as manner posters means highlighting interventions in routine incivilities: efforts to promote and uphold 'normal', 'expected', and 'polite' behaviour in public spaces. Accordingly, it allows us to inquire into the management of 'minor deviant acts that are simply inconsiderate or rude', or behaviours that are otherwise presented as breaches to group expectations (Phillips and Smith, 2003, p. 85). The thesis thus presents a departure from prior scholarship on the regulation of urban space which has predominately focused on the governance of behaviours that are considered criminal, criminogenic, or otherwise harmful (Atkinson and Millington, 2019), such as by examining endeavours by urban authorities to safeguard urban 'order', believed to be ever in danger, through regulatory technologies like policing, surveillance, or by-laws (Burney, 2009; Fassin, 2013; Millie, 2009; Norris and Armstrong, 2010).

In the remainder of this introductory chapter, I will first discuss why Tokyo's public transport environments provide a good case study for sociological explorations of the management of mundane misconduct in contemporary cities. This justification is followed by a discussion of the thesis' research questions and scholarly contribution. I will conclude with a brief overview of the thesis structure.

1.3 Why focus on urban public transport environments?

Public transport environments are a logical geographic choice for studying routine incivilities. The above described emphasis of (semi-)criminal and harmful behaviour in the 'urban misconduct' literature has led most prior scholarship to focus on disadvantaged inner-city areas. Contrary to this, Smith, Phillips and King (2010, p. 6) have argued that a sociology of 'mundane' forms of deviance such as inconsiderate and rude behaviour needs to turn its attention to quotidian public spaces such as supermarkets, car parks, and public transport settings. Accordingly, the management of commuter conduct presents an ideal case study for an inquiry into the regulation of routine incivilities.

Mass transit environments such as train stations and subway carriages are 'quintessentially urban space[s]' in which passengers 'move with others' and are always faced with the task of managing contact with strangers (Benediktsson *et al.*, 2018, p. 2; Bissell, 2016). This forced proximity to other transport users begets an inherent potential of discomfort and vexation. Passengers on public transport might be subjected to a range of inconsiderate misbehaviours such as co-passengers cutting in line or occupying multiple seats. The risk of experiencing nuisance is only amplified by the fact that urban transit brings together highly diverse individuals with disparate mobility goals (e.g. work commute or day trip) who have to endure each other's company until they alight (Moore, 2012; Smith and Clarke, 2000; Symes, 2007). It is thus not surprising that public transport spaces have been identified as one of the key sites in which urban dwellers encounter 'rude strangers' in their everyday lives (Smith, Phillips and King, 2010).

Indeed, in the early days of modern mass transit, the social mixing of passengers from different backgrounds – particularly in terms of gender and class – frequently gave rise to moral anxieties and concerns (Belenky, 2020; Bieri and Gerodetti, 2007; Zunino Singh, 2017). For example, public transport environments were framed as ‘space[s] of moral dangers for respectable women’ (Belenky, 2020, p. 136), which facilitated the emergence of discourses problematising inappropriate passenger conduct, such as by instructing women how they should position their legs on the tram, and teaching ‘male passengers how to behave’ in front of, and ‘in relation to female passengers’ (Zunino Singh, 2017, pp. 86, 91). In addition, etiquette infractions such as intoxicated and rowdy behaviour does not just threaten the ‘moral’ organisation of transit spaces, but also their technological order. The safe and efficient operation of the transport system is always at risk of being upset by delays or accidents, leading public transport providers to engage in various initiatives and endeavours to protect the smooth operation of public transport.

To put it briefly, public transport environments are ‘quintessentially’ urban spaces in which there is a high likelihood of encountering deviant, uncivil, or otherwise ‘problematic’ behaviour, and which are thus shaped by a strong need to manage everyday conduct.

1.4 Why focus on Tokyo?

Home to more than 30 million people, the Greater Tokyo area⁴ is one of the most densely populated urban agglomerations globally. It is traversed by 2500 km of train tracks which are operated by multiple public transport providers, making it one of the world’s most extensive urban railway systems. Tokyo’s railway system is essential for the operation of socio-economic life in the city. Millions of people living in and around Tokyo depend on the urban rail network for work and private purposes alike (Negishi and Bissell, 2020; Pendleton and Coates, 2018), with trains accounting for 95 per cent of all trips in central Tokyo (Enoch and Nakamura, 2008). In total, about 15 billion passenger journeys are made on Greater Tokyo’s railway system every year (MLIT, 2020b). Unsurprisingly, Tokyo’s train and subway stations frequently make it onto lists of the ‘world’s busiest stations’ circulating online and in other media (JapanToday, no date; Railway Technology, 2012; WorldAtlas, 2019). Shinjuku station in particular frequently receives media attention as, officially, the ‘world’s busiest station for passenger use’ with more than 3.5 million passengers every day (Guinness World Records, 2021). The sheer scope of Tokyo’s railway system and the central role it plays in the operation of everyday life in the city thus make it a well-suited choice for studies of urban mobility (see Chowdhury and McFarlane, 2021; Negishi and Bissell, 2020).

Another reason for the chosen geographical focus is the frequency, design, and scope of manner improvement initiatives by Tokyo railway companies. As will be discussed in-depth in Chapter 5, Japanese public transport etiquette posters have a history of at least 100 years, and are the go-to tool of choice for transport provider interventions in passenger behaviour. In other words, manner posters are not the product of a temporary company policy, but a regular sight for passengers on Tokyo’s railway network and stable fact of urban life. In fact, manner posters are part of a larger semiotic landscape of regulation in the city. Signs, posters, and other semiotic devices appealing to ‘proper’ conduct are omnipresent in

⁴ The population of Tokyo varies greatly depending on which geographic definition of the Japanese capital and the surrounding (sub)urban sprawl is applied. In this thesis, I define the Greater Tokyo as the area in a 50 km radius from Tokyo station as this definition is frequently used by Japanese railway providers and government authorities alike (e.g. Statistics Bureau of Japan, 2015). Other definitions, also used by government authorities, count larger parts of the neighbouring prefectures and put the population number even higher (for example MLIT, 2020a states a population of ca. 44 million for the Tokyo region).

Japanese cities and employed in various areas of urban governance ranging from trash disposal to crime prevention (Bayley, 1991; Coates, 2015; Schimkowsky, 2021a; Sugimoto, 2014; Wetzell, 2010). Japanese manner posters further stand out due to their design. Posters' verbal-visual content frequently diverges from the official and standardised format commonly employed by proscription and prohibition signage, and instead integrates elements of 'semiotic play' (Lazar, 2003, p. 212) and makes use of 'soft' messages 'that appeal to peoples' hearts' (Asahi Shimbun, 2009). Accordingly, manner posters are evidence of an 'conversationalisation' of public discourse that has the potential to mask power differences between the audience and the issuing authority (Fairclough, 1994; Kress and van Leeuwen, 2006, p. 90). Japanese manner posters also provide a promising case study because of the wide array of behaviours that are addressed through them. Transit etiquette posters issued by Japanese public transport providers are not limited to basic mobility skills such as 'correct' boarding practice, but present reminders of minute boarding etiquette that extend to the 'right' way of holding your smartphone or carrying your backpack on a crowded train. Accordingly, Japanese manner posters not only target dangerous or formally prohibited behaviours but proclaim a meticulous code of urban conduct. This integration of mundane micro-behaviours into the scope of regulatory targets positions Tokyo as an ideal case study for analysing the management of mundane incivilities in urban spaces. While posters or signage encouraging good transit etiquette and passenger behaviour can be found in public transport systems around the world (Bissell, 2018; Butcher, 2011; Moore, 2011; Symes, 2015; Ureta, 2012), the scope of Japanese manner posters makes them a particularly conspicuous example of mundane urban governance. Etiquette initiatives by Tokyo public transport providers are thus well-suited for explorations of larger sociological puzzles.

Finally, there is also a personal reason for the chosen geographical focus. Having spent five years in the city during my undergraduate and postgraduate university education, Tokyo's cityscape has inspired and influenced much of my sociological imagination. Experiences on Tokyo's transport network in particular repeatedly sparked moments of anthropological reflection. During my first stay in the city, I was struck by the relative silence of Tokyo's packed morning commuter trains: so many people, yet – for the most part of the journey – the only noise was the droning sound of the speeding carriage and the occasional onboard announcement. On an afternoon train a few years later, I felt embarrassed when a foreign visitor I was showing around hungrily gulped down an *onigiri* rice ball, and a Japanese co-passenger sitting nearby looked at us disapprovingly and changed seats. As an exchange student living in Tokyo, train rides around the city thus offered moments of insight into the workings and behavioural expectations of Japanese society. Rather than mere observations of a newcomer to the country, these cultural encounters can be easily connected to the central position trains occupy in the Japanese national and urban imagination. There is a near innumerable list of Japanese publications about urban railways, ranging from guides advising passengers how best to spend their commute or secure a seat during rush hour to literary and philosophical reflections (see Freedman, 2011; Pendleton and Coates, 2018). Matters of passenger etiquette, too, are a reoccurring topic in public discourse, and are regularly discussed in newspaper columns or on social media: sometimes merely to vent complaints, sometimes to criticise the moral state of Japanese society at large. In other words, Tokyo's urban railway system offers a useful vantage point for scholars to 'think from' – about Japanese cities and society, but also about broader sociological and anthropological questions (Pendleton and Coates, 2018).

1.5 Research questions and scholarly contribution

This thesis inquires into mundane discursive and semiotic strategies of maintaining public order by taking up the example of manner posters in urban transport spaces in Tokyo. It is guided by two overarching research questions:

- 1) Why has mundane passenger (mis)behaviour become the target of company-led regulatory initiatives?
- 2) What does the textual-visual style of regulatory signage reveal about the governance of conduct in urban public space?

The underlying theme uniting these two questions is an interest in the logics driving (media-based) institutional interventions into everyday conduct in contemporary cities. The thesis asks how manner posters developed as a genre of public communication, which behaviours are taken up by posters and why, and which considerations shape posters' design conventions. I will suggest that the answer to these questions can be found in railway companies' pursuit of a 'comfortable' railway journey and corporate perceptions of the demands of company-customer interaction. Accordingly, I largely refrain from an interpretation of manner posters and the management of passenger etiquette as an expression of social control, surveillance, or a 'mobile panopticon' (Negishi, 2016; Padoan, 2014, p. 590), and instead delve into emic understandings of manner improvement efforts. The thesis argues that regulatory intent alone cannot fully explain the diverse ways in which private and public actors intervene in public conduct. Although playful appeals to good passenger etiquette can be easily perceived as a subtle disciplinary technology, I will demonstrate that the principal concern guiding the production and deployment of manner posters is not regulatory will, but corporate consideration of customer satisfaction, sensibilities, and comfort. In other words, I argue that the answer to the above listed research questions can be found in manner posters' function as a technology of customer service.

While etiquette posters and passenger misbehaviour are common phenomena in urban public transport spaces worldwide, they have rarely been the focus of dedicated social science study. In lieu of an established body of topical research I could rely on, this thesis draws on an eclectic mix of literature from across the social sciences and beyond. As will be further discussed in Chapter 3, this thesis is situated at the intersection of four loosely defined bodies of scholarship: 1) routine incivilities and their regulation, 2) the production and regulation of urban mobilities, 3) signage in urban space, and 4) research on urban railways in Japan. Accordingly, the thesis advances our understanding of multiple areas of research. Among several, its key contributions to the literature are that it provides insights into 1) everyday misconduct and its management in contemporary urban spaces, as well as the rationales that guide it, 2) the process through which passenger conduct and interaction becomes the subject of transport provider interventions, 3) the use of semiotic devices such as posters and signage as means of mundane governance, and 4) manner posters as a central component of the semiotic landscape of Japanese cities (see Chapters 3 and 9 for a more in-depth discussion of the thesis' contributions to the literature).

1.6 Thesis structure

This thesis is organised into three parts which contain nine chapters. Following this introduction, Chapter 2 will explore key terms and concepts that I refer to throughout the thesis, thus introducing the reader to key terminology. Chapter 3 will build on this with an in-depth discussion of the extant related scholarship, laying the foundation for my empirical analysis by introducing prior research on routine incivilities, urban

mobilities, urban signage, and urban railways in Japan. It will highlight that there is a lack of research on the regulation of everyday misconduct and the employment of semiotic devices as a means of mundane urban governance – a shortcoming that this thesis seeks to address. Afterwards, Chapter 4 will introduce my methodological approach. It will discuss expert interviews, archival research, ethnography, and visual analysis (i.e. multimodal and quantitative visual content analysis) as key methods employed during fieldwork. The chapter will also detail the rationale that guided my methodological choices and discuss ethical considerations and challenges encountered during fieldwork. These four chapters thus lay the groundwork for my subsequent analysis and together constitute Part I of the thesis.

The following three empirical chapters will explore different aspects of Japanese urban railway companies' use of manner posters to manage passenger conduct. First, Chapter 5 will introduce the phenomenon of manner posters through a discussion of their textual structure and their socio-cultural history as a genre of public communication. Based on archival research, the chapter demonstrates that the history of manner posters can be traced back to *at least* the Taishō era (1912-1926). It further argues that the development and proliferation of the genre needs to be understood in the context of changes in the Japanese railway and advertising industries and underlying socio-cultural transformations such as urbanisation and economic growth. Specifically, it points to an intensification of efforts by railway companies to improve the quality of public transport, advances in graphic design, and changes in dominant approaches to public communication as factors that spurred the development of manner poster initiatives.

The following chapter, Chapter 6, will shift the analytical focus to the logics of poster production and deployment. The chapter draws on archival research and expert interviews with individuals involved in commissioning and creating manner posters to examine the corporate considerations shaping poster production and design. It discusses targeted behaviours, design considerations, and corporate perspectives on posters' effectiveness to argue that – contrary to prior research which positions media interventions in passenger conduct as a form of disciplinary strategy – railway companies primarily conceptualise manner posters as a technology of customer service. It will demonstrate that corporate concern for customer sensibilities is at the heart of poster production and shapes their content and design. Posters' regulatory potential is curtailed by their customer service function and the requirements of company-customer communication.

Chapter 7 explores posters as visual media artefacts and zooms in on their semiotic structure and design conventions. Drawing on a multimodal content analysis and a supplementary quantitative visual content analysis of Japanese manner posters, it identifies practical design techniques employed to solicit desirable mobility practices while simultaneously protecting customer sensibilities. It sets out by demonstrating that poster campaigns must rely on persuasive design (instead of formal prohibition) due to the nature of the targeted behaviours. Examining character figuration, the chapter then shows that posters employ recognisable character roles to increase the salience of their manner message. Following this, it analyses posters' perspective, drawing style, and geosemiotic qualities to establish that message salience is further heightened by citing actual commuter experiences as a visual frame of reference. Finally, the chapter discusses three sets of graphic strategies posters use to frame passenger behaviour as problematic. Chapters 5-7, collectively forming Part II of the thesis, will be bracketed by a brief preamble and coda that comment on methodological and analytical interrelations and interdependencies among the three empirical chapters to alleviate potential shortcomings of the paper-based format (see Note to the Reader at the beginning of this thesis).

The subsequent Part III of the thesis will reflect on the study as a whole. A common theme that will emerge from Chapters 5-7 is that the design and deployment of manner posters is not primarily shaped by regulatory will, but rather by corporate considerations of customer service and comfort. Anticipating doubts readers might have regarding this admittedly counter-intuitive interpretation of manner poster campaigns, the penultimate Chapter 8 will qualify and defend my argument through a critical reading of alternative interpretations of manner posters as a form of social control driven by disciplinary desire. The concluding Chapter 9 will revisit the research questions introduced in the current introduction and review the thesis' findings. It will situate the study in the context of the broader academic literature and discuss its main contributions and impact. Finally, it will reflect on the thesis' limitations, and identify potential avenues for future research.

Chapter 2 Key terms and concepts

This chapter will explore seven sets of key words and concepts that I refer to throughout the thesis and that underlie its reasoning. Next to introducing readers to essential terminology, the below overview also lays the groundwork for a more in-depth discussion of related prior scholarship in the following chapter. As questions of inappropriate and inconsiderate passenger conduct in public transport are at the heart of this thesis, I will start by discussing *manners, etiquette, and civility* as well as *behaviour in public and the urban public order*. This is followed by a discussion of the sibling concepts *deviance and incivility*. Subsequently, I will introduce readers to sociological ways of understanding societal reactions to misconduct through a discussion of *social control and governmentality*, as well as thinking on *semiotics, signs, and signage*. Finally, I will explore *mobilities and passengers* and *customers and customer service* as key concepts essential for understanding the specific urban mass transportation context of the thesis.

2.1 Manners, etiquette, and civility

The term 'manners' refers to 'patterned interactions, prevailing norms and customs, and contextually dependent and socially anticipated behaviours' (Voyer, 2018). It is closely connected to the narrower notion of 'etiquette' which describes 'more formally codified standards of behaviour' (Voyer, 2018). Both manners and etiquette refer to shared socio-cultural codes of polite, considerate, and appropriate behaviour. They detail rules and norms of public conduct and comportment such as those relating to bodily functions, appearance, and language use, and have been identified as important components of everyday social interaction (Goffman, 1963, 1971). Notably, manners and etiquette can be understood as connected to morals: exercising good manners means treating others with respect, which in turn means acknowledging their dignity. However, manners remain distinct from the concept of morals: manners' primary objective is 'to encourage us to make ourselves agreeable' (Buss, 1999, pp. 797–798). Accordingly, they do not require people to act from 'good will'; rather it is more important to '[appear] to be good willed' (Buss, 1999, p. 798).

Etiquette and manners are closely related to the concept of civility: a code of behaviour 'that calls to respond to others in a respectful way' (Eicher-Catt, 2013, pp. 1–2). Like manners and etiquette, 'civility' and associated terms such as 'civilised' convey a sense of orderly and good behaviour and attitude. Interestingly, early conceptualisations of the term viewed civilised individuals as 'those who are fit to live in cities' and contrasted them with 'barbarians' (Kesler, 1992, p. 58; Peck, 2002, p. 359; Sifianou, 2019, p. 54). Accordingly, early understandings of the term can be interpreted as referring to the ability to adhere to codes of cultured urban conduct.

Scholarly discussions of civility, etiquette, and manners are often closely linked. This is particularly evident from Norbert Elias' (2000) two volume work *The Civilizing Process* which is based on a study of etiquette books and presents an important starting point for sociological studies of manners, etiquette, and (in)civility alike (Flint, Kruithof and Powell, 2015; Smith, Phillips and King, 2010; Wouters, 2007). *The Civilizing Process* examines the gradual transformation of attitudes and expectations towards interpersonal conduct, bodily functions, and emotions in European societies between the Middle Ages and the end of the 19th century (van Krieken, 1998). It argues that the behavioural expectations governing everyday life (e.g. table manners, natural bodily functions) became increasingly refined as time progressed and identifies heightening social sensitivities of embarrassment and revulsion that led to the segregation of 'shameful' or 'distasteful' acts (e.g. defecation, social intercourse) from public life (van Krieken, 1998, p. 92; Wouters, 2007). In other words, the civilising process is characterised by an increasingly demanding

and differentiated code of conduct (van Krieken, 1998). It is further shaped by a shift from external social constraints (*Fremdzwang*) to a habitus of ‘automatic self-restraint’ (*Selbstzwang*) and peoples’ adoption of a reflexive approach to understanding their actions and social interrelationships (van Krieken, 1998, pp. 94–101; Treibel, 2008). Through the civilising process, humans learned to subordinate their impulses to rational thought and foresight, and to manage their emotions and conduct in variegated social contexts, adjusting them to the demands of the situation at hand (van Krieken, 1998; Treibel, 2008; Wouters, 2007).

While Elias’ work on the civilising process has been criticised for featuring Eurocentric stereotypes and ideology (Pepperell, 2016), Eliasian studies of the gradual transformation of manners and sensitivities are ongoing in contemporary social science scholarship. For example, Wouters (2007) has continued Elias’ work by tracing the development of manners and emotions from 1890 to the end of the 20th century. He argues that – following the long-term process of formalisation identified by Elias in which a growing number of behaviours were subjected to increasingly strict regulation (Wouters, 2007, p. 30) – in the 20th century, European societies experienced several spurts of informalisation during which manners became more relaxed, subtle, and varied (Wouters, 2007, p. 209). Wouters (2007, p. 176) further observed a phase of reformalisation of manners and etiquette towards the end of the 20th century which saw a re-emergence of ‘strictness, hierarchy, and consensus’ in dominant manner regimes.

The term manners is used in this thesis not just as an analytical sociological category (see above) but also to express an emic concept. Japanese language has adopted ‘manners’ (*manā*) as a loan word which has been commonly used in everyday language since at least the 1980s (Bardsley and Miller, 2011). Like its English origin, the Japanese word *manā* can describe both ‘moral character [...] and one’s ability to execute protocol’ (Bardsley and Miller, 2011, p. 5). Notably, the Japanese term *manā* is not just invoked to discuss matters of etiquette but also to describe the ‘correct’ way of doing something. Accordingly, the manner posters (*manā posutā*) that are the subject of this study can be understood as concerned with the ‘right’ way of using public transport. The thesis thus focuses on behavioural norms relating to conduct in public transport spaces such as trains and subway stations. It explores the management of passenger manners and the promotion of desirable transit etiquette, and zooms in on mass transport environments as one of the key locales of everyday urban life where behaviour in public becomes problematic (see de Regt, 2015; Smith, Phillips and King, 2010). This focus on inconsiderate, impolite, or otherwise inappropriate passenger behaviour brings us to the notions of deviance and incivility. First however, I will briefly discuss behaviour in public and the urban public order as something that is facilitated by manners, etiquette, and civility.

2.2 Behaviour in public and the urban public order

The behavioural expectations that are implicit in the concepts of manners, etiquette, and civility are crucial to understanding how social interaction and everyday urban life are ordered in public spaces. Unsurprisingly, they present important themes in microsociological studies of behaviour in public, such as those inspired by the work of Erving Goffman. Goffman developed a rich analytical vocabulary for the study of human conduct in public spaces, coining expressions such as ‘civil inattention’ – a deferential strategy for accommodating strangers or the unexpected (Goffman, 1963) – or ‘territories of the self’ and their violation through intrusion, transgression or defilement (Goffman, 1971). His work helps us understand how individuals conduct themselves in public and achieve mundane tasks such as walking or waiting (Crossley, 1995). The examination of social rules that ‘constitute the structure of social interaction’ and their different manifestations (e.g. expectations, obligations or constraints) is an underlying theme in

Goffman's work (Manning, 1992, pp. 73–76). Notably, the rules of interaction described by Goffman do not produce social order through coercing specific behaviours but are instead part of the processes by which social order is performed (Manning, 1992, p. 10).

Urban sociology provides a further source of insight into the rules governing behaviour in public. The intensification of urbanisation processes in the 19th century brought with it a dramatic transformation of human life worlds. Urban environments – characterised by size, speed, anonymity, and the adaption of human habits – became the focus of rich scholarly analysis. Investigations of urban life are frequently traced to Georg Simmel whose *Metropolis and Mental Life* inquired into the relation between the urban environment and city residents' character dispositions. Simmel observed that the increased sensory stimuli of city life lead urban dwellers to acquire blasé attitudes and be more guarded towards their fellow men than rural residents (Simmel, 1995 [1903]). This has become an important analytical starting point for scholars of urban modernity who view managing exposure to strangers and (potentially) undesired sensations and experiences as a core challenge of city life. Simmel's work further stressed the importance of punctuality, calculability, and exactness for the organisation of urban life (see Jensen, 2013, p. 71; Simmel, 1995).

The study of behaviour in public has been continued by Lyn Lofland (1973, 1998) who built on both Goffman and Simmel to examine how urban dwellers navigate everyday life in the city as a 'world of strangers'. While throughout much of (pre-)history humans lived in small settlements which allowed individuals to be acquainted with most of the people they encountered, urbanisation made contact to strangers the norm (Lofland, 1973, p. 4). Due to the size of cities, urban dwellers have no personal knowledge of the majority of others with whom they share a space (Lofland, 1973, p. 3). Urban public space is a unique 'social-psychological environment' which is inhabited by strangers who only know another 'in terms of [...] nonpersonal identity categories' (Lofland, 1998, pp. xi, 9). Accordingly, urban environments require specific practices of sharing a habitat with unknown others. Lofland identifies several techniques, knowledges, and processes that 'order' urban public space and address the challenges of everyday contact with strangers. For example, city life has given rise to different ways of 'ordering' the urban population. Urban dwellers are embedded in processes of appearance and spatial organisation that allow individuals to gauge fellow city residents based on their appearance and location (Lofland, 1973, p. 22ff). The importance of these modes of urban organisation has changed over time and socio-technical developments have caused a shift from widespread appearance ordering to a relative dominance of spatial ordering in the modern city (Lofland, 1973, p. 57ff).

Socio-technical developments also led to broader changes in the urban order. In the preindustrial city, public space was characterised by the broad scope of its uses. Public space was 'nonspecialized' and simultaneously a site of diverse activities such as defecation, education, or punishment (Lofland, 1973, p. 37ff). In contrast to this 'spatial integration of activities'⁵, many of the acts that previously occurred in

⁵ It is debatable whether this argument of 'spatial integration' in pre-industrial cities holds up in cross-cultural comparison. Scholars have shown that the urban governance of Edo, Tokyo's pre-modern predecessor, was characterised by high levels of spatial control (Sorensen, 2002, p. 24). Classes (and by extension, land-use) were spatially segregated: samurai, commoner, and temple quarters were clearly divided, administrated separately, and different districts often cut off by gates, moats, and rivers (Sorensen, 2002, pp. 18, 23–25). Another example of this spatial ordering of urban life in Edo is the restriction of all (licensed) female sex work to Yoshiwara in the early 17th century, a walled-off brothel quarter in the outskirts of the city with a single, permanently guarded entrance that the indentured women who worked there were not allowed to leave (Stanley, 2012, pp. 45–46, 50). In other words,

public are now confined to private or specialised spaces. Modern cities are characterised by a designation of specific times and places for different kinds of persons and activities (Lofland, 1973, p. 67). In other words, dominant understandings of ‘appropriate’ public conduct are increasingly spatially and temporally defined. Lofland argues that ‘appropriate’ behaviour in public is a skill that is acquired in processes of ‘urban learning’, such as the acquisition of categorical knowledge through which to read the conduct and appearance of others as well as a practical knowledge of what behaviour, dress, and position in space are acceptable or desirable in a given situation (Lofland, 1973, p. 97). Furthermore, Lofland analyses techniques that allow individuals to maintain privacy in public, such as through body management (e.g. minimising body and eye contact; Lofland, 1973, p. 151ff), or temporarily transforming public space into private space by creating (mobile) ‘home territories’ (Lofland, 1973, p. 118ff).

In her later work, Lofland (1998) expands her examination of urban public space which she now refers to as the ‘public realm’. The public realm is shaped by normative systems that secure the ‘orderliness’ or ‘patternedness’ of urban dwellers’ behaviour (Lofland, 1998, p. 25). Behaviour in public is governed by ‘principles of stranger interaction’ such as cooperative motility and civility toward diversity. While such rules do not simply determine behaviour, knowledge of them does contribute to the production of social outcomes such as privacy, sociability, or territorial defence (Lofland, 1998, p. 34). Accordingly, Goffman’s, Simmel’s, and Lofland’s descriptions of the underlying microsociological mechanisms at work in ordering urban life and behaviour in public are in line with notions of manners, etiquette, and civility. In the following section, we will turn to the transgression of these behavioural expectations in form of manifestations of deviance, disorder, and incivility in the city.

2.3 Deviance, disorder, and incivility

The term deviance refers to deliberate and unintentional divergences from societal norms defined by folkways, mores, laws, or taboos beyond what is considered acceptable by a group or population (Lugosi, 2019; Thompson and Gibbs, 2016). Norm violations can consist of attitude, behaviour, or (physical or mental) conditions (Adler and Adler, 2014). Accordingly, it can be both something that is ‘ascribed’ to people (e.g. physical conditions) or something they ‘achieve’ (e.g. acts) (Curra, 2015, p. 126; Mankoff, 1976, pp. 241–242). Not all norm violations are automatically considered expressions of deviance. Transgressions are only viewed as deviant when they exceed a tolerance threshold and ‘there is a probability of a sanction being applied’ (Meier, 2019, p. 29; Thompson and Gibbs, 2016). Accordingly, deviance is not an absolute, but a gradual phenomenon: its ‘degree’ is indicated by its likelihood to attract a sanction as well as the sanction’s intensity (Goode, 2015, p. 4). Whether a norm transgression is considered deviant commonly depends on the involved actors, culture, time, place, and situation, thus indicating that deviance is a fundamentally relative phenomenon (Thompson and Gibbs, 2016). Put differently, most norm violations only become transgressive in specific settings and situations (Curra, 2015, pp. 16–18).

This contextual understanding of norm transgressions is reflected in interactionist and constructivist perspectives on deviance. Opposed to positivist approaches which view deviance as an objective fact and

Yoshiwara was a ‘formalized site of recreation’ and an ‘official site of alterity’ (Screech, 2020, pp. 185–187). While the establishment of the Yoshiwara quarter traces back to a suggestion by enterprising brothel owners, the ruling shogunate soon realised that the establishment of a designated pleasure district, as strategy of containment and surveillance, served to uphold social and political order, and similar quarters were founded in other large cities in Tokugawa era Japan (Stanley, 2012, pp. 47–50).

seek to explain why some individuals, in some circumstances, engage in deviant behaviour, interactionist and constructivist approaches see deviance as socially constructed and ask how certain behaviours or characteristics come to be stigmatised (Goode, 2015). Interactionist perspectives posit that societies 'create deviance by making the rules whose infractions creates deviance' (Becker, 1973, p. 9). Becker emphasises that rules and, by the same turn, deviance are not natural occurrences, but the products of social processes. He describes rule creation and application through a three-step model of value, rule, and enforcement, and argues that rules commonly originate in societal values. On their own, values are frequently insufficient as guides of human conduct or basis for policing behaviour: not only do individuals hold several conflicting values, but, more fundamentally, their vague and general character means they are of limited use in the diverse situations that make up everyday life. To guide or regulate behaviour in specific situations, more concrete rules need to be deduced from values. Rule creation is no easy process. Because of values' inherent ambiguity, different rules can be formulated based on them. Furthermore, rules might contradict rules deduced from other values. Accordingly, rules are not a natural occurrence, but the product of a deliberate process of rule production prompted by a specific problem or situation. Rules, in other words, 'do not flow automatically from values' – and in some cases are only tied retroactively to them (Becker, 1973, p. 132). The sequence *value – rule – enforcement* is not an automatic or inevitable process, but a purposive pursuit.

Rules, then, are the result of initiatives by social actors. Becker dubs these actors moral entrepreneurs, 'for what they are enterprising about is the creation of a new fragment of the moral constitution of society, its code of right and wrong' (Becker, 1973, p. 145). He distinguishes between two kinds of moral enterprise: rule creation and rule enforcement (Becker, 1973, p. 146). Rule creators bring a conduct or condition they deem problematic to the attention of wider society, and push for regulation. Becker describes rule creators as moral crusaders who are genuinely disturbed by a certain issue, and passionate about their regulatory and reformatory pursuit. However, the success of processes of rule creation frequently also relies on the support of actors with instrumental motives. For example, the prohibition of alcohol in the United States in the early 20th century was backed by industrialists who hoped prohibition would lead to more docile labourers (Becker, 1973, p. 149). Still, rule creators themselves are usually 'more concerned with ends than with means' and rely on professionals to draw up and implement rules (Becker, 1973, p. 152). This brings us to second category of moral enterprise, that of rule enforcement.

The mere existence of a rule does not ensure its automatic application. Like rule creation, rule enforcement is an 'enterprising act' that requires proactive policing. This task is often taken up by organisations (e.g. police authorities or other government bodies), thus resulting in the institutionalisation of the moral enterprise. Notably, rule enforcers tend to be less passionate about the rule content than rule creators. Their engagement with deviance is not that of a moral crusader, but that of a working professional. As the task of rule enforcement provides organisations such as the police with a 'raison d'être', they must simultaneously demonstrate their usefulness *and* emphasise that the problem persists despite their best efforts (Becker, 1973, pp. 156–157). Rule enforcement is often selective in terms of policed subjects and situations. Since rule enforcers' resources are limited and they usually do not share the moral passion of rule creators, enforcers regularly exercise discretion when applying rules and tend to police deviance according to their own priorities and perceptions of the severity of transgression, as well as the requirements and constraints of their work situation. Becker's contribution to the sociology of deviance thus highlights the definition and regulation of transgressions as inherently social processes. Rules and deviance, two sides of the same coin, are 'always the result of enterprise' (Becker, 1973, p. 162);

an enterprise that can be tied to both moral fervour and private interests. It is not a natural process, but a deliberate endeavour that defines certain forms of conduct as deviant. When successful, such moral enterprise leads to the creation of a new rule, and with it, of rule transgressors as a new group of outsiders (Becker, 1973, p. 155).

Mary Douglas' (2001 [1966]) work on pollution and taboo provides an important corollary to the previously mentioned constructionist perspectives on deviance by highlighting the importance of context in defining norm transgressions. Positioning dirt as 'matter out of place', Douglas (2001, pp. 36–38) argues that definitions of dirt are always context-dependent. Things are not 'dirty in themselves', but only when they are in the wrong place at the wrong time (Douglas, 2001, p. 37). For example, soup is considered 'food' when in a bowl on the dinner table but becomes 'dirt' when spilled on one's clothes. Similarly, shoes are unproblematic when worn outside but become 'dirty' when worn in bed. Definitions of dirt always depend on a prior system of classification of what belongs where. It is transgressions of such classificatory systems that become sources of pollution (Douglas, 2001, pp. 36–38).

In urban contexts, deviance is often framed as 'disorder'. Disorder includes physical deterioration (e.g. litter, graffiti) and 'social nuisances' (e.g. panhandling, public urination) (Hinkle, 2014, p. 213). Compared to deviance, a term usually invoked to discuss 'abnormal' attitudes, behaviours, or conditions of individuals and groups, the term disorder is primarily used to refer to an accumulation of experiences of deviance and 'dirt' in a specific place. 'Disorder' has a decidedly spatial dimension, referring for example to certain neighbourhoods or streets. The study of urban disorder is fundamentally shaped by the broken windows thesis (Wilson and Kelling, 1982). Following this thesis, residents become fearful if 'disorder' in a neighbourhood is left unchecked. This in turn causes community decline and facilitates the proliferation of crime. All instances of disorder are inherently dangerous – litter and graffiti are not just potential sources of aesthetic displeasure, but are seen as carrying within them essential threats to urban order itself. Accordingly, there is a need to police even minor instances of 'disorder' in the city to ward off bigger dangers (Hinkle, 2014, pp. 213–214). Notably, academic discussions in a 'disorder' and 'broken windows' framework tend to be much more positivist than the above mentioned constructivist and interactionist approaches to understanding transgressions of the urban order. While the broken windows thesis has proved highly influential in both academia and urban policy (Sampson, 2009a), its empirical validity is controversial (Harcourt and Ludwig, 2006; Hinkle, 2014). Post-broken windows thesis views on urban disorder recognise that cues of disorder might be perceived and interpreted differently by different urban residents (Innes, 2004; Sampson, 2009a, p. 10). The same instance of disorder might be problematic – or salient – only to some people. Perceptions of disorder are always socially mediated and shaped, for example, by the 'racial, ethnic and class composition' of a neighbourhood (Sampson, 2009b, p. 15, 2009a).

Deviance and crime are often conflated in public and academic discussions (Goode, 2015). Accordingly, the sociology of deviance is frequently understood to be primarily about crime (Downes, Rock and McLaughlin, 2016). However, crime is better understood as a sub-type of deviance that is defined by the violation of societal norms enshrined in law (Goode, 2015, p. 25). Most forms of deviance are *not* criminal (Goode, 2015, p. 7), and instead involve the transgression of manners, etiquette, and other 'informal folkways and mores that govern our everyday behaviours' (Thompson and Gibbs, 2016, p. 16). It is these mundane forms of deviance that this thesis will focus on. A useful way of describing such everyday norm infractions can be found in the antithesis of the above discussed notion of civility: incivility. Like in the case of deviance, there is a tendency to understand incivility as (semi-)criminal transgressions of formal legal norms. Often used interchangeably with the term 'anti-social behaviour', 'incivility' is frequently

invoked in political and scholarly discourses to describe physical or social disruptions of the urban order that are perceived as threatening, criminogenic, or as an indication that an area is in decline (e.g. vandalism, graffiti). Opposed to this, scholars such as Phillips and Smith (2003, p. 85, 2006; Smith, Phillips and King, 2010) have argued for a broader sociological conceptualisation of incivility that focuses on ‘minor deviant acts that are simply inconsiderate or rude’. Rather than violations of a legal code, these are subjective transgressions of manners, etiquette, or an ‘urban code’, and encompass a diverse array of seemingly trivial behaviours and incidents such as shoving, queue jumping, littering, or the inconsiderate use of seats on public transport. If civility describes a code of conduct that ‘calls to respond to others in a respectful way’ (Eicher-Catt, 2013, pp. 1–2), incivility describes a lack of respect and consideration in interactions with others. Encounters with such everyday forms of incivility are far more common than with the behaviours described by criminological conceptualisations of the term, making them a ‘universal everyday experience’ in contemporary cities (Phillips and Smith, 2003, p. 87). Notably, this routine incivility further differs from the (semi-)criminal incivility discussed in the criminological literature in that it prompts feelings of irritation, frustration, anger, or indifference rather than fear (Smith, Phillips and King, 2010).

As transgression of etiquette or behavioural expectations, mundane incivility can be understood as a disruption of the micro order of everyday urban interaction described by sociologists such as Goffman, Simmel, and Lofland (see Section 2.2). Accordingly, deviance, disorder, and incivility can be understood as posing constant threats to the order of urban places and social interaction (Lofland, 1973, p. 52). To ward off the dangers of deviance and maintain public order, governmental authorities and other urban actors thus engage in strategies of social control. It is these that we turn to next.

2.4 Social control and governmentality

There are competing definitions of social control. ‘Narrow’ conceptualisations of social control define the term as ‘purposive mechanisms used to regulate the conduct of people who are seen as deviant, criminal, worrying, or troublesome’ (Deflem, 2015; Innes, 2003, p. 3). This definition allows us to differentiate between formal and informal social control (Innes, 2003). While the former refers to interventions by official (usually government) bodies, such as through the criminal justice system, the latter describes a diverse array of unofficial sanctions by other actors ranging from gossip to ostracism (Thompson and Gibbs, 2016). As transgressions of etiquette, the routine incivilities that are the focus of this thesis appear to firmly fall within the realm of informal social control. For example, passenger misconduct such as inconsiderate seat usage might be met with judgmental stares from other commuters, or, in rare instances, be called out by them. However, distinguishing between formal and informal control can be surprisingly difficult (Innes, 2003). For instance, civil crime prevention groups are often integrated into official policing frameworks (Schimkowsky, 2021a; Thompson and Gibbs, 2016). The systematic nature of the company-led manner improvement campaigns examined in this thesis – some of which are conducted with government support (see Chapter 4) – similarly highlights the uncertainty of the formal/informal divide. Due to this definitional ambiguity, and due to the focus narrow definitions of social control commonly place on institutional regulatory mechanisms targeting (semi-)criminal behaviour, such conceptualisations of social control are only of limited use in the context of this thesis. Let us thus consider alternative approaches to understanding social control.

‘Loose’ conceptualisations of social control understand the term as describing efforts to ‘ensure conformity to [...] societal norms’ (Goode, 2015, p. 7). Such a broad understanding of social control was common in early sociological work which discussed it as means of harmonious integration of individuals

into a normative social order (Meier, 1982). For example, Ross (1901) saw all fields of sociological inquiry – from art, to religion and law - as mechanisms of social control that '[hold] society together' (Deflem, 2015, p. 30; Meier, 1982, p. 41, 2019, p. 30). More recent manifestations of a loose understandings of social control have been inspired by Foucault's writings on the history of punishment (Foucault, 1995) and governmentality (Foucault, 1991, 2007). Examining historical transformations of punishment, Foucault (Foucault, 1995) observed the emergence of discipline as a form of societal power that does not inflict physical pain, but instead seeks to shape peoples' 'souls' and subjectivity. The rise of discipline as a mode of governance sees institutions establishing norms and inventing strategies that aim at ensuring people's compliance with them. Disciplinary strategies such as timetables or specific forms of architectural design 'apply constant but minimal pressure intended to produce habits of conformity' (Hutchinson and O'Malley, 2019, p. 71). In his later work, Foucault observed the emergence of governmentality as a modern 'art' of governance distinct from previous forms such as sovereignty or discipline (Hutchinson and O'Malley, 2019, pp. 63–65). Governmentality focuses not on the control of territories or subjects but seeks instead to 'govern' future risks that could affect state and population. Like in the case of discipline, the emergence of this mode of governance was tied to new ways of knowing the population (e.g. statistics) and new strategies of 'governmental intervention', such as those aimed at prevention (Hutchinson and O'Malley, 2019, p. 66).

While Foucault himself never explicitly engaged with the phrase social control, his work has been adapted by scholars investigating the agents, institutions and mechanisms of control through studies of governmentality (Deflem, 2015, p. 39; Hutchinson and O'Malley, 2019, pp. 69–70). Now a field of research in its own right, governmentality studies seeks to analyse the various governmental technologies employed in modern societies (Hutchinson and O'Malley, 2019, p. 67). Scholars in this field have advanced our understanding of the governance of society and everyday life through notions such as 'government at a distance' (Miller and Rose, 1990, p. 9) which outline how the workings of power are achieved through governmental technologies as a 'complex of mundane programmes, calculations, techniques, apparatuses, documents and procedures through which authorities seek to embody and give effect to government ambitions' (Rose and Miller, 2010, p. 273). Similarly, the notion of 'mundane governance' highlights the workings of regulation omnipresent in everyday life through a focus on the 'very unremarkable objects and technologies' that become the object of governmental concern in contemporary society (e.g. waste disposal, traffic; Woolgar and Neyland, 2013, p. 3) as well as its enactment through mundane objects and assemblages such as signs (Clark, 2021; Woolgar and Neyland, 2013, pp. 67–69, 174–175). A common theme in such studies of governmentality as a mode of power is the idea of self-regulation which works to enlist individuals into the aims of governing authorities (Innes, 2003; Rose, 1996). (Neo-)Foucauldian governmentality scholarship's contribution to the study of social control is thus threefold. First, its focus on self-management broadens the targets of regulatory strategies from deviants and criminals to the general population (Innes, 2003). Second, it decentres traditional organisations of social control (e.g. the state, police) in favour of a 'rhizomatic' image of control that emphasises the multiplicity of agents of control, the relationships between them, as well as the role of individuals themselves (Grattet, 2011, p. 196; Rose and Miller, 2010). Lastly, it facilitates an examination of material and immaterial objects and devices translating 'governmental rationalities and programmes into practical techniques that enable indirect rule or governing at a distance' such as through the inscription of behavioural guidelines, regulations, and information in the semiotic landscape (Merriman, 2005a, p. 238).

Inquiries into the regulation of everyday life epitomised by the notions of ‘governmentality’ and ‘mundane governance’ thus appear to provide a suitable starting point for examining manner improvement campaigns that target the general passenger population and are primarily led by corporate entities. However, as the following chapters will discuss, my empirical fieldwork with Japanese transport providers and creative professionals involved in manner improvement initiatives unequivocally showed that ‘social control’ and ‘regulation’ are *not* among the principal concerns driving the production and use of public transport manner posters. Aware of the risks of privileging etic assumptions (i.e. ‘the production of manner posters is about controlling passenger conduct’) over the emic understandings of the involved professionals, I largely forgo references to ‘social control’ in my analysis of the underlying rationale of manner improvement campaigns. Instead, I speak of the *management of everyday behaviours*. This decision is in line with the wider contemporary sociological literature, in which the term social control is no longer consistently used, and scholars instead utilise terms such as crime control, punishment, or policing⁶ (Deflem, 2015, p. 43). The linguistic preference for *management* rather than *control* is shared by writers such as Garon (1997) who argues that the term management better expresses the fact that regulatory initiatives often encourage the active participation of the population (Roth, 2012). Accordingly, it allows us to move beyond conceptualisations of power, regulation, and government that imply a dichotomy between *governing* elites and the wider *governed* society, and further point out overlaps between different kinds of actors (e.g. government, industry, civil society organisations, and individuals) involved in management efforts (Roth, 2012). Moreover, the use of the term management enables me to highlight that interventions in urban conduct are not necessarily driven by a strong regulatory will but can be tied to diverse other concerns. It allows me to demonstrate that, from the perspective of the individuals and organisations involved in the poster production, it is the ideal of customer service, rather than social control or another expression of disciplinary intent or regulatory will, that is the determining force behind manner improvement campaigns (see Chapter 6). Customer service will be introduced as a key concept in the final section of this chapter. First however, I will turn to two additional sets of terms: *semiotics, signs and signage*, and *mobilities and passengers*, as both are key to understanding the empirical case study of manner poster campaigns in urban mass transit environments.

2.5 Semiotics, signs, and signage

Manner posters are a form of visual communication that inscribes behavioural expectations into urban environments. They thus present a form of signage that can be visually analysed (see Chapter 7). This section will summarise key ideas in the field of semiotics, the discipline that is usually charged with inquiries into signs and signage. Building on this, it will introduce recent social semiotic thought that informed my analysis of the visual strategies employed in manner poster design.

2.5.1 Semiotics and the study of signs

Social semiotic studies of visual artifacts are indebted to semiotic studies of ‘signs’. The field of semiotics is commonly traced back to the work of two 19th century scholars, Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure and American philosopher Charles Sanders Peirce, who are the founding fathers of two analytical

⁶ Since the 2000s, investigations of social control have been largely replaced by inquiries into the ‘surveillance society’ (Deflem, 2019, p. 4; Lyon, 2002). While Foucault’s work, particularly his adaption of Bentham’s idea of the panopticon, has been a crucial influence in this field of study (Elmer, 2012), surveillance studies scholars increasingly endeavour to move beyond Foucault and the panopticon (Andrejevic, 2002; Hier, 2004, p. 543; Jiow and Morales, 2015; Larsson, 2017; Lyon, 2006; Murakami Wood, 2007).

traditions of the study of signs: semiology (Saussure) and semiotics⁷ (Peirce) (Chandler, 2017). What unites Saussure and Peirce's work is that both radically challenged common sense understandings of signs 'as something which stands for something else', thus questioning the established dyadic model of signs as consisting of a 'sign vehicle' (e.g. a word, symptom) and its referent (Chandler, 2017, p. 2).

Saussure understood signs as consisting of a 'signified' and 'signifier'. While this reproduces the dyadic structure of earlier sign models, the Saussurean sign does not consist of 'a thing and a name' but of a 'concept and an acoustic image' (Chandler, 2017, p. 13). Accordingly, Saussure's model is largely detached from the material world, and situated instead entirely on a psycho-linguistic plane (Chandler, 2017, p. 15). Saussure argues that the meaning of signs arises out of their relation to the wider language system (Chandler, 2017, pp. 17–19). In other words, meaning is not an integral and natural part of signs but the product of intralinguistic processes of differentiation: it emerges 'in relational patterns of likeness and contrast within a sign system' (Chandler, 2017, p. 21). Chandler (2017, p. 21) illustrates this through the example of marketing: advertisements do not position a product on the market in reference to the actual physical product, but rather in relation to competing brands. Similarly, according to Saussurean thought, a sign's significance is not based on (extralinguistic) reference to the material world but arises from (intralinguistic) reference to other parts of the language system (Chandler, 2017, pp. 21, 26). An example of this are the 'contrastive relationships' of binary sign-pairs: the 'red' light of a traffic light only comes to mean 'stop' when a green symbol is conceptualised as 'go' (Chandler, 2017, p. 22). This lack of an absolute sign value external to the semiotic system in Saussure's model undermines traditional conceptualisations of language as representation of an external reality (Chandler, 2017, p. 20).

Like Saussure, Peirce rejects the idea of signs as 'containers' of external and objective meaning (Chandler, 2017, pp. 29, 35). However, where Saussure proposed a dyadic model of signs, Peirce proposed a triadic model, which consists of the following three parts (Chandler, 2017, pp. 29–35):

- *object*: what is represented
- *representamen*: sign vehicle (e.g. word or image)
- *interpretant*: the meaning produced by the sign – *not* the individual interpreter, but a collective social activity

These three components are interlocked in a continuous and ongoing dynamic process of 'semiosis'; i.e. the interpretation of signs (Chandler, 2017; Metro-Roland, 2011, p. xi). Similar to Saussure who described 'signifier' and 'signified' as two sides of a sheet of paper, the three components identified by Peirce are indivisible and their relationship unalterable (Chandler, 2017). Accordingly, Peirce's triadic system cannot be transformed into multiple dyads and a direct relationship between object and interpretant (i.e. one that is unmediated by a representamen) is impossible (Chandler, 2017; Jappy, 2013, p. 6).

Peircean and Saussurean sign models further diverge in their consideration of the nature of individual sign components. While Saussure's 'signifier' and 'signified' are located on the psycholinguistic plane, Peirce's triadic model also accommodates extralinguistic objects. In other words, whereas Saussure's conceptualisation of signs is exclusively concerned with the intralinguistic dynamics of signs, Peirce's model is one of 'referential realism' that also engages with the material world (Chandler, 2017, p. 33).

⁷ Except for specific references to the Saussurean tradition, I will use the term semiotics throughout this thesis. This does not reflect a rejection of Saussurean thought, but rather common usage in contemporary scholarship which adapted the term semiotics for studies that draw on both Saussure and Peirce (Chandler, 2017).

This should not be misunderstood as implying direct access to an actual and objective external reality – human engagement with the world remains mediated by signs. However, it opens the conceptual model to the extralinguistic, material world in a way that Saussure's does not. Peirce's inclusion of an object referent can thus be credited for broadening the scope of applicability of semiotic analytical framework (Chandler, 2017, p. 37). This openness to the material world and the inclusion of semiotic systems beyond language positions Peircean thought as a potential suitable basis to study signs in real world contexts such as the cityscape (Metro-Roland, 2011, p. 4).

The study of signs has been further advanced by Roland Barthes (1972) who adapted Saussure's semiologic model for the study of myths in the society. The term 'myth' refers to a type of 'speech' that presents itself as natural while actually being 'an expression of a historically specific ideological vision of the world' (Allen, 2003, pp. 34–36). Examples of this can be found in discourses about wine as expressing a collective national identity or plastic as symbol of human dominance over nature (see Allen, 2003, p. 36). As seen through these examples, myth-making entails the assignment of universal values to cultural objects with specific histories. Turning 'culture into nature', myth thus fulfils an ideological function (Allen, 2003, p. 37). Barthes criticises this 'duplicitousness of myth' and sets out to expose their constructed nature as part of his wider critique of bourgeois culture (Allen, 2003, pp. 37–38, 52; Barthes, 1972, pp. 8, 142).

As evident from the above examples of wine and plastic, Barthes' concept of 'speech' is not limited to oral exchange, but includes various communication acts (Barthes, 1972, pp. 108–9). Like Peirce, whose triadic system also accommodates extralinguistic objects (see above), Barthes thus extends the focus of semiotic inquiry from language to the wider material world (Allen, 2003, pp. 39–41). His work placed a particular focus on images, thus laying the foundation for visual semiotics as a mode of scholarly inquiry (Aiello, 2019). Prime examples of this are Barthes' analysis of 'denotation' (the 'literal' meaning of what is depicted) and 'connotation' (the 'ideological' meaning images gain through cultural codes) as two levels of visual meaning, as well as the concepts of 'anchor' and 'relay' to describe relationship between image and texts (e.g. the meaning of images can be 'anchored' through accompanying text; Aiello, 2019, pp. 370–371).

While classical semiotic thought as advanced by Saussure, Peirce and Barthes has seen prominent adaption within the social sciences (e.g. Williamson, 1978), this thesis primarily draws on more recent developments in the field of semiotic theory, namely social semiotics and geosemiotics. The latter's advancement is accompanied by a shift from the abstract *sign* to physical *signage*, which is also taken up as an object of study in linguistic and semiotic landscape studies (see Chapter 3).

2.5.2 Social semiotics

The above outlined classical semiotic approaches are limited by their neglect of the social context of image production and reception (Aiello, 2019, p. 372). This shortcoming is addressed by social semiotic approaches to analysing visual meaning. Social semiotics explores the position of signs in society and everyday life (Randviir and Cobley, 2009). It recognises that all semiotic activity takes place in human communities and thus involves social processes of meaning-making (Foote and Azaryahu, 2009, p. 90; Randviir, 2009). Different from traditional semiotics, social semiotics views the relationship between sign components (i.e. signifier and signified) as motivated rather than arbitrary (Stein, 2009). Social semioticians understand sign production as a contextualised process that is inherently shaped by socio-cultural values, norms, and assumptions (Aiello, 2019). They seek to unpack the functional and purposive

signifying techniques and design choices made by creators of (visual) texts (Aiello, 2019, p. 372; Aiello and Parry, 2019, pp. 27–29).

Social semiotics is a vast field of study, the theoretic influences of which range from anthropology (e.g. structuralism) and sociology (e.g. social constructivism) to Marxism and pragmatism (Randviir and Cobley, 2009). This thesis adopts the social semiotic analytical framework developed by van Leeuwen (2005) and Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) for its visual analysis (see Chapter 7). Arguing that the term ‘sign’ is inadequate due to connotations of pre-given meaning unaffected by sign use, van Leeuwen (2005, p. 3) reconceptualises ‘signs’ as ‘semiotic resources’ to emphasise their indeterminate character and peoples’ active utilisation of them. Social semiotics thus becomes the study of semiotic resources, the way humans use and interpret them, as well as attempts to regulate their use (van Leeuwen, 2005, p. xi).

The framework developed by van Leeuwen (2005) allows analysis of semiotic rules and functions, discourse and style. While van Leeuwen (2005) highlights the flexibility of a social semiotic approach by drawing on examples ranging from office layouts to toy prams, his collaboration with Kress (Kress and van Leeuwen, 2006) focuses on visual materials. Their work provides one of the core references for the analysis of visual communication artefacts through a multimodal framework. Studies of multimodality emerged from Hallidayan linguistics’ attempt to expand the application of systematic functional linguistics (SFL) to non-linguistic modes of communication (e.g. image, sound) and study them as shaped by ‘grammatical rules’ (Machin, 2009, pp. 271–272). Kress and Leeuwen’s *Reading Images* is an attempt to formulate a ‘grammar of visual design’ that shows how visual elements in images and other visual artefacts come together to form ‘meaningful wholes’ (Kress and van Leeuwen, 2006, pp. vii, 1, 6). Rather than a rigorous application of SFL, their work is a loose adaption that also draws on scholars such as Barthes and Arnheim (Machin, 2009). Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) repeatedly emphasise that visual analysis cannot merely copy the tools and processes of linguistic analysis. Verbal and non-verbal sign systems have different affordances: while they might be able to communicate some meanings in a similar fashion, others they express differently from each other, and still others can only be expressed in a verbal or non-verbal mode (Kress and van Leeuwen, 2006, pp. 19, 31, 110).

Kress and van Leeuwen’s (2006) analytical framework is based around three ‘metafunctions’ which they adapted from communicative ‘metafunctions’ identified by the linguist Halliday (1985): ideational, interpersonal, and textual functions which facilitate the examination of representational, interactive, and compositional aspects of visual texts (Aiello, 2019; Aiello and Parry, 2019, p. 28; Kress and van Leeuwen, 2006, pp. 41–44). The first of these, the ideational metafunction, enables inquiries into the representational meaning of a visual, i.e. the actors, objects, and processes it depicts. Examining the narrative and conceptual structures of images, it helps visual scholars analyse how image participants – the actors and/or objects represented within a given visual artefact – relate to each other. Second, the interpersonal function allows us to consider the relationship between image participants and viewers: it enables us to ask how the image interacts with and engages viewers through specific design choices (e.g. the gaze of image participants or the employed ‘camera’ distance and angle). Finally, the third metafunction facilitates explorations of images’ compositional meaning. It places the analytical focus on images’ internal organisation by examining how visual elements are depicted, framed, and rendered as (more or less) salient within the image (Aiello, 2019, pp. 374–375; Kress and van Leeuwen, 2006, pp. 41–44). Placing the analytical focus on signifying techniques, a social semiotic framework thus facilitates a more detailed analysis than that afforded by classic visual semiotic thought (e.g. Barthes’ distinction between denotation and connotation; Aiello, 2019, p. 374). It seeks to understand the strategic use of

semiotic resources and signification processes to shape meaning potentials of visual texts (Aiello, 2019). This focus on visual techniques informed my visual analysis of manner posters (see Chapter 7; see also Chapter 4 for an in-depth discussion of my methodological approach).

2.5.3 Geosemiotics and signage

Another recent direction in the field of social semiotics that provides an apt analytical lens for examining public transport manner posters is Scollon and Scollon's (2003) notion of geosemiotics. Geosemiotics shifts the attention from the abstract sign to something that is materially situated in the world (Scollon and Scollon, 2003, p. viii). Their work provides a theoretical framework for the analysis not of abstract Saussurean signs but physical signs, such as in the form of public signage, paper notices, inscriptions and other texts that make up human environments (Scollon and Scollon, 2003, p. xi). As indicated by the term, spatial aspects are a fundamental component of *geosemiotic* analysis of written language use. The meaning and function of physical signage and other forms of 'discourses in place' always depends not only on the specific sign content, but also on its spatial context in a specific location in the material world (Scollon and Scollon, 2003, pp. 2, 23). It is the physical location of a sign that allows for a shift from 'abstract meaning potential' to 'real-world meaning' (Scollon and Scollon, 2003, p. viii). For example, a red traffic light might symbolise 'stop' when embedded in the physical scene of a street with road markings but would evoke only confusion when placed in an open field (Scollon and Scollon, 2003, p. viii). 'Out of place' signage risks losing its meaning and might even turn into a transgressive discourse (Mooney and Evans, 2015, p. 90). In their emphasis on spatial *indexicality* as meaning-making aspect of signage, Scollon and Scollon thus continue the analysis of sign relations initiated by Peirce. Signs also index wider discourses. For example, anti-smoking signage indexes anti-smoking laws and ordinances as well as the stigmatisation of smoking in a given society (Mooney and Evans, 2015, p. 91). Signage also frequently indexes the discourse or institution that authorised their placement (Scollon and Scollon, 2003, p. 205). Furthermore, Scollon and Scollon (2003, p. 135) advance our understanding of physical signage by emphasising its material conditions (e.g. medium of inscription, material base, age) as a further factor in the meaning-making processes they elicit in audiences. They thus provide a rich framework for the analysis of language in place that I draw on in my visual analysis of manner posters (Chapter 7). Social semiotic and geosemiotic approaches provide the thesis with a useful analytical toolkit for unpacking the design choices and considerations driving manner poster production (see Chapters 6 and 7).

2.6 Mobilities and passengers

Mobility is movement 'imbued with meaning and power' (Cresswell, 2006, p. 4). While 'simple' movement can be understood as a line between two points (A --- B) that might be described in terms of length, shape, or speed with which it is traversed, the notion of mobility instead allows us to ask how people experience the act of traversing this line, or how the line came to be in the first place (Cresswell, 2006). For example, while a focus on movement draws attention to the duration, speed, and reasons for a car journey, a mobility perspective might instead focus on the experience of being stuck in traffic, the social meanings of owning and being able to drive a car, or the labour practices enabled by commuting. In other words, mobility looks at movement as a meaningful, lived, and contextualised phenomenon which is productive of places and people (Cook, 2018). Since the 'mobility turn' in the early 2000s, social science research in disciplines ranging from anthropology, sociology and geography, to media and urban studies, has spotlighted the diverse ways in which (im)mobilities shape social life and organisation, and sought to move beyond static conceptions of social life and space (Adey, 2010; Adey *et al.*, 2014; Coates, 2017a; Cook, 2018; Sheller and Urry, 2006). Now a vibrant transdisciplinary field of scholarly inquiry, mobilities research

explores the socio-cultural, institutional, and historical context of diverse forms of movement and flows, the infrastructures that enable them, their material qualities, and the practices and experiences of mobile subjects (Adey *et al.*, 2014). Mobilities researchers study the social production of a wide array of forms of movement ranging from dance to air travel and the global circulation of goods.

This thesis focuses on mundane urban mobilities in the form of rail- and subway transit (Jensen *et al.*, 2020). It explores urban railway commutes and subway trips around the city as mundane mobilities that are 'enmeshed with the familiar worlds we inhabit [and constitute] part of the unreflective, habitual practice of everyday life' (Binnie *et al.*, 2007, p. 165). While mundane mobilities are often experienced as 'banal', 'routinized', and 'familiar' because of their quotidian and regular nature, their ordinary character can be disrupted through 'unforeseen occurrences and unfamiliar conjunctions' such as accidents, train cancellations (Binnie *et al.*, 2007, pp. 167–168), and passenger misconduct. This potential for disruption is heightened when subjects with varying cultural conventions, habits, and means of movement come together in the same mobility space. However, even potential disruptions of everyday mobilities are often 'woven back into the mundane' as mobile subjects become used to dealing with them (Binnie *et al.*, 2007, p. 168). A mobility studies lens thus allows us to frame the topic of this thesis as corporate attempts to shape mobility practices and skills (e.g. how to board a train; how to position oneself and one's belongings on the crowded and moving vehicle). In other words, manner posters can be understood as inscribing desirable ways of being mobile into the transport environment. Accordingly, the thesis is concerned with the mobile semiotics of transit etiquette as an element in the social construction of urban mobilities: the interrelated ways mobility situations are simultaneously 'staged' from above (i.e., through planning and design) and below (i.e. through their performance, embodiment and enactment by mobile subjects; Jensen, 2013, 2014).

The 'passenger' can be considered as one of the 'key figures' of mobility (see Salazar, 2017). The term refers to non-steering occupants of a moving transport vehicle and, by implying a limited degree of agency over timing, route, and pace of movement, can be contrasted with the subject position of the driver (Dant, 2014). As a way of interpreting 'mobile subjectivity', the passenger is an analytically productive figure that allows scholars to inquire into the experiences, knowledge, and relationships of transport users, as well as the way they are imagined, shaped, and regulated (Adey *et al.*, 2012; Bissell, Adey and Laurier, 2011). For example, scholars have highlighted the disparate transport experiences of different kinds of passengers: while legitimate passengers are increasingly shielded from undesirable sensations of passage through technological process and other interventions (Adey *et al.*, 2012, p. 184), the journeys of illegitimate passengers are often violent and perilous (Martin, 2011).

A focus on passengers also allows us to examine the active and inactive qualities of mobility practices. While passengers' agency might appear limited compared to that of the driver, becoming a passenger requires 'practical preparation' and 'the cultivation of [...] affective, immaterial habits and practices' (Adey *et al.*, 2012, p. 172). Travel on public transport is a socio-cultural practice that must account for technical, spatial, and sensory dimensions of a particular mode of transport (Schivelbusch, 2007), and is physically demanding and driven by 'affectual intensities' (Muñoz, 2020, p. 2). Studies have shown that becoming a passenger is an active process (Hernandez Bueno, 2021; Shilon and Shamir, 2016; Zaporozhets, 2014). For example, Shilon and Shamir (2016, p. 249) demonstrate that the subject position of the passenger is assembled through 'skilful coordination of body, luggage and documents' while on the move. They also emphasise the relational nature of this process, stressing that individuals become passengers through their engagement with transport company employees, machines, objects, scripts, and other passengers.

Scholarship has further shown that moving as a passenger requires specific literacies and skills (Shilon and Shamir, 2016). Public transport users' mobility skills include the ability to appropriately interact with the material transport environment, its infrastructure, and other people (Zaporozhets, 2014). For instance, in the case of train travel, passengers need not only to know where and how to board, but also make constant choices how to inhabit the space of the carriage (Watts, 2008), or how to (not) engage with their fellow passengers (albeit many of these skills are rooted in habit; see Bissell, 2014).

The learned character of mobility skills becomes evident in the context of migration. Movement through the city requires 'knowledge and practical skills' that are often taken for granted but need to be acquired through 'urban apprenticeship' by new arrivals in a city (Buhr, 2018, p. 339). An example of this is Doody's (2020) study of New Zealand migrants' adjustment to London's public transport system. During this, they not only acquired appropriate local urban mobility practices, but also developed a sensitivity towards behavioural norms and expectations. These newly acquired sensibilities might cause them to get annoyed at visitors to the city who breach mobility norms that the migrants themselves might have transgressed not long ago.

While transport providers might formally instruct passengers in mobility skills and literacy, they are primarily learned through imitation, inter-passenger learning, or transferring skills from other locations or areas of urban life (Zaporozhets, 2014). The notion of 'passenger' (Laurier *et al.*, 2008) as an active and relational process and competency that is evident from this scholarship highlights that being a passenger comes with responsibilities and commitments (Adey *et al.*, 2012, p. 172). The passenger misbehaviour that is targeted by the manner improvement initiatives analysed in this thesis can thus be understood as disregard for such responsibilities, and as a deviation from a passenger code of conduct. This highlights that, much like driving (Lumsden, 2015; Merriman, 2006; Nuhrat, 2020; Roth, 2019), passengering can have an ethical dimension (Lee, 2021). In other words, passenger misbehaviour can disrupt the public order of shared urban transport environments.

2.7 Customers and customer service

While the above section discussed public transport users as passengers, this section will introduce the figure of the 'customer' as an alternative way of framing mobile subjects. Customers can be defined as the 'actual or intended purchaser[s]' of a product or service (Law, 2016). The notion of the customer is dominant in contemporary management discourses and practices, with organisations adopting a philosophy of customer orientation. The customer is placed at the centre of organisational practices and reasoning. Put differently, internal work processes are designed around corporate imaginings of customers (Gay and Salaman, 1992). Not only businesses, but also public sector institutions such as hospitals or universities increasingly subscribe to 'the cult(ure) of the customer' (Gay and Salaman, 1992). Public transport providers are no exception and increasingly speak of and address their users not as passengers, but as customers. While the reference group – public transport users – is the same, it indicates a shift in focus from subjects engaged in mobility practices to individuals who pay for a service, and who need to be gained and retained. In this thesis, I will speak of both 'passengers' and 'customers' to highlight the bifurcating dimensions of how railway companies imagine and address public transport users.

One manifestation of customer orientation is the emphasis organisations place on customer service. Including diverse provisions ranging from after-sales service to free dial hotlines, customer service refers to arrangements made by organisations to increase the appeal of their products (Law, 2016). Accordingly, 'good' customer service is seen by companies as an integral component of business plans and a

competitive advantage (Groth *et al.*, 2019). Although there is no shortage of models designed to measure companies' customer service practices, the experience of customer service is ultimately a matter of customers' subjective perception of 'service interactions', i.e. moments in which company and customer come together (Groth *et al.*, 2019). In other words, the term service experience describes customers' 'cognitive and affective response to any direct or indirect contact with [a] company or its resources' (Olsson *et al.*, 2012, p. 413).

Service quality has emerged as an important topic in industry and academic conversations about public transport (Molander *et al.*, 2012; de Oña and de Oña, 2015). Increasing public transport ridership through high service quality is viewed as key to creating sustainable cities and mobility habits (de Oña and de Oña, 2015). As expression of corporate market orientation, it is further essential for addressing challenges of deregulation and increased competition in the transport sector (Molander *et al.*, 2012). Public transport organisations, professionals, and researchers increasingly recognise the importance of providing 'superior customer value' through 'designing the system and delivering the service from the traveller's point of view', such as by gathering information about customer needs and responding accordingly (Molander *et al.*, 2012, pp. 155–156). The customer experience on public transport depends on the interplay of a multitude of factors, ranging from cost, reliability, service frequency, speed, safety, and access to vehicle cleanliness and employee behaviour and attitude (Hutchinson, 2009; Mouwen, 2015). Corporate concern for passenger comfort is another manifestation of companies' focus on customer experience. While such concern is perhaps most evident from provisions made for 'First Class' and other privileged passenger categories (Bissell, 2020), it is also apparent from transport providers' efforts to protect passenger bodies from the potential discomforts and anxieties caused by vehicular movement (Martin, 2011; Virilio, 2008), such as by shielding passengers from the disquieting and inhospitable sensations of air travel (Budd, 2011). Passenger comfort is also an important consideration during the design of transport spaces and environment⁸ (Bissell, 2020). However, passenger comfort is not simply the result of pleasant or amiable vehicle design (e.g. high padded velour seats; see Jain, 2011), but rather a complex physiological and psychological state that is influenced by a variety of factors (Bissell, 2008; Lin, 2020b). Accordingly, transport companies' comfort provision efforts are not limited to hardware and infrastructural design but may extend to other service interventions. For example, Lin (2020b) describes efforts by Singapore Airlines to shape frontline staff to embody ideals of hospitality, extending to policing their physical appearance. Company initiatives should thus be understood as efforts to pre-empt and shape (dis)comfort by trying to 'encourage, steer, and (hopefully) enable particular affects to take hold among customers' (Lin, 2020b, p. 164). Notably, customers' public transport experience can also be negatively affected by the behaviour of other passengers (Hutchinson, 2009). Co-passengers' failure to adhere to behavioural expectations can be a cause of passenger annoyance as well as bodily and emotional discomfort (Jain, 2011). It is service innovations targeting this aspect of customer experience that this thesis focuses on (for more on the relation between passenger comfort and misconduct, see Sections 3.2.1 and 3.2.2 in the following chapter).

Most studies on customer service stem from the fields of business, management, and marketing research. However, customer service has also received the attention of sociologists. Within sociology, most studies of the topic have been conducted in the context of scholarship on work and employment. A major focus

⁸ Critical mobilities scholarship has cautioned against understandings of passenger comfort as a 'predictable effect' of a purposefully designed transport environment, emphasising that what is experienced as (un)comfortable varies from commuter to commuter (Bissell, 2020, pp. 27, 36).

within this research is the emotional labour rendered by service workers (Groth *et al.*, 2019; Wharton, 2009). Originally coined by Hochschild (2012), the term 'emotional labour' refers to workers' active effort to align their own feelings with organisationally defined rules (Wharton, 2009). Emotional labour is a requirement of most service work, as customers and employers alike view frontline workers' 'polite' and/or 'friendly' attitude as a key criteria of 'good' customer service.

While my original idea was to examine manner improvement campaigns from the perspective of social control (see above), empirical fieldwork with railway companies revealed the concept and ideal of customer service as key to understanding corporate etiquette initiatives. Manner improvement campaigns are frequently framed as response to customer concerns and effort to improve service quality. As will be discussed in Chapters 6 and 7, corporate consideration of customer sensibilities is also a significant influence on the design of manner posters. While classifying such design decisions as emotional labour would be stretching the concept's definition, posters' production process nonetheless reflects similar corporate concerns as those driving emotional labour. Both the creative process of poster production and the emotional labour of service workers is shaped by the demands of company-customer interaction such as the perceived requirement to show deference to customers (Wharton, 2009). Similarly, the concentrated design effort to avoid offending customer sensibilities that will be discussed in Chapters 6 and 7 is in line with company efforts to improve the service skills of frontline staff in order to ward off customer dissatisfaction, offense, and complaints about 'inappropriate' employee conduct and attitude. In other words, to understand the phenomenon of manner posters, we need to pay attention to its status as a means of company-customer communication. Just like customer service and other frontline staff are perceived by companies as 'face of the organisation' (Groth *et al.*, 2019, p. 98), official posters carrying the company name and logo effectively represent companies. Their production and deployment thus requires the utmost care.

The above discussion of the figure of the customer also provides us with another way of framing the passenger misconduct we previously discussed as routine incivilities: customer deviance. Also referred to as 'consumer misbehaviour', 'dysfunctional customer behaviour' or 'jaycustomer behaviour', customer deviance can be defined as 'behavioural acts by consumers which violate the generally accepted norms of conduct in consumption situations, and disrupt the order expected in such situations' (Fullerton and Punj, 1997, p. 336). While this definition maintains the focus on norm transgression dominant in the sociology of deviance, it is also possible to take a different definitional approach (Gursoy, Cai and Anaya, 2017). Harris and Reynolds (2004, p. 154) define customer misbehaviour as 'actions by customers who intentionally or unintentionally [...] act in a manner that [...] disrupts otherwise functional service encounters'. In other words, the focus is placed on the disruption of service experiences rather than the transgression of underlying norms and rules governing social encounters and behaviour in public (Gursoy, Cai and Anaya, 2017). Accordingly, customer misbehaviour can encompass a vast array of behaviours ranging from vandalism to 'outlandish demands' which slow down the overall service provision by demanding high levels of effort from frontline staff (Gursoy, Cai and Anaya, 2017, pp. 2351–2352). While the majority of research in this area focuses on the negative effects customer misbehaviour can have on companies, their assets and employees (e.g. research on shoplifting and verbal abuse of frontline staff; see Aslan and Kozak, 2012; Cox, Cox and Moschis, 1990; Harris and Reynolds, 2004), there is thus also a formidable body of research which positions by-standing customers as another important victim of customer deviance (Ang and Koslow, 2012, p. 197; Gursoy, Cai and Anaya, 2017; Huang, Lin and Wen, 2010). For example, customers might be irritated, annoyed, or bothered by a rowdy group of fellow

restaurant-goers or a fellow shopper with poor body hygiene (Gursoy, Cai and Anaya, 2017, p. 2353). Even minor misbehaviours such as queue jumping may cause consumers indignation, thus again illustrating that the majority of 'incivilities' individuals encounter is highly mundane and consists of minor breaches of behavioural expectations rather than severe, (semi-)criminal transgressions.

Customers often blame the host business/organisation for negative experiences with fellow consumers as they expect to protect them while in the shared consumption space (Fullerton and Punj, 1998, p. 413). Accordingly, the prevention and neutralisation of customer misconduct is an important task for managers seeking to avoid customer dissatisfaction (Gursoy, Cai and Anaya, 2017). However, the regulation of customer misbehaviour is no easy undertaking (Dootson *et al.*, 2017). Preventive and intervening measures such as deploying prohibition signage, CCTV cameras, or security guards, can backfire as they might alienate or antagonise honest customers (Ang and Koslow, 2012, p. 200). Corporate responses to customer deviance are further complicated by the dominance of the business paradigm of 'customer sovereignty' (Ang and Koslow, 2012, p. 186). The notion that 'the customer is always right' is highly influential in marketing and management discourse, and believed by business practitioners to be key to achieving quality customer service, customer satisfaction and customer loyalty (Ang and Koslow, 2012, p. 186). The phenomenon of customer deviance is thus sociologically interesting as it challenges implicit norms and role expectations of the consumer society (Fullerton and Punj, 1997). Furthermore, situations of customer deviance are also of interest to social scientists because of the complex power dynamics involved. While the political implications of defining deviance mean there is a tendency to portray individuals and groups with low social standing as deviant, in the case of customer deviance the misbehaving subject is in a position that demands respect (Aslan and Kozak, 2012, p. 684). Frontline staff who encounter customer misbehaviour are faced with a dilemma: while they should intervene in misbehaviour, the basic demands of customer-employee interaction require them to behave courteously (Ang and Koslow, 2012, p. 186). We will return to this fundamental challenge in the regulation of customer deviance when inquiring into the rationale of manner improvement campaigns in Chapters 5 to 7.

This chapter introduced readers to seven sets of key terms and concepts which I will refer to throughout the thesis. Building on the above introduction of the analytical vocabulary, the following chapter will provide an overview of studies relating to urban misconduct and its regulation, mobilities and misconduct, signage in urban space, and Japanese cities and public transport, with a focus on empirical scholarship.

Chapter 3 Literature review

The previous chapter familiarised readers with the analytical vocabulary and theoretical background of the thesis by introducing key terms and concepts. The present chapter will build on this through an in-depth review of extant literature on the topics explored in this thesis, focusing on empirical scholarship. As a sociological study of poster-driven corporate initiatives seeking to shape passenger conduct on public transport in Japan, this research is situated at the intersection of four loosely defined bodies of literature, which I will discuss in turn: 1) urban misconduct and its regulation, 2) misconduct in public transport contexts, 3) signage in urban environments, and 4) urban mobilities in Japan. The chapter begins with an overview of scholarship on incivilities and their regulation in cities, before zooming in on studies of mundane misconduct and its management in the context of mobility practices and environments. This is followed by a discussion of scholarly accounts of signage and their role in the production of urban space, as well as a review of scholarship on public transport in Japanese cities. The structure of the chapter thus gradually moves us closer to the empirical case study, with a discussion of prior research on etiquette posters initiatives on Japanese public transport, as well as the thesis' contribution to the literature located towards the end of the chapter.

3.1 Urban misconduct and its regulation

This section will discuss scholarship that examines behaviours deemed problematic in urban public environments and the way they are regulated and managed by city authorities and other stakeholders. Note that, for now, we will skip studies focusing on public transport spaces and passenger behaviour as these will be examined in-depth in Section 3.2.

3.1.1 Urban misbehaviour

While the overwhelming majority of scholarship on urban misconduct and deviance spotlights its (semi-)criminal or criminogenic manifestations (see Chapter 2), this thesis follows Philips and Smith's (2003, 2006; Smith, Phillips and King, 2010) call for sociological engagement with 'routine' and 'everyday' incivilities: 'minor deviant acts that are simply inconsiderate or rude' (Phillips and Smith, 2003, p. 85). This involves redirecting the sociological gaze from severe (and usually illegal) forms of urban deviance that cause fear and harm to everyday encounters with inconsiderate and inappropriate behaviour that instead prompts annoyance, anger, or apathy. Furthermore, it requires shifting the spatial focus of deviance research from disadvantaged residential areas and city centres to quotidian utilitarian spaces such as supermarkets and public transport environments (Smith, Phillips and King, 2010; see also Section 1.3). The following paragraphs will introduce research in this vein, starting with Smith *et al.*'s own work.

Based on a large-scale survey with Australian residents, Smith *et al.*'s work provides an in-depth analysis of the patterns of rude and uncivil behaviour in everyday life. Smith and his colleagues (2010, p. 11) argue that incivility is a subjective experience and thus presents a highly malleable analytical category encompassing 'whatever is taken as offensive, impolite or crude' by the involved individuals. Following this definition, mundane misconduct can be broken down into three essential components: 1) an event that is interpreted as uncivil, 2) an (accidental or deliberate) offender, and 3) a self-described victim. Regardless of the elastic character of everyday incivility, it is possible to identify patterns in its occurrence and experience. The vast majority (61.2 per cent) of the offenses reported in the survey administered by Smith and his fellow researchers described behaviours relating to movement and space management such as invasion of personal space, having one's path blocked, or being pushed in front of. This was followed

by reports of encounters involving inappropriate language (14.6 per cent), bodily decorum (13.9 per cent), and intrusive sounds (10.4 per cent). Notably, the majority of these occurrences was not perceived as a deliberate offense by survey participants, but rather as a collateral outcome of egoistic or insensitive behaviour. Furthermore, the study found that the vast majority (70.8 per cent) of incivilities reported by participants were encountered in the process of getting somewhere. Only around one-third of occurrences (29.2 per cent) took place at 'destinations' of everyday life such as restaurants and supermarkets. We will return to this finding of their study in Section 3.2 when inquiring into the connection between mobility practices and misconduct.

Despite popular media discourses of unruly teenagers harassing senior citizens, Smith and his colleagues point out that incivility cannot be easily explained through conventional theories about offenders' (or victims') demographic characteristics, personalities, or cultural backgrounds. In fact, their survey found that a large share of offenders are described by victims as 'respectable-looking' and middle-aged (Smith, Phillips and King, 2010, p. 31). Victim demographics are also diverse (Smith, Phillips and King, 2010, p. 87). Rather than specific demographic attributes, the principal driving force behind the occurrence and experience of incivilities in everyday life can be found in situational risk configurations. Incivility is the 'product of our mundane trajectories through public environments' and is likely to occur where there is 'a greater density of human interaction' (Smith, Phillips and King, 2010, pp. 41–44). In other words, routine incivilities are tied to the rhythms of urban life. Rude encounters are facilitated by situations and moments of everyday life that bring strangers together (e.g. lunch break, evening rush hour) and the probability of experiencing incivility corresponds to the time spent in public spaces and situations. Accordingly, some people are more likely to encounter rude strangers than others (e.g. compare the daily routine of working professionals with that retired individuals).

While Smith *et al.*'s (2010) call to redirect the focus of incivilities research to mundane misbehaviour has not yet led to a major shift in sociological attention, it is nonetheless possible to identify a nascent body of social science research examining minor breaches of the urban public order. For instance, Clarke (2019) follows Smith and his collaborators by examining the governance of mundane infractions of the urban order: his work examines local authorities' responses to minor transgressions such as unkempt yards or inconsiderate car parking practices that are not perpetrated by marginalised urban subjects (as in the case of much of 'traditional' deviance research) but citizens from various socio-economic and educational backgrounds. Similarly, Wiesel and Freestone (2019) discuss mundane forms of misconduct such as skipping a queue as a potential subversions of the urban public order. The study of everyday incivility has also been continued by Smith and King (2013) themselves in their exploration of rude and inconsiderate driving practices.

Sensory and spatial transgressions are another focus of research on banal disruptions of the urban order. A strong example of scholarship in this vein can be found in the early work of British human geographer Tim Cresswell. Cresswell (1996, pp. 4, 25) takes up Douglas' analysis of dirt as something that is 'out of place' (see Section 2.3) to inquire into the role place plays in the construction of behavioural norms and deviance. Places are used 'to structure a normative landscape' and transmit ideas of right and wrong, and are thus engaged in the construction of ideological values in a given society (Cresswell, 1996, p. 8). Reiterating Douglas' analysis that perceptions of disorder depend on beliefs in a classificatory system of order, Cresswell (1996, pp. 149–150) analyses reactions to 'out of place' things and persons to pinpoint dominant understandings of places in form of the 'normal'. His work further emphasises the role of power in defining spatial deviances. Places are subject to discourses that seek to maintain 'normative

geographies' and reign in any spatial transgressions that threaten to subvert it, warding off the dangers matter and bodies out of place pose to the existing order (Cresswell, 1996, pp. 9, 60).

The work of Douglas and Cresswell provides a theoretical foundation for studies of various sensory and embodied transgressions of normative spatial and social orders. For example, Tan (2013) demonstrates that, in Singapore, smoking in public is perceived as a 'sensorially transgressive' practice that offends and disgusts. Similarly, Dennis (2016) discusses smoke as polluting not only the lungs of the smoker and those around them, but also clothes, skin, or furniture. Smoking is deviant not just as an in situ act, but smoke lingers and taints people or places long after the activity has ceased. Sharing this focus on sensory transgressions, studies by researchers such as Pennycook and Otsuji (2015) and Rhys-Taylor (2017) have analysed concerns surrounding the smell of certain (e.g. 'ethnic') foods in urban and other (semi-)public environments, and highlighted their association with social and racial hierarchies. Finally, scholars have inquired into sources of 'aural discomfort' in urban space, such as behaviours that cause noise nuisances (Shantz, Kearns and Collins, 2008).

Banal breaches of the public and interaction order are also frequently discussed in writings on public transport environments and passenger practices, which will be explored in-depth in Section 3.2. First however, I will introduce scholarship on the regulation and management of incivilities and disorder in cities.

3.1.2 The management and regulation of urban misconduct

Cities have long been central to studies of social control. Sociological interest in the notion of social control can be traced back to a period of rapid urbanisation experienced by Western societies in the early years of the history of sociology as an academic discipline. Early sociologists shared then-popular worries that urbanisation undermined the 'traditional' social order and caused social problems (Meier, 1982, p. 37f). Primary groups, central to village life, were believed to be a wellspring of social order that was absent in cities and needed to be replaced by new means of regulation (Meier, 1982, p. 39).

Cities have retained their central position in sociological studies of social regulation to this day. Contemporary thinkers attest that the atmospheres of insecurity and desires for control shaping modern societies manifest themselves most evidently in urban spaces (Beck, 1992; Deleuze, 1992; Garland, 2002; Rose, 1996). Political and academic discourse positions the city as at permanent risk of falling victim to disorder and as a space that must be secured accordingly (Coaffee, Wood and Rogers, 2009). Efforts at guarding the city are described in an extensive body of scholarship on processes of urban control. Next to conventional means of maintaining order in the city such as policing (Fassin, 2013; Yarwood, 2007), surveillance technologies (Coleman, 2004; Norris and Armstrong, 2010), and informal control in communities (Duneier, 1999; Foster, 1995; Jacobs, 1991; Mele, 2017), scholars have analysed a broad array of interlinking strategies of urban control. These include (para-)legal means such municipal laws and anti-social behaviour orders (Beckett and Herbert, 2008, 2010; Burney, 2009; Flint and Nixon, 2006; Millie, 2009), private security services (Loader, 1999; Neocleous, 2007; Polak-Rottmann, 2018; Pow, 2013), and promoting citizen vigilance (Larsson, 2017). In the form of gated communities and defensive architecture (Davis, 1990; McCann, 2009; Ruppert, 2006), gentrification (Persak and Di Ronco, 2018), and privatisation of spaces that limit supposedly public places to 'appropriate' (i.e. spending) individuals (Mitchell, 1995; Zukin, 1998), even cities' layout and material infrastructure has been recognised as a regulatory medium. Importantly, these regulatory strategies are not exclusively driven by governmental authorities, but also

involve community and commercial bodies and are advanced in public-private partnerships (Bullock, 2014; Kennelly and Watt, 2011; Larsson, 2017).

The above described expansion and intensification of urban control mechanisms is part of a wider culture of control characterised by a re-emergence of punitive sanctions, an expanding infrastructure of crime prevention and community safety, and emphasis on risk and danger (Garland, 2002). The imprint new regulatory strategies are leaving on cities has been conceptualised as 'fortress urbanism' (Davis, 1990) or 'revanchist urbanism' (Smith, 1996), and its effect on (Western) cities is well documented (Minton, 2009; Ruppert, 2006). Far from being exclusively concerned with protecting the city against crime, these strategies are linked to attempts to create 'desirable' cities that are attractive to investors, tourists, and middle-class residents. Desires to create 'beautiful' and 'safe' spaces translate into efforts to 'sanitise' urban space. Often, this takes the form of exclusionary practices that displace 'disorder' and 'undesirables' from city centres (Cook and Whowell, 2011; Rogers and Coaffee, 2005; Shantz, Kearns and Collins, 2008, p. 52).

While studies of social control in contemporary cities recognise the employment of increasingly diverse regulatory technologies, they largely share the earlier identified blind spots of the wider incivilities literature. Scholars studying the workings of urban control predominately focus on regulatory interventions targeting criminal and criminogenic behaviours (Smith, Phillips and King, 2010). As this thesis aims to spotlight efforts to manage minor transgressions of behavioural expectations that are often neglected in the wider literature, it is again the work of Smith and his colleagues that presents a valuable starting point. Smith *et al.* (2010, pp. 162–187) distinguish between five approaches to addressing inappropriate and inconsiderate conduct in everyday urban life: self-help, legislation, diversion, education, and design. Each of these will be discussed in turn, and I will refer back to them sporadically throughout the chapter to classify regulatory approaches discussed in the wider literature.

The first category, self-help, describes individual attempts at tackling incivility by 'dealing with' rude strangers personally or changing one's routine (e.g. avoiding certain locales and behaviours; Smith, Phillips and King, 2010, p. 163ff). For example, victims of uncivil behaviour may choose to communicate their disapproval through (para)-linguistic means such as sighs, or choose to avoid late-night buses. However, such an approach is not without its problems. Avoiding 'risky' behaviours or locales means giving up personal liberties. Furthermore, the approach also has practical limits as encounters with rude strangers and norm transgressions are generally unpredictable. Finally, Smith *et al.*'s (2010) study showed that victims of uncivil behaviour often hesitate to engage in confrontational strategies; ignoring the offense or attempting to exit the situation are much more common behaviours.

The second category of legislation refers to (para-)legal endeavours that facilitate official interventions (e.g. fining, ticketing offenders; Smith, Phillips and King, 2010, p. 167ff). However, legal interventions can be challenging to implement. For example, they might require processes for impartially evaluating the highly subjective experiences that rude or inappropriate encounters present. Furthermore, the effective policing of incivilities would require substantial funds that might be required for different, more pressing issues. Aside from such practical problems, there are also concerns that the legal regulation of mundane micro-transgressions that are usually governed by social norms, customs, and informal social control would constitute an overreach by the state.

Distraction, the third regulatory strategy identified by Smith and his colleagues (2010, pp. 162, 170ff) describes efforts to 'distract, re-route, or otherwise take out of circulation potentially incivil people'. This

may involve a careful management of urban 'time-space dynamics' (Smith, Phillips and King, 2010, p. 163) such as by directing fans of different football clubs into opposing directions after a match to avoid conflict or staggering school closing times to prevent streets filling up with excited teenagers. Alternatively, a distraction approach may mean changing the atmosphere of a certain locale (e.g. by playing classical music) or shifting its centre of attention (e.g. by hiring performers). Smith *et al.* (2010) see potential in such an approach. Diversion and distraction are 'less confrontational and constitutionally problematic' than legal interventions, and appropriately address incivilities and other everyday breaches of the urban order as outcomes of specific situations (Smith, Phillips and King, 2010, p. 170). However, distraction-based approaches are far from perfect. Not only do they usually require a clearly defined target group and location, but they also possess discriminatory potential (e.g. playing high frequency sounds that affect *all* young people).

The fourth regulatory strategy identified by Smith *et al.* (2010, p. 173ff) is that of education. Education-based attempts to manage misconduct consist of efforts to convey social norms governing behaviour in public (Smith, Phillips and King, 2010, p. 163). Such regulatory efforts might take a cognitive or a moralistic approach, such as by seeking to directly convey behavioural guidelines, or make audiences ashamed of their (supposedly) poor behaviour. The effectiveness of educational campaigns is up for debate. In particular, there is scepticism regarding the suitability of education-based strategies that could be perceived as 'preaching' or 'blaming' by audiences (Smith, Phillips and King, 2010, p. 174). We will return to this issue later in this thesis (Sections 7.4 and 9.2.1).

Design, the final regulatory strategy Smith and his collaborators (2010, p. 176ff) identified, refers to efforts to minimise the likelihood of uncivil behaviour through purposive manipulation of the urban environment such as by creating spaces that are conducive to low stress levels and smooth navigation and movement. In other words, urban authorities and stakeholders should seek to

'[...] create an environment in which well-meaning people can act without annoying others. Spaces and places need to be thought out so that tempers do not snap, people do not collide, those with baggage can get out of the way or are somewhere else, interpersonal space is maintained and behavioural externalities, such as smoking or talking on mobile phones, do not bother other people.' (Smith, Phillips and King, 2010, p. 179)

Smith *et al.* (2010, p. 179) argue that inspiration for such an urban design could be taken from theme parks⁹ which generally endeavour to reduce the stress levels in crowded spaces by providing distractions in areas where people are likely to queue and wait, as well as providing ample lavatories and free water fountains. Interestingly, they also identify signage as another essential component of incivility-adverse environments. Clearly displaying relevant information in public spaces (e.g. wayfinding information, departure times) can help reduce the anxiety of individuals moving through or using the space, thus facilitating a relaxed atmosphere and crowd dynamics. The authors further argue that signage can 'head off' problems caused by misconduct by clarifying behavioural expectations (Smith, Phillips and King, 2010, pp. 184–185).

⁹ Smith and his colleagues (2010, pp. 179–180) are aware of criticisms that social scientists have directed at theme parks such as Disney Land (e.g. insidiously moulding human behaviour), but argue that 'well-designed civic spaces' do not necessarily lead to the creation of consumerist dupes.

Design approaches are founded on the belief that the urban layout and infrastructure influence informal social control mechanisms and the occurrence of incivility. They are thus similar to distraction and diversion techniques in that they tackle incivilities as products of specific situations. However, while distraction approaches usually involve the temporary manipulation of urban space, design approaches present permanent interventions in city infrastructure. The underlying rationale of design approaches is further in line with popular situational crime prevention approaches that seek to ‘design out’ crime by reducing the crime ‘affordances’ of urban spaces through manipulation of the environment (i.e. ‘Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design’, often abbreviated as CPTED; Crawford and Evans, 2012; Schimkowsky, 2021a). Notably, such approaches have frequently been criticised for creating ‘dystopian and prison-like’ urban spaces that ‘increase fear of crime and decrease civic amenity’ (Smith, Phillips and King, 2010, pp. 177–178). Smith and his collaborators contend that urban stakeholders seeking to reduce incivilities through design approaches should learn from such criticisms by aiming for design solutions that do not negatively impact the liveability of a city: what is required are ‘aesthetic surfaces that promote relaxed behaviour and signal civilisation’ (Smith, Phillips and King, 2010, p. 178).

Contemporary efforts to manage and influence citizen conduct often involve design approaches. In cities, ‘undesirable’ urban subjects (e.g. the homeless) are often forcefully ‘moved along’ through design interventions such as metal spikes in doorways, automatic water sprinklers in parks, various forms of ‘bum-proof’ benches, and other examples of a hostile urban environment that prevent ‘illicit’ lingering and have received similar criticism as CPTED approaches (Jensen, 2019). Since the mid-1990s, governmental authorities have also adapted ‘nudging’ as a means of shaping individual and public behaviour. Shaping peoples’ ‘choice architecture’ by changing default options or ‘designing in’ the preferred behaviour, nudging presents an innovative strategy of leading citizens towards desirable conduct in everyday life (Chriss, 2016). Notably, nudging approaches are not limited to the adjustment of the built environment, but also include changing the design of regulations, systems, and (consumer) products (e.g. encouraging recycling by making recycling bins bigger than those for general waste).

Authors have also frequently observed the use of education-based approaches to the regulation and management of everyday incivilities. An example of this is research on so-called ‘civilising offensives’. First coined by Dutch researchers in the late 1970s to describe 19th century bourgeois efforts to improve the life and conduct of the ‘lower classes’, the term civilising offensive has since developed into an analytical concept that is used to describe systematic efforts by powerful groups to educate ‘problematic’ and marginalised populations in desirable habits (Flint, Kruithof and Powell, 2015; Powell, 2007, 2013) and reminds us of the moral enterprise described by Becker (1973; see also Chapter 2). While the terminology appears to invoke Elias’ *The Civilizing Process*, early scholars working on the topic primarily drew not on the German-British sociologist, but U.S.-historian Christopher Lasch’s (1977) analysis of ‘forces of organized virtue’ in the context of the emergence of behavioural rules in Victorian England: the moral enterprise of educators, bureaucrats, doctors, and feminists to impose ‘bourgeois domesticity’ upon society (Kruithof, 2015; de Regt, 2015). Elias’ work, however, was soon integrated into the concept, even though there exist some tensions between the notions of civilising *process* and civilising *offensive*. While Elias does mention organised endeavours to educate marginalised classes (e.g. by the church), these are not discussed in-depth, and are not presented as integral components of his theoretical framework (de Regt, 2015). In fact, Elias’ idea of the civilising process significantly diverges from the notion of the civilising offensive. While the former describes a blind and unplanned process that is driven by sociogenic and psychogenic changes (see Chapter 2), the latter refers to deliberate efforts to ‘correct’ or ‘improve’ the

conduct and cultural practices of marginal groups that are seen as in need of education – or threatening the established social order (Powell, 2007, 2013; de Regt, 2015). Furthermore, whereas the civilising process works through mechanisms of distinction and imitation and is closely tied to unequal social structures, civilising offensives can be argued to reduce inequality by integrating ‘lower groups in the culture of the higher strata’ (de Regt, 2015, n.p.). However, civilising process and civilising offensive are not necessarily irreconcilable concepts. De Regt (2015, n.p.) argues that even though the civilising process ‘as a whole’ might be unplanned, this does not necessarily mean that privileged and powerful social groups do not attempt to steer the conduct of marginalised classes into a specific direction. Similarly, distinction and incorporation processes are not fundamentally incompatible: integrating the marginalised social groups into the culture of the privileged and powerful classes does not automatically erase inequality.

The notion of the civilising offensive has been employed for the discussion of a diverse array of topics ranging from Roma travellers (Powell, 2007) to residential childcare policies (Vertigans, 2015) or policies of the Thatcher government (Clement 2015). Although scholars have primarily drawn on the term to discuss government initiatives targeting marginalised groups, they have also found that civilising offensives can be conducted internally, driven by the ‘respectable’ strata of a certain group (van Ginkel, 1996). Notably, the concept of the civilising offensive has primarily found application in studies of Western societies. An exception to this is Zhang and McGhee’s (2021) research on ‘moral clinics’ that target the ‘uncivil’ behaviour of rural migrants in Chinese cities, and Zhang’s (2020) study of ‘moral review committees’ that address undesirable conduct related to various aspects of everyday life in rural China, such as breaches of norms of filial piety or issues relating to public hygiene.

Apart from scholarship that makes explicit use of the notion of the civilising offensive, there exists a diverse body of scholarship that explores campaigns and initiatives eliciting ‘appropriate’ conduct in more varied geographical concepts. For example, campaigns that encourage manners or hygiene have been observed in East Asian nations such as China (Bach, 2010; de Kloet, Chong and Landsberger, 2011; Landsberger, 2001; Nguyen, 2012; Tomba, 2009), Singapore (Lazar, 2003, 2010; Yeo and Tupas, 2018) and Japan (Garon, 1997). Such initiatives may be driven by preparations for mega-events and the will to project the best possible image of the nation to the outside world (Garon, 1997; de Kloet, Chong and Landsberger, 2011), or by the perceived need to introduce urban dwellers to new forms of infrastructure (Butcher, 2011; Ureta, 2012). Alternatively, campaigns may be motivated by business interests, such as efforts by the Japanese tobacco industry to teach ‘smoking manners’ in order to avoid formal regulation (Kashiwabara and Armada, 2013). Like the literature on civilising offensives, these studies largely discuss not targeted and in-situ means of policing deviance and disorder, but broader attempts at behavioural regulation aiming to educate urban dwellers as a specific kind of person, focusing on the mundane habits of everyday life. Accordingly, as mentioned above, most of the initiatives and interventions discussed in the above mentioned studies belong in the ‘education’ category of Smith *et al.*’s (2010) framework: they present educational efforts to advance social norms and behavioural expectations. However, this does not mean that they are necessarily exclusively education-based. Instead, they might be combined with (para)-legal and other assertive interventions in misconduct (see for example work on government policies such as Clement, 2015). Indeed, they are often tied to – and advanced together with – ‘disciplining offensives’ that pursue the same goal of regulating and managing conduct through more assertive means such as threats of punishment (van Ginkel, 1996).

3.1.3 Styles of urban conduct regulation

Contemporary urban authorities are often inclined to regulate urban deviance and disorder through punitive technologies of control (Davis, 1990; Garland, 2002; Smith, 1996). However, it is also possible to identify a parallel movement towards 'subtle' and non-assertive means of behavioural regulation. The proliferation of 'subtle' regulatory strategies has been observed in various areas of urban governance but is particularly evident in regulatory interventions seeking to elicit desirable modes of public conduct and urban citizenship. For example, Clarke's (2019) study of urban nuisance governance in Australia found that city authorities prefer to appeal to citizens' self-governance abilities through the use of educational and persuasive strategies in the first instance, and employ punitive measures only in severe cases. Clarke further observes that urban authorities are concerned with the regulated residents' satisfaction with the regulatory process, as 'customer satisfaction' helps improve a regulators' legitimacy and their ability to secure cooperation from regulatees' (Clarke, 2019, p. 535).

Clarke's findings are in stark contrast to the punitive and revanchist turn observed in the wider incivilities literature. This difference can potentially be explained by the fact that many of the misconducts and complaints tackled by the city authority in Clarke's study were low-level forms of deviance (e.g. unkempt lawns) and perpetrated by citizens from diverse socio-economic backgrounds – instead of the (semi-)criminal and criminogenic conduct of marginalised populations that is the focus of most of the incivilities literature. However, a trend towards subtle and gentle forms of regulation can also be identified in efforts to manage marginalised or otherwise 'problematic' urban dwellers. For example, instead of being expelled, homeless people in Montreal or Gothenburg might be gently encouraged to 'move on' through strategies that lay claim to public space and establish expectations which behaviours and people are desirable (e.g. cultural activities and participative beautification and 'greenification' initiatives that; Margier, 2016; Thörn, 2011). Other examples of a turn towards subtle and innovative approaches to regulation and management of conduct can be found in the design and manipulation of 'atmospheres' in policing techniques and prisons (Wall, 2019; Young, 2019), or the engineering of atmospheres to modify customer behaviour in malls, such as through illumination technologies (Hudson, 2015). The above discussed use of 'nudging' can also be seen as evidence of a larger trend towards inventive modes of managing conduct. Nudges aim to 'reduce citizen backlash against [...] an overly interventionist and ham-fisted Nanny State' by masking strategies of intervention, and have been described as a 'softer form of paternalism' and effort to make regulatory efforts more palatable (Chriss, 2019, p. 20).

The difference between punitive/direct and subtle/indirect modes of behavioural regulation can also be conceptualised in terms of 'hard' and 'soft' modes of control. While 'hard' control refers to conventional regulatory technologies that are seen as assertive, authoritative, and formal (e.g. CCTV surveillance or traditional policing), the term 'soft' refers to persuasive and less-assertive strategies. Negishi (2016, p. 11) describes these 'soft' techniques as 'modulative approaches to control' that 'psychologically sway [individuals] to undertake a particular set of actions and movements'. Rather than through 'discipline and punishment', these technologies of control work through 'encouragement and promotion' (Negishi, 2016, p. 13). This dualistic conceptualisation is in line with previous theoretical advancements such as Cohen's (2001) distinction between 'hard-edged' approaches to control involving coercion and 'soft-edged' approaches involving instead psychological and therapeutic forms of diagnosis, persuasion, and intervention (Innes, 2003). However, the analytic dichotomy of 'hard' and 'soft' modes of control also has significant shortcomings. Although the terminology of 'hard' and 'soft' control has been employed by various studies (e.g. Cohen, 2001; McCarthy, 2014; Mele, 2017), they are used without a uniting

conceptual framework or reference to each other. While Negishi (2016) provides a persuasive introduction to the term, his work has not yet found widespread adaptation. In other words, most scholars' usage of the term 'soft' appears to reflect linguistic intuition rather than a developed theoretical framework. A consequence of this is that the term is not coherently and consistently used: the term 'soft' control has been employed to refer to such different phenomena as therapeutic approaches to regulation and policing (Cohen, 2001; McCarthy, 2014) and informal control exercised by residents (Mele, 2017).

This section has provided an overview of literature related to problematic forms of behaviour in urban space and the way they are governed. It has focused on scholarship of mundane transgressions of behavioural expectations in public space, thus highlighting that it is not just (semi-)criminal conduct that imperils the 'order' of contemporary cities, but a much wider array of potential disruptions that include inconsiderate, offensive, sensorily transgressive, or otherwise inappropriate behaviours. Subsequently, it has explored research on regulatory efforts employed to produce and maintain public order beyond standard control technologies such as policing, fines, and surveillance, placing a particular focus on subtle or soft approaches to managing conduct. The following section will focus on mobility practices as a context in which mundane transgressions of behavioural expectations and benign approaches to managing conduct are particularly accentuated and have frequently received scholarly attention.

3.2 Mobilities and misconduct

This section will provide an overview of scholarly accounts of misconduct and its regulation in the context of mobility practices and transport spaces. While, as in the case of scholarship on misconduct in cities more broadly (see above), there is a significant body of literature focusing on criminal and harmful forms of deviance in mobility situations (e.g. sexual harassment on public transport; Ceccato and Newton, 2015; Horii and Burgess, 2012; Newton, 2014; Zunino Singh, 2017), research on such serious transgressions will again largely be bracketed out to instead highlight studies that engage with mundane incivilities such as transgressions of passenger etiquette and rowdy motorist behaviour.

There is a clear connection between mobilities and misconduct. As discussed in the previous section, the majority of everyday incivilities are encountered 'in the process of going somewhere' (70 per cent) and/or relate to movement and space management (60 per cent; Smith, Phillips and King, 2010, pp. 26–28). This link between mobilities and misconduct can be explained through the structure of uncivil encounters. The research of Smith and his colleagues (2010) argue that it is more likely to encounter incivility while in the process of getting somewhere than at 'destinations' of public life (e.g. restaurants, supermarkets) because streets and transit spaces often lack the rule 'enforcers' (e.g. members of staff) and clear-cut behavioural norms that characterise destinations. Behavioural norms governing passenger conduct on public transport (e.g. regarding seat usage) are primarily based on unspoken agreements and not policed by transport providers. Accordingly, claims to seating (e.g. by a senior citizen) may only be 'informally exerted' by passengers themselves (Wilson, 2011, p. 639). Urban mass transit spaces present a liminal location between the public and the private realm in which 'tacit conventions regarding appropriate self-presentation [...] enter a grey zone that is also in-between' (Berry and Hamilton, 2010, p. 112). In other words, being on the move 'involves a more anarchic environment' where behavioural norms are less defined, encounters more transient, and enforcers absent (Smith, Phillips and King, 2010, p. 28). In addition, interactions between mobile subjects are more likely to produce incivility than those between static subjects. In particular, incivility appears to be linked to situations in which one party moves – or attempts to move – faster than another, or is heavily encumbered (e.g. dragging a bulky suitcase).

Accordingly, the extant literature recognises that mobility practices facilitate the occurrence of incivility, especially in situations when movement is 'difficult, disjunctive and out of step with the general flow' (Smith, Phillips and King, 2010, p. 64).

Concern for the misconduct of mobile subjects is particularly evident from scholarship on driving practices and their regulation. Efforts to manage the behaviour and mindset of drivers have a long history. For example, Merriman (2005a, 2006) has discussed attempts to govern the practices and subjectivities of motorists in post-war Britain through employment of a 'Motorway Code' and an array of technology-, infrastructure- and media-based regulatory strategies. Similar government efforts to transform motorist etiquette, emotions, and driving practices in order to encourage a 'more cautious driving subjectivity' have been observed in the wake of mass motorisation in post-war Japan (Roth, 2012). Around the same period, there have also been efforts to regulate the transgressive and dangerous driving practices of Japanese truck and taxi drivers that were driven by socio-economic conditions such as the 'gamification' of work (Roth, 2019, p. 4). Next to these historical studies, there also exist multiple ethnographic studies of motorist misconduct. For instance, Nuhlat (2020) discusses the transgressive manoeuvres (e.g. running red lights, using emergency lanes, unauthorised U-turns) motorists in Istanbul employ to save time, circumvent traffic jams, and 'get ahead' in the competitive driving environment of the Turkish metropolis. Her study also examines the narratives through which motorists make moral sense of their mobile conduct. Lumsden's (2015) ethnographic study, on the other hand, has focused on efforts to '(re)civilize' motorists, taking up the case of young drivers in Scotland to highlight that it is not just risky and illegal driving practices, but also other mobility-related forms of deviance such as car modification that become the target of governmental concern and regulatory efforts. Finally, prior scholarship has also examined *civil* driving behaviour, such as through an Laurier's (2019) ethnomethodological account of motorists showing appreciation for the considerate driving practices of other road users.

Government and academic attention to motorist (mis)behaviour can be explained by the centrality of automobility and car culture in modern societies (Featherstone, Thrift and Urry, 2005). It is also likely tied to the potentially deadly consequences of driving-related transgressions. For example, the Motorway Code presented an official response to concerns about road safety and motorist behaviour (Merriman, 2005a). Similarly, Japanese government campaigns encouraging appropriate driving etiquette and mindset were part of traffic safety campaigns tackling high accident numbers (Roth, 2012). However, concern for the conduct of mobile subjects is not limited to transgressive driving practices. Government authorities and other organisations are concerned with managing a diverse array of mobility practices ranging from the promotion of desirable conduct among visitors to the British countryside (e.g. respectful attitude and demeanour; Merriman, 2005b) to efforts shaping airline passenger behaviour and subjectivities to ensure the security and profitability of aeromobility spaces (Adey, 2007; Bissell, Hynes and Sharpe, 2012). The behaviour of public transport passengers is another major area of concern and will be discussed in the following sub-section. First however, I want to briefly reflect on the regulatory strategies that are employed to shape mobility practices in general.

The management of mobility practices and subjectivities is achieved through variegated regulatory interventions, with textual and media devices among the most commonly employed. For example, British government authorities sought to translate the Motorway Code into embodied motorist practices through publicity campaigns including posters, press releases, cartoons, and events (Merriman, 2005a). Similarly, the UK's Countryside Code was articulated and translated into governmental practice through an array of 'mundane media technologies' ranging from posters to bookmarks that contributed to codifying

(un)desirable conduct (Merriman, 2005b). Media-based initiatives are also common in Japan. Campaigns promoting traffic safety and motorist etiquette have been frequently advanced through media such as safety slogans hung alongside roads or traffic safety posters designed by school children (Roth, 2012). Similarly, post-war initiatives targeting deviant mobility practices of truck and taxi drivers have featured the public shaming of offending individuals in newspapers (Roth, 2019).

However, efforts to manage mobility practices are not limited to media and text-driven strategies. Initiatives seeking to shape motorist behaviour may include legal regulations, police patrols, CCTV, or integrating a psychological personality inventory into driving aptitude tests to make test takers aware of their predispositions and encourage self-reflection (Lumsden, 2015; Merriman, 2005a, 2006; Roth, 2012). Strategies may also involve changes to street and highway infrastructure or car technology (Merriman, 2006). For example, car makers in recent years have used technological interventions such as driver drowsiness detection systems or displaying speed limit warning messages as part of the onboard navigation system to nudge motorists in the direction of safe and sustainability driving practices (Spahn, 2013). Accordingly, there is range of educational, legalist, and design strategies that are employed to manage mobility practices (see Smith, Phillips and King, 2010).

3.2.1 Transgressions of behavioural expectations in urban mobility environments

The conduct of public transport users is another area of mobility practices that has been a frequent target of governmental intervention. Passenger behaviour is always potentially problematic because of mass transit environments' inherently public nature. Sharing the vehicle and station space with fellow urban denizens is a defining characteristic of public transport usage (Mattioli, 2014). This inevitability of co-presence positions passengers' mobility practices as a public performance that is more strongly shaped by behavioural expectations and socio-cultural norms than 'private' mobility practices such as automobility. Public transport users' conduct on public transportation is usually influenced by their awareness that they can be heard and seen by others passengers (Mattioli, 2014, p. 3). In other words, their behaviour and self-presentation is 'constrained by the dictates of the public nature of sharing [the] carriage with other commuters' (Berry and Hamilton, 2010, p. 113). This gives commuter behaviour a 'rule-governed and scripted' character which 'acts as a safety valve, reducing the friction that might otherwise manifest itself as a result of being forced into closed proximity with strangers' (Symes, 2007, p. 458).

This description of commuter practices as 'scripted' reminds us that passenger practices are socially constructed. As discussed in Chapter 2, becoming a passenger requires the acquisition and exercise of urban knowledge and competencies, such as the ability to navigate transit spaces (Bissell, 2018; Symes, 2013) or claim territories inside the transport vehicle through the use of objects and devices (Watts, 2008). Frequent users of public transport acquire passengering habits that shape their urban mobility experience. For example, the 'strains of the daily commute' are more bearable for habituated and accustomed passenger bodies (Bissell, 2014, p. 485). Accordingly, passenger habits and competencies constitute a form of 'mobility capital' that influences the 'speed and comfort of passage' (Shilon and Shamir, 2016, p. 250). They are integral to the smooth operation of the transport system as they allow 'passengers, carriages, railways, signs, platforms, and entry and exit points to coalesce into an apparently seamless whole', supporting 'the routine use of metro and train systems to access places' (Doody, 2020, p. 4). It is thus unsurprising that public transport companies frequently engage in efforts seeking to educate passengers in correct and desirable mobility skills and knowledge, as we will see in Section 3.2.2.

Regardless of the potential ordering effect passenger competencies and habits have on urban mobility practices and environments, the co-presence with other commuters remains a problematic aspect of public transport usage. Lin (2020b, p. 153) observed that contemporary societies appear to produce individuals who are increasingly intolerant of and uncomfortable with ‘moving proximately with strangers’. In fact, physical proximity to other passengers is a principal reason why many people dislike public transport (Mattioli, 2014). This aversity to stranger proximity is evident from railway passengers’ preference for standing over sitting down next to other commuters (Evans and Wener, 2007). Public transport users seek distance from other passengers through social avoidance techniques such as minimising eye contact (Evans and Wener, 2007), employing involvement shields such as newspapers and mobile phones to exercise civil inattention (see Clayton, Jain and Parkhurst, 2017; Goffman, 1971; Hirsch and Thompson, 2011), or utilising personal listening devices to ‘sound out’ the environment (Bull, 2006). In other words, the co-presence with other passengers presents public transport users with the task of managing contact with strangers (Benediktsson *et al.*, 2018). Carving out and protecting personal space in the public environment of the train is an important aspect of passengers’ mobility practices (Hirsch and Thompson, 2011). If this ability is limited (e.g. because of vehicle layout or level of crowding), it results in a greater social engagement than desired (e.g. eye contact, overhearing conversations, direct bodily contact) which can cause discomfort¹⁰ (Evans and Wener, 2007; Hirsch and Thompson, 2011).

The physical proximity to other public transport users thus comes with an inherent potential of annoyance and discomfort. Diverse behaviours and sensations can become the source of passenger irritation. One of the most common causes of vexation and discomfort in mass transit environments are transgressions of tacit agreements regarding what constitutes appropriate commuter conduct, or ignorance of the needs of other public transport users. Examples of this include passenger neglect of common boarding and seating etiquette (e.g. blocking seats with luggage, not offering seats to individuals in need; see Likhacheva and Kapkan, 2019; Steger, 2013; Wilson, 2011). Unwanted stimuli are another major cause of passenger annoyance and discomfort. For instance, mobile phones present a potentially problematic technological artifact in transport spaces as they can cause noise disturbances and unsolicited exposure to other passengers’ private conversations (Jain, 2011; Srivastava, 2006). Similarly, noisy conversations, loud music or smelly food are other examples of undesirable sensations and experiences that may provoke ‘unwanted arousal’ among passengers (Stradling *et al.*, 2007; Watts, 2008, pp. 720–721). Notably, the vexation of undesirable stimuli does not need to be rooted in serious transgressions of commuter conduct or related ideals of appropriate behaviour. More than severity, it appears to be the frequency of transgressions that affects commuters as it can ‘wear people down’ (Moore, 2011, p. 56). In fact, even (seemingly) banal micro-actions such as the repetitive tapping of fingers can be aggravating and give rise to negative affective fields in the enclosed space of the carriage (Bissell, 2010). Notably, the above described sources of annoyance are in line with understandings of external stimuli as stress factors in cities (see Mubi Brighenti and Pavoni, 2019; Simmel, 1995). The problematic status of unwanted stimuli in public transport environments closely mirrors concerns regarding ‘sensory transgressions’ of the wider urban order (see Section 3.1.1). Accordingly, it is possible to identify clear connections between current scholarship on urban mobility practices and environments and the classical sociological work of thinkers such as Simmel and Goffman (Adey, 2010). This is also evident from passengers’ engagement with manner

¹⁰ Notably, not all public transport users might perceive contact with other passengers like this, and might instead welcome public transport as an opportunity for social interaction or observation (Hirsch and Thompson, 2011; Mattioli, 2014).

transgressions, such as their use of ‘involvement shields’ to exercise civil inattention (see above; Clayton, Jain and Parkhurst, 2017).

The likelihood to encounter passenger misconduct and experience discomfort in mass transit environments is heightened by their characteristics as public spaces. Urban public transport ridership is often transitory, with a quick turnover of passengers leading to potentially volatile passenger dynamics (Likhacheva and Kapkan, 2019). Passenger relations in this environment are largely governed by norms of civil inattention which can be easily abused to ignore behavioural expectations (e.g. feigning sleep in order to circumvent social pressure linked to not offering a seat to a person in need; Likhacheva and Kapkan, 2019; Steger, 2013). In addition, the fact that the encountered offenders are usually strangers lowers passengers’ tolerance towards inappropriate and intrusive behaviours (see Evans and Wener, 2007; Likhacheva and Kapkan, 2019). Passengers’ sensitivity towards misbehaviour is further heightened by the crowdedness of the transit environment, the experience of which in turn is easily aggravated by factors such as the natural and built environment (e.g. wet carriage surfaces on a rainy day), perceived risk (e.g. safety, public health), or insufficient information provision by the transport provider (Hirsch and Thompson, 2011). Finally, public transport brings together individuals from variegated social, cultural, and economic backgrounds who pursue diverse mobility goals (e.g. work, errands, recreation) but cannot escape each other’s presence until they disembark (Moore, 2012; Smith and Clarke, 2000; Symes, 2007; Wilson, 2011). The diversity that characterises urban transit’s passenger demographics can in itself be a cause of irritation and discomfort because different socio-cultural groups might have disparate understandings of what constitutes appropriate behaviour in public (Mattioli, 2014). Specific passenger populations might be perceived as inherently ‘problematic’ by urban denizens which can be linked to and reproduce existing structures of marginalisation (see Wilson, 2011). While this is frequently connected to ethno-cultural difference, it can also be tied to other factors such as age and socio-economic position. For example, school pupils tend to experience public transport commutes – time they spent away from the disciplining gaze of parents and teachers – as a time of relative freedom which may cause them to deviate from ‘normal’ commuter conduct, turning them into transgressive mobile subjects (Symes, 2007).

The occurrence of passenger incivilities and misconduct is also connected to environmental factors. Passenger conduct and etiquette can differ according to the time of day and level of crowdedness. For instance, it has been observed that passengers tend to be less willing to offer their seats to individuals in need on crowded evening commutes (Likhacheva and Kapkan, 2019) and develop boarding techniques that may be detrimental to other passengers when they frequently travel in crowded conditions (Hirsch and Thompson, 2011). The physical transport environment can also influence passenger (mis)conduct, with different transportation infrastructures ‘affording’ different passenger behaviours and degrees of etiquette adherence (see Hutchby, 2001; Yaneva, 2009). For example, Lee (2021) observes that passenger conduct etiquette on Taipei busses and trains lacks behind that on the city’s subway system due to infrastructural conditions: different from the subway network, doors of buses and trains do not open in predictable locations which negatively affects queuing behaviour.

3.2.2 Managing passenger conduct

The above section has examined the potentially problematic implications of the public character of urban transit environments, making clear that the transgression of a commuter ‘code of conduct’ and transit etiquette can cause co-passengers annoyance as well as bodily and emotional discomfort. This is echoed in surveys of public transport users. For example, a *Transport for London* survey suggests that the conduct

of fellow passengers is a concern for many transport users, with respondents mentioning mundane incivilities and disorders such as the disposal of chewing gum on bus seats as negatively affecting their transit experience (Moore, 2010, 2011). This has ramifications for public transport companies seeking to provide passengers with a comfortable transit experience as a form of customer service (see Section 2.7). Comfortable transit experiences are not fully determined by corporate service provision efforts (e.g. amiable vehicle interior design such as padded seats) but are also ‘contingent on travellers abiding by many unstated rules of behaviour that maintain a tranquil experience’ (Jain, 2011, p. 1021). In other words, customer service experiences on public transport are ‘holistic’ as they include factors that are outside of companies’ direct control (Olsson *et al.*, 2012, p. 413). Furthermore, passenger misconduct may also negatively affect peoples’ willingness to use mass transit (Moore, 2011; Stradling *et al.*, 2007) and can further potentially cause accidents or operational delays (see above, see Chapter 5). Accordingly, it is unsurprising that transport companies engage in a range of efforts seeking to shape passengers’ mobility practices and tackle misconduct.

While severe forms of deviance such as crime and fare dodging are frequently tackled through assertive and infrastructural interventions in transport spaces such as CCTV cameras, ticket gates, and patrols (Ceccato and Newton, 2015; Newton, 2014), mundane forms of passenger misbehaviour are often addressed through educational strategies. Like the above discussed initiatives targeting motorists, many of these interventions are driven by media technologies. For example, scholars have highlighted the use of announcements and departure melodies to encourage desirable passenger practices (Lee, 2021; Manea, 2017). Textual devices such as signage and posters, like the ones that are the focus of this this thesis, also find frequent usage in transport systems around the world, and will be examined more in depth in Section 3.3.2.

Didactic interventions in passenger conduct are particularly evident in the event of technological and infrastructural transformations. New forms of transport technology may require the acquisition of entirely new mobility skill sets – appropriate passengering practices do not come naturally, but need to be taught and learned (Löfgren, 2008). For example, the opening of the New York City subway at the beginning of the 20th century required transport authorities to educate passengers in appropriate mobility practices and police conduct: New Yorkers needed to learn how ‘to behave as proper subway passengers’ (Höhne, 2015, p. 317). The more recent launches of the Delhi and Taipei subway systems were accompanied by similar efforts to educate urban residents in appropriate forms of commuter conduct (Butcher, 2011; Lee, 2021). The introduction of new urban transport infrastructure appears to necessitate – from the perspective of transport authorities at least – the disciplining and homogenisation of user practices in order to ensure safe and smooth transport operations (Höhne, 2015). Likewise, major changes to public transport systems, such as a revision of the ticket system or the influx of new passenger populations through the opening of lines in previously unconnected areas may also prompt transport authorities to engage in educational efforts (Ureta, 2012). Importantly, didactic interventions are also not reserved for new passenger groups. Public transport providers frequently employ educational interventions to improve the behaviour of the existing passenger population (e.g. as ‘reminders’). For example, Symes (2007, p. 449) observes that stations and carriages on Sydney’s urban railways system are ‘lined’ with ‘disciplinary texts’ that outline a code of commuter conduct. Similarly, Moore (2010, 2011) discusses Transport for London’s use of a poster campaign to tackle existing problems with uncivil conduct on public transportation by promoting consideration and tolerance among passengers.

Educational strategies are frequently combined with other regulatory interventions. For example, the ‘disciplinary texts’ mentioned by Symes (2007, p. 449) sometimes warn of penalties for breaching the passenger code of conduct, thus linking what Smith *et al.* (2010) classify as educational and legal strategies. Another example of the use of law-based approaches to managing passenger conduct can be found in the case of the Taipei Mass Rapid Transit System; eating and drinking on which are officially prohibited (and finable) through legislative efforts on a state-level (Lee, 2021). Passenger behaviour on public transport systems may also be modulated through ‘design’ strategies, primarily in form of purposive adjustments of the built environment or technological transport infrastructure, such as through platform demarcations indicating where passengers should line up, or installing heavy turnstiles on public buses to fight fare evasion (Lee, 2021; Muñoz, 2020). Such environmental approaches to managing passenger conduct are not limited to urban mass transit but are also commonly employed in other forms of mobility infrastructure such as airports. For example, by withholding gate information until the last minute, screens with departure information are often used to hold passengers in spaces such as retail areas. This illustrates that design solutions can be used to both facilitate and impede movement, depending on the interests of the involved stakeholders (Woolgar and Neyland, 2013).

A closer examination of design-based interventions reveals two points of note. First, design approaches are indicative of the wider turn towards subtle regulatory techniques discussed in Section 3.1.3. Next to the departure display example, evidence of intricate and innovative efforts to modulate peoples’ conduct in transport environments can be found in the manipulation of ambiances and affective atmospheres to ‘prime’ public transport passengers to ‘act in a particular way’ (Bissell, 2010, pp. 274–280). For example, railway companies train frontline employees in affective smiling techniques to encourage positive passenger behaviour and comportment, while at the same time protecting the ‘myth of customer sovereignty’ (Negishi, 2016, p. 110; see also Chapter 8). A second implication of design-based regulatory approaches is that they can negatively affect accessibility and passenger comfort. For example, the above mentioned new turnstile design turned out to be not just a hindrance for fare-dodgers but also for paying passengers with bodily configurations that differ from that of an able adult: wheelchair users, children, and senior citizens can only navigate the turnstile through physical exertion or with the help of others (Muñoz, 2020). This indicates that the ideal of comfort that dominates customer service and satisfaction discourses (see Chapter 2) can be overlooked when transport providers ‘prioritize control and efficiency’ (Muñoz, 2020, p. 7). Accordingly, there is a risk that design-based regulatory approaches create a hostile environment that excludes some groups from public transport spaces, causing mobility injustice (Jensen, 2019).

Regardless whether taking the form of educational, legal, or design approaches, the effectiveness of efforts to manage passenger conduct is disputed. While some industry research has sought to prove the effectiveness of corporate interventions (see Yamauchi *et al.*, 2005), academic commentary on the subject has been largely sceptical. For example, Watts (2008, pp. 720–721) points out that while transport spaces can be designed to reduce such sensory infections such as ringing mobile phones or headphone sound leaks (e.g. quiet coaches), they can never be entirely avoided and always present a potential risk. Similarly, scholars have observed that didactic technologies such as announcements encouraging public transport users to offer their seat to passengers in need are often ignored (Likhacheva and Kaplan, 2019). One factor that may influence the effectiveness of regulatory initiatives is the reputation and perceived legitimacy of the involved organisations. For instance, Lee (2021) observes that while official civility campaigns in Taiwan were often unsuccessful in the past because the island’s authoritarian government

was considered to be in a weak position to encourage civility, Taipei residents are more willing to follow the ‘code of civil behaviour’ outlined by contemporary MRT campaigns because the transport system is well-managed and runs smoothly.

This section has provided an overview of scholarly engagement with mundane misconduct in the context of mobility practices and environments. It has identified mass transit environments as a key arena in which everyday behaviours become problematic due to the characteristics of urban mobility settings as public space. It has further highlighted the diverse and often subtle regulatory practices employed to manage and modulate the behaviour of mobile subjects. The following section will take a deep-dive into one set of regulatory technologies identified in the above discussion, namely signs, posters, and other discursive devices.

3.3 Signage in urban environments

Regulatory interventions seeking to modulate passenger conduct in public transport spaces frequently take the form of media devices such as signs and posters (see Bissell, 2018; Moore, 2010, 2011; Symes, 2015; Ureta, 2012): textual inscriptions in the material environment that I will refer to as ‘signage’. This section will introduce the reader to scholarly approaches to understanding signage’s presence *in* and effect *on* urban spaces.

3.3.1 Linguistic landscape studies

One of the primary scholarly conceptualisations of signage in urban environments is provided by Linguistic Landscape (LL) studies. The concept of the LL refers to the ‘visibility and salience of language on public and commercial signs in a given territory or region’, such as in form of ‘public road signs, advertising billboards, street names, place names, commercial shop signs, and public signs on government buildings’ (Landry and Bourhis, 1997, pp. 23, 25). LL research is a relatively recent subfield in sociolinguistics (Backhaus, 2007, p. 3) that is usually traced back to the work of Landry and Bourhis (1997). Since their influential paper, some scholars have argued for a more generous conceptualisation of the discursive objects making up the linguistic landscape. Moving beyond signs and plaques, Itagi and Singh (2002) have argued for a definition that includes all visible text in a given area (e.g. newspapers, t-shirt slogans). Recognising that text is just one dimension of the media environments humans inhabit and responding to advancements in social semiotic thought discussed above, scholars have lobbied for adopting the term semiotic landscape. This accounts for a ‘multimodal’ understanding of landscapes that includes ‘sounds, images and graffiti’ (Shohamy and Gorter, 2009, p. 4) along with other ‘discursive modalities’ such as architecture and the built environment (Jaworski and Thurlow, 2010, p. 2). However, there is also some resistance against attempts to broaden the definition of the linguistic landscape, due to a preference for a narrower definition which keeps it as a workable methodological concept (Backhaus, 2007, p. 61).

Historically, the notion of the linguistic landscape grew out of studies of multilingualism and has been primarily utilised for such (Landry and Bourhis, 1997; Mooney and Evans, 2015, p. 96; Spolsky, 2009, pp. 25–26). These studies focus on matters such as the dynamics of multilingualism in urban spaces in relation to language policy (dal Negro, 2009; Sloboda, 2009) or identity and representation (Curtin, 2009; Kallen, 2009). Studies of multilingualism in LLs have been conducted in various countries, including Japan (Backhaus, 2007, 2009). While the details of these examinations of urban multilingualism are only of limited interest to us here, this scholarship has developed analytical tools that are useful for the study of signage more broadly. For example, LL research provides us with a vocabulary for classifying different kinds of urban signage. Following Landry and Bourhis’ (1997) distinction between ‘private’ and

'government' signs, scholars have put forward multiple binary pairs, such as 'top-down' and 'bottom-up' signs (Ben-Rafael *et al.*, 2006), 'official' and 'non-official' signs (Mooney and Evans, 2015, p. 87) and 'commercial' and 'non-commercial' signs (Backhaus, 2007). While these scholars categorise signage primarily according to its issuing body, alternative classificatory attempts focus on their relative location (Kallen, 2010) or function and material character (Spolsky and Cooper, 1991). Dray (2010, pp. 108–109) further distinguishes between embedded and disembedded signs, i.e. signs which's content *addresses* and is *contextualised by* the setting the sign is situated in, and those which primarily refer to social situations different from their spatial location. Scollon and Scollon (2003, p. 37) further help us distinguish between urban signs based on the discourse they belong to (i.e. municipal regulatory; municipal infrastructural; commercial and transgressive discourses). While critics have pointed out the methodological pitfalls of several of these classificatory attempts (Huebner, 2009; Spolsky, 2009), they nevertheless provide a useful analytical grid.

While the multilingualism studies heritage of LL research has proofed a limitation since most studies focus entirely on the logics of language choice rather than sign content (Papen, 2012, p. 58), recent scholarship has developed the concept of LL into an analytical lens used to inquire into topics beyond multilingualism. The concept has been employed to examine issues such as gentrification and resistance (Papen, 2012), urban planning policies (Leeman and Modan, 2009, 2010), and gender and sexuality (Milani, 2018). While pushing the boundaries of linguistic landscape research, these studies also build on a recognition of the relation between the written environment and questions of power (Ben-Rafael, 2009; Coulmas, 2009) that has been present in LL research since its inception (Landry and Bourhis, 1997).

3.3.2 Signage as co-constituting urban environments

Research on urban signage is not limited to LL studies but can also be found in the wider social science literature, albeit rather sporadically. The following paragraphs will discuss the analytical foci of sociological studies of signage. First among these are investigations of the socio-cultural implications of urban sign environments. An example of this is Halonen and Laiho's (2021) study of 'dog signs' (i.e. signs warning of or prohibiting the presence of dogs) in Finland and Romania which demonstrates that apparently trivial signs encountered around the city can indicate wider societal norms. Another instance of research in this vein is Hickey's (2012) study of commercial signage advertising planned communities in Australia which positions signage as expression of an underlying cultural order. As both material artefacts and expression of a symbolic realm, signs 'exist at the intersection of the physical and the symbolic' (Hickey, 2012, pp. 10, 30–31). They constitute the 'tangible form' through which the 'deep workings of culture' can become a subject of sociological analysis (Hickey, 2012, pp. xv, 10). The cultural meanings of sign environments are also frequently emphasised in studies of transport spaces. Researchers have examined the ad and signage environments of subway stations, analysing the different collective identities they attempt to invoke (Jiang, 2018; Lewis, 2003) and the overlapping, conflicting, and fragile ideological discourses found within them (Cockain, 2018).

A second theme is the analysis of signage as participant in the production of urban spaces and society. Researchers have argued that the 'outdoor media landscape' contributes to the constitution of a public sphere (Iveson, 2012). Signage and other outdoor media present a platform which 'channels various ideas and images into the public scene' (Silla, 2019, p. 78). Furthermore, it is a form of 'urban furniture' that influences the experience of everyday urban environments (Krajina, 2019, p. 393; Silla, 2019, p. 78). Notably, these researchers observe that components of the outdoor media landscape are rarely 'viewed

in isolation' but instead '[tend] to function as a scenographic element of the eventful space of the street' (Silla, 2019, p. 78). In other words, urban audiences often consume outdoor media in a 'distracted' or unfocused fashion, such as through peripheral vision (Silla, 2019, p. 78). Repetitive exposure to the same urban media can even lead urban dwellers to 'overlook' media texts (Krajina, 2019), although this does not mean that they lose their effect (Silla, 2019). The assembled urban media landscape gives environments a certain 'ambience' from which it is difficult to escape (Silla, 2019).

Signage does not just shape the cultural environment of public spaces but also their socio-material order (Denis and Pontille, 2015, p. 340; Fuller, 2002, p. 203). Signs 'organize [...] the material world' (Scollon and Scollon, 2003, p. 167), participating for example in the construction of differences between public and private space. Next to geosemiotics, which will be explored more in depth in Chapters 4 and 7, many of these studies can be aligned with understandings of language as 'performative' and signage as inscriptions that 'do things' (Austin, 1962; Denis and Pontille, 2014), as well as a conceptualisation of objects as actors (or 'actants') with diverse capabilities and affordances that are fundamentally involved in the construction of human societies and environments (Latour, 2007). Highlighting signage as participants in the production and organisation of space, these studies go far beyond linguistic and semiotic explorations of signage and instead link it to investigations of mobility, security, and urban space. Specifically, we can identify two interrelated research foci, namely studies of signage as 1) making places readable and 2) conveying behavioural expectations and regulating conduct, both of which shall be examined in turn.

Analysis of signage as making places readable primarily focus on signs that shape practices of movement in public space. Directional signage makes places legible and manoeuvrable (Sharrock and Anderson, 1979). Signage can facilitate or hinder 'the physical circulation and movement of people, vehicles and goods' (Jensen, 2014, p. 572). Accordingly, signage, alongside other objects such as architectural or technological artefacts, are involved in the management of spaces and the people who move through it. This has been illustrated through the case of airports (Woolgar and Neyland, 2013). Even a simple arrow sign is a core participant in processes of place-making by enabling navigation of unfamiliar spaces and encouraging individuals to move on, thus facilitating passenger flow (Fuller, 2002, p. 233). Navigation is further eased through standardising wayfinding systems between locales such as different airports (Fuller, 2002) or within the domain of a particular public transport provider (Denis and Pontille, 2014). This stabilisation of the local semiotic environment may also facilitate the creation of specific urban 'territories', such as by symbolically separating the spaces of different transport providers in the same city (Denis and Pontille, 2014). However, the socio-material order created through signage is always itself constructed. Sign-production involves strategic design decisions, such as in order to maximise impact (Juhlin and Normark, 2008). Official signage is created in institutional processes that transform the sign in the course of its production (Latour and Hermant, 2006). Furthermore, placing signs requires the active reconciliation of sign policies and conditions on the ground (Denis and Pontille, 2010). Finally, the order produced by signage systems is always fragile. Signage is vulnerable to threats such as decay, vandalism and theft that endanger the socio-material order and must be warded off through continuous maintenance (Denis and Pontille, 2014, 2015).

Another research focus relates to analysis of signage as conveying behavioural rules and expectations. A typical example of this are the 'legal visual semiotics' of road signs that inscribe duties, responsibilities and prohibitions into traffic environments, reproducing legal regulations as a fact of everyday life (Wagner, 2006), and positioning signage as a component of the larger regulatory apparatus of nation states (Volpp, 2019). Signage also plays an essential role in commercial and transport environments. Augé (1995)

emphasises the importance of signage in the 'non-places' of 'supermodernity' that lack definition through historical memory or relational bonds (e.g. airports, hotel rooms). Instead of engagement with other people, individuals primarily make sense of non-places through the texts found within them, which provide 'instructions for use' (Augé, 1995, pp. 94–96). This notion of signage as a user manual suggests that signs are not only involved in place-making practices by allowing the identification and navigation of urban and infrastructural environments, but also by making explicit the conventions and expectations governing them. Signage can define places as (not) meant for particular activities (e.g. ball games, smoking) or persons (e.g. minors) (Mooney and Evans, 2015, pp. 90–92). By communicating the behavioural norms of a given locale, signage possesses a preventive governmental capacity: it can 'head off' problems of misconduct before they occur (Smith, Phillips and King, 2010, pp. 184–185). Signage is thus a means of guiding and regulating behaviour, and a technology of urban learning (Lofland, 1973, pp. 113–117).

Signage can be employed to shape conduct both directly or indirectly (Dann, 2003). While indirect approaches may see signage identifying spatial boundaries (e.g. demarcations created through 'Staff Only' signs) or announce control mechanisms (e.g. patrol schemes), direct interventions may range from 'petitionary' signs that politely appeal to readers to 'hortatory' notices that carry explicit commands and 'minatory' signs threatening penalties (Dann, 2003). United by a common attempt to deter or elicit specific behaviours, these signs can be conceptualised as regulatory signage. Regulatory signage has been studied by linguists who have analysed signs' linguistic and semiotic structure in order to distinguish between different forms of prohibition signage (Domke, 2015; Wagner, 2015). Within the social sciences, the study of regulatory signage has been advanced by Hermer and Hunt (1996, p. 458) who draw on Miller and Rose (1990, p. 9) to position it as a technology of normalisation and governing 'at a distance' used to shape self-regulating subjects. While regulatory signage is employed to manage diverse areas of everyday urban life, such as public urination, hawking, and loitering (see Hermer, 1997; Whitecross, 2009), its authority largely depends on its official appearance, e.g. a slashed-out red circle (Hermer and Hunt, 1996).

Drawing on Hermer and Hunt (1996), Lippert (2009) discusses CCTV signage as a mundane governmental technology, means of political subjectification, and part of a wider 'surveillant assemblage'. The link between signage and surveillance has also been explored by other authors. Building on the concept of the semiotic landscape (Landry and Bourhis, 1997; Shohami and Gorter, 2009), Jones proposes the notion of surveillant landscapes that make 'people and their actions visible and legible' (Jones, 2017, p. 150). Next to surveillance technologies (e.g. CCTV, sensors) and architectural openings (e.g. windows), this regulatory environment features signage announcing the presence of surveillance schemes. According to Jones (2017, p. 153), CCTV signage alerts individuals that they are 'being watched' and utilises discursive strategies to turn them into 'more compliant objects of surveillance'. Surveillant landscapes thus operate in the service of 'particular ideologies and power structures' (Jones, 2017, p. 182). Similarly, Cole (2002, p. 430) has argued that signage advertising CCTV schemes, alongside CCTV technology itself, facilitates a panopticon-like 'automatic functioning of power' by conveying to individuals the permanent visibility of their actions.

Deploying signage outlining behavioural expectations is a common regulatory strategy in public transport spaces. The urban mobilities literature is ripe with references to the use of signage to modulate passenger behaviour. For example, Ureta (2012) analyses ads and signage as one of several 'disciplinary devices' employed on the Santiago de Chile metro to 'civilise' passengers, appealing to them to follow desirable rules of circulation and mannered behaviour. Similarly, Butcher (2011, pp. 238, 243) describes efforts by Delhi transport authorities to educate passengers in the 'correct' use of the subway through 'disciplining codes' of 'dos and don'ts' that are proclaimed through signage and announcements. Cockain (2018)

observes how regulatory discourses stipulating conventions and behavioural expectations intermix with marketplace discourses in Shanghai subway stations, and de los Reyes (2014) analyses English-language use in regulatory signage in train stations in the Philippines. These studies have also emphasised the limits of control messaging: passengers frequently transgress or ignore the regulatory discourses set out by signage (Butcher, 2011; Cockain, 2018) or might sacrifice manners in the interest of ensuring smooth and swift navigation of the transport space (Ureta, 2012). Notably, while surveillance studies highlight signage as involved in urban crime prevention practices, studies of signage in mobility and public transport contexts instead primarily discuss it as addressing a broad range of mundane practices related to the production of desirable and appealing transport environments¹¹. The etiquette-related signage that is analysed in the above mentioned studies of public transport contexts further can differ from standard prohibition signs. While the latter usually forbid a particular activity at a specific location or time, etiquette and manner signage might be intended to not just change passengers' behaviour in mobility contexts, but also outside of it, e.g. by encouraging being considerate of others (Ureta, 2012). Accordingly, the boundaries between regulatory signage that attempts to regulate in situ behaviours and campaigns that endeavour to shape peoples' attitudes and conduct more broadly are somewhat porous. Discursive passenger etiquette improvement campaigns can thus be understood as related to poster-based public communication campaigns addressing health concerns and substance abuse (Gorsky *et al.*, 2010; Rice and Atkin, 2013) or broader 'civilising' campaigns (Garon, 1997; Nguyen, 2012; see also Chapter 2) that are also often found in public transport environments (Cockain, 2018; Lazar, 2003; Lewis, 2003).

This section has provided an overview of scholarly accounts of signage. Focusing on signage's role in co-creating the socio-material order of urban environments and managing behaviour in public spaces, the section has highlighted its flexible employment as a regulatory device. Following the classificatory framework proposed by Smith *et al.* (2010) that was introduced earlier in this chapter, we can conceptualise signage as a governmental technology that finds use in educational, legal, and design approaches to managing human conduct: it can convey behavioural expectations, announce and threaten potential sanctions, and directly modulate human movement (e.g. through arrows and other forms of wayfinding signage). This section concludes our three part introduction to scholarship on the management of mundane misconduct. Changing tracks, the following section will discuss research on Japanese urban public transport, thus familiarising readers with the state of scholarship on the chosen case study.

3.4 Urban railways in Japan

There is a rich amount of scholarship on the spatial, economic, societal, and political organisation of Japanese cities (Pekkanen, Tsujinaka and Yamamoto, 2014; Sorensen, 2002; Sorensen and Funck, 2007; Waley, 2007, 2013). Tokyo in particular has received significant scholarly attention, with prior research exploring the city's history (Hasegawa, 2015; Jinnai, 1995; Sand, 2013; Screech, 2020; Seidensticker, 1991a, 1991b; Tagsold, 2010), socio-cultural spaces and their mediation (Baudinette, 2016; Brumann and Schulz, 2012; Coates, 2015, 2017a; MacGregor, 2003; Morris, 2010; Purkarthofer, 2020), as well as various other aspects of urban life, organisation, and representation in the Japanese capital (Hino, Uesugi and Asami, 2018; Holthus *et al.*, 2020; Waley, 2006).

Scholars of Japanese urban sociality and mobility agree that railways play a defining role in the societal and spatial organisation of Japanese cities. Urban rail has been a defining component of city life in Japan

¹¹ A broad scope of regulatory targets is also found in signage in other urban environments, e.g. in signs addressing sensory transgressions such as offensive smells (Pennycook and Otsuji, 2015).

since the early decades of the 20th century and remains essential for the operation of socio-economic life in Japanese cities until today (Negishi and Bissell, 2020). Inner-city rail networks and their expansion facilitated processes of urbanisation in Japan (Zacharias, Zhang and Nakajima, 2011), and have shaped diverse aspects of urban existence ranging from culture (e.g. by prompting the production of specific cultural practices and products, such as publications that can be easily read on trains), to the workings of political power (e.g. by facilitating demonstrations; Fujii, 1999).

More fundamentally, urban rail enabled the emergence of new urban subjectivities that still shape life in Japanese cities today, such as that of the consumer, commuter, or salaryman¹² (Freedman, 2011; Fujii, 1999; Hankins, 2018). It transformed modes of public interaction and sensibilities by ‘changing sensory perceptions of urban crowds’ and the way urban residents viewed each other and the city (Freedman, 2002, p. 23). Characterised by crowdedness and co-presence with strangers, commutes facilitated the acquirement of new embodied practices and interpersonal relations (Fujii, 1999). Along with larger transformations in Japanese society such as the legal abolishment of a strict social hierarchy and evolving work practices, the train carriage contributed to the emergence of ‘stranger sociability and anonymity’ as dominant mode of modern urban life (Hankins, 2018, p. 186). It provided a stage for urban dwellers to acquire and practice the interpersonal skills and sensibilities that city life necessitated (e.g. civil inattention; Hankins, 2018). Shaping modern urban subjects, the development and expansion of mass transit systems in Japanese cities thus had a disciplining effect (Fujii, 1999; Hankins, 2018). The structural transformations in Japanese society that facilitated these developments have been discussed by Miki (2005) who explores the social history of commuting in Japan from the Meiji period to the First World War and ties its emergence as common social practice to the growth of railway infrastructure, the beginning of wage-labour system, and the creation of a national school system.

Railway networks further shape the spatial and temporal organisation of Japanese cities. The train schedule impacts the rhythms on urban life, with the ‘regular cessation’ of train services in Tokyo creating a night-time ‘void’ (Dimmer, Solomon and Morris, 2017, p. 29). Urban railways also structure peoples’ experience of Japanese cities. For example, Tokyo residents often state the location of their home by referring to nearby stations and train lines (Purkarthofer, 2021; Qiao, 2019). Moreover, railway mobilities also influence place-making processes, as Coates (2018) illustrated through the example of Tokyo’s Yamanote line and the Ikebukuro district. Similarly, Linhart (1998) observed that railway infrastructure and commuting patterns have directly influenced the creation of leisure and entertainment areas (*sakariba*) in Japanese cities. The development of urban railways within inner Tokyo led to the development of *sakariba* around stations, and the decline of previously popular entertainment districts without direct railway access. Performing a wide range of commercial and cultural functions apart for public transportation, railway stations are further entwined with broader urban planning and urban regeneration programs (Qiao, 2019; Zacharias, Zhang and Nakajima, 2011). Finally, the impact rail services have on urban space and urban planning in Japan has also been demonstrated in the context of the opening of *shinkansen* line between Tokyo and Osaka in 1964 (Abel, 2019).

¹² While the term salaryman (or *salariman* in Japanese) in principle refers to any employee receiving a monthly wage, it primarily signifies male full-time white collar employees or executives in the private sector. Images of the salaryman as suit-wearing ‘corporate warrior’ and breadwinner enduring long train commutes every day trace back to the early 20th century, but it was in the decades after the Second World War that the salaryman emerged as archetype not just of Japanese masculinity, but respectable middle-class existence and citizenship. It remains closely connected to domestic and international imaginings of Japan (Dasgupta, 2013; Mackie, 2002).

Above discussions of the railway systems' influence on the organisation of urban space are located in a broader body of scholarship examining the socio-cultural impact of the development of the Japanese railway system. For example, the expansion of the railway system has been tied to the establishment of a national standard time and a stronger time consciousness among Japanese (Nakamura, 2002; Tsuji, 2006). Other authors have examined the cultural footprint of the *shinkansen* bullet train, and its role as a symbol of contemporary Japan (Hood, 2006), or argued that the opening of the first *shinkansen* line in 1964 redefined domestic perceptions and imaginings of the Japanese nation, its regions and cities (Abel, 2019), and became a lens through which social change was understood in 1960s and 1970s Japan (Abel, 2021).

Another body of scholarship explores Japanese urban railway environments as socio-technological spaces. A prime example of this is Fisch's (2018) anthropological account of Tokyo's commuter rail network. Fisch observes that Tokyo's railway system, transporting more than 40 million passengers a day, operates 'beyond capacity' in terms of carriage congestion and traffic density, and asks how it can avoid systematic collapse despite near constant operational overload (Fisch, 2018, pp. 1–2; see Schimkowsky, 2021e). Somewhat counterintuitively, he suggests that the answer to this does not lie in absolute adherence to a tight schedule and the demands of the technological system, but rather 'flexible and dynamic interaction between human and machines' (Schimkowsky, 2021e, p. 303). Operation beyond capacity is achieved through systematic underdetermination in form of a 'margin of indeterminacy' (Fisch, 2018, p. 31). Research on Japanese urban mobilities has further analysed the embodied and social experience of inner city railway travel and the commuter crowd (Chowdhury, 2020), musicians' appropriation of public transport spaces such as station passageways for performances (Simpkins, 2020), and the fleeting, semi-anonymous sociality of digital encounters on commuter trains (Nishimura, 2018). Furthermore, there is a growing body of scholarship on the sarin gas attacks on the Tokyo subway in 1995 that explores the terrorist attacks' socio-political implications and the way they are remembered (Eckersall, 2011; Pendleton, 2009, 2011a, 2011b, 2016, 2019). Importantly, Pendleton (2011b) has observed that the attacks shattered previously hegemonic Japanese notions of not just underground rail travel, but also the country of Japan as safe¹³, thus again highlighting the enormous impact railway mobilities have on the Japanese national imagination and public discourse.

3.4.1 Japanese train manners and their management

Matters of passenger conduct and etiquette have repeatedly gained the attention of scholars studying public transport spaces in Japan. Researchers have examined the behavioural norms governing seating etiquette (Steger, 2013) and the use of cell-phones on Japanese trains (Okabe and Ito, 2005). These studies have emphasised passengers' 'management of the gaze' to negotiate behavioural transgressions and sanction manner infractions. For example, public transport users might seek to discipline manner offenders by glaring at them, or close their eyes and feign to be asleep in order to circumvent behavioural expectations to yield their seat to passengers in need. Furthermore, scholars have pointed out that passenger manners – much in line with the general importance of etiquette in Japanese society (see Bardsley and Miller, 2011) – are a recurrent topic in Japanese public discourse, with tales of manner transgression often tied to a perceived general societal decline (Fisch, 2018, pp. 61–62; Okabe and Ito, 2005). Finally, researchers have also examined the gender-specific ways passengers inhabit public transport spaces in terms of bodily comportment (Getreuer-Kargl, 2012), and various forms of (activist,

¹³ This was also facilitated by the Kobe earthquake in the same year as well as an economic downturn. For more information, see Leheny and Liu (2010).

artist, and other) interventions that have disrupted the public order of Tokyo train carriages in the past, such as collective knitting events (Pendleton, 2018).

Taking up the case of Tokyo's urban railway network, Fisch (2018) observed that the extreme levels of carriage congestion and traffic density that define railway traffic in the city have given rise to highly specific codes of passenger etiquette. For instance, the behavioural expectation to maintain silence on commuter trains is tied to passengers' desire to carve out space for themselves in the crowded carriage environment in order to manage 'their degree of entanglement within the (commuter) collective' (Fisch, 2018, p. 55). In other words, train manners do not just reflect broader societal values (e.g. a disapproval of inconveniencing others) but contribute to the production of a 'gap' that facilitates Tokyo's railway system's operation 'beyond capacity' (Fisch, 2018, pp. 60–62). Notions of good commuter etiquette, such as the importance placed on auditory restraint, are not just connected to broader social norms, but also the interplay between commuter collective and technological infrastructure: the norm of silence 'is not imposed on commuters; it is a condition born in the interplay between human and machine' (Fisch, 2018, p. 55).

Train manners can be distinguished from legal regulation of officially prohibited behaviours such as groping¹⁴, violence, vandalism and sabotage. While Okabe and Ito (2005) observe that manner transgressions might be sanctioned through gazes of fellow passengers, Fisch (2018, p. 61) observes that they rarely prompt intervention by fellow passengers, who instead tend to 'accommodate disruption through passive tactics such as averting attention or even moving away'. Similarly, while transgressions against legal regulations are often quickly policed through an overwhelming deployment of railroad employees, manner offenses do not prompt a similarly assertive institutional intervention. Instead, manner transgressions are tackled by public transport providers through pervasive mediated interventions in railway carriages and stations such as standardised announcements asking passengers to put their phone to silent mode (Okabe and Ito, 2005) and departure melodies that indicate the end of the designated boarding period (Manea, 2017). The most prominent intervention in matters of passenger etiquette however comes in form of manner posters which visually inscribe behavioural expectations into Japanese public transport environments, and thus fall into the Smith *et al.*'s (2010) categories of 'education' and 'design' approaches to addressing incivility (see Section 3.1.2).

The presence of manner posters in Japanese railway stations and trains has been commented on by several authors (Bayne, 2018; Eberhardinger, 2019; Fisch, 2018; Miller, 2011a; Mizuta, 2013; Negishi, 2016; Padoan, 2014). This scholarship has positioned manner posters as part of the linguistic landscape of public transport environments in Japanese cities (Bayne, 2018), and of a larger Japanese tradition of visual problematisations of inappropriate conduct (Miller, 2011a). Authors have also started to examine the linguistic and semiotic composition of selected posters. For example, Eberhardinger (2012, n.p.)¹⁵ has conducted a textual analysis of four manner posters from the 1970s and 1980s, identifying iconicity, cultural appropriation of famous global imagery, humour, and bold colours as elements of posters' semiotic code that are strategically employed in a pursuit of 'harmonious social order' and 'polite and civil cooperation'. Similarly, Padoan (2014, p. 591) sees manner posters' function as exercising 'prescriptive power' and establishing a 'distributed' mobile panopticon 'in which everyone is assumed to control everybody else'. Drawing on continental semiotic theory for an analysis of a 2008-2010 series of manner

¹⁴ See Horii and Burgess (2012) for more information on the problem of groping on Japanese trains and passenger and company reactions to it.

¹⁵ Eberhardinger (2012) is a longer version of Eberhardinger (2019) which is cited elsewhere in this thesis.

posters, he identifies the use of humoristic visuals and a clear visual demarcation of offender and victim passengers (e.g. through different colour schemes) as strategies employed to persuade viewers of good transit etiquette. At the same time, Padoan (2014, p. 594) observed that passenger-audiences also have access to 'powerful counterstrategies', such as subverting corporate manner communication through creating and circulating parody posters online. Building on a linguistic analysis of the same 2008-2010 poster series, Mizuta (2013) described manner posters as complex and indirect persuasive texts that attempt to convey ideas of good transit etiquette without threatening passengers' 'face' through the use of inclusive grammatical forms, humour, and combination of verbal and visual components. Sociologically-oriented accounts of manner posters have followed the analytic thrust of this scholarship by positioning manner posters in a wider network of mechanisms of 'soft control' in the Tokyo subway that aims not only at securitisation but also the convenience of passenger-customers (Negishi, 2016), and as evoking a 'sense of a collective' by employing an interplay of affective and prescriptive modes (Fisch, 2018, pp. 62–63). In line with the above discussed semiotic studies, anthropological and sociological research has recognised the use of a cute and playful visual and linguistic style featuring informal modes of address and illustrated characters (Fisch, 2018; Negishi, 2016) that is at odds with previous analyses which view regulatory signage employing an 'official' appearance to invoke legitimacy and authority (Hermer and Hunt, 1996). Despite these recent advances in manner poster scholarship, there is still a need for further investigation. Prior research on the subject is not yet in conversation with each other, and only integrated into wider theoretical debates within the social sciences to a limited degree. Furthermore, most studies only touch on the phenomenon of manner posters in passing as part of a larger study (Fisch, 2018; Miller, 2011a; Negishi, 2016) or take the form of working papers or dissertations (Bayne, 2018; Eberhardinger, 2012; Mizuta, 2013). Overall, there is a dearth of in-depth scholarly examinations of manner posters as a genre of communication and the organisational context and considerations shaping their production and deployment.

3.5 Concluding remarks: positioning the thesis

This chapter introduced readers to four bodies of literature: scholarship on urban misconduct and its regulation, misbehaviour in mobility and transport contexts, signage and its role in the construction of urban environments, and finally, urban railways in Japan. With the exception of the last cluster of area studies research, the surveyed bodies of literature are loosely defined. They do not form self-aware, specialist clusters of scholarship with a shared framework and scholarly mission. Instead, the studies they encompass have been purposively put in relation to each other in the context of this chapter to provide a starting point for the empirical inquiry that will follow in the remainder of the thesis. Although the literature review has highlighted common themes and interests in prior research, the extant scholarship is in fact characterised by a degree of disconnection. For example, while the literature review has identified several studies that hint at the usage of innovative and subtle means of social control in cities, these are largely isolated accounts that lack mutual engagement, conceptual cohesion and consistency. Similarly, although the role of signage in managing behaviour in public has been commented on by several authors, they are, for the most part, not in conversation with each other. In fact, several of the above introduced studies discussing the deployment of signs in urban public transport settings (e.g. Bissell, 2018; Butcher, 2011; Moore, 2010, 2011; Symes, 2015) are not studies of signage per se, but rather touch on signage as part of broader academic inquiries into urban sociality and mobilities.

The lack of clearly defined bodies of prior research is evidence of the niche character of the topics explored in this thesis. Matters of passenger etiquette and poster initiatives are far from being central areas of sociological inquiry, as employment, ethnicity, gender, and similar subjects are. While it would have been theoretically possible to frame the first three sections of this chapter (Sections 3.1-3.3) as 'sociology of

deviance', 'urban mobilities', and 'sociology of media' or 'social semiotics' respectively, this would have only accentuated the marginal position of research on mundane misconduct (in comparison to studies of criminal behaviour), the management of passenger etiquette (in comparison to studies of the meanings and practices of urban movement), and poster initiatives (in comparison to studies of other media such as television, newspapers, or the internet) in these canonical fields of social science literature. In other words, while this thesis is positioned at the intersection of multiple established areas of sociological scholarship such as urban mobilities and the sociology of deviance, it is located at the very edges of these fields.

The present and the preceding chapter drew on literature from across and beyond the social sciences (e.g. sociology, human geography, socio-linguistics, urban studies, business studies) to contextualise this thesis' inquiry into the management of passenger manners on Japanese public transport. The interdisciplinary scope of these last two chapters is a response to the precarious position of research on the media-driven management of passenger conduct in the established social science literature, i.e. the relative scarcity of dedicated studies of the phenomenon. Furthermore, the interdisciplinary orientation results from the recognition that this thesis' research topic can only be comprehensively understood when drawing on insights from various areas of scholarship: As a study of the management of behaviour in urban public spaces it needed to consult sociological accounts of urban life and deviance; as a study of passenger etiquette it had to engage with the mobilities literature; as a study on signage and its role in urban environments it had to reflect on linguistic, semiotic, and ANT-inspired scholarship; and as a study of Japan it needed to draw on relevant area studies scholarship. I will conclude this chapter by briefly highlighting the thesis' contribution to these four bodies of scholarship.

3.5.1 Contribution of the study

Positioned at the intersection of four interdisciplinary bodies of scholarship, the thesis' contribution to the extant literature is multifold. While the thesis' contributions to academic discourse will be discussed in-depth in Chapter 9, it is helpful to signpost three key areas of knowledge the following chapters aim to advance:

The thesis advances our understanding of mundane misconduct and its management in cities and public transport environments: Examining the management of everyday incivilities in public transport spaces, this thesis responds to Smith and his colleagues' (2010) call to redirect the focus of sociological studies of deviance from (semi-)criminal activity in disadvantaged urban areas to benign misbehaviour in the mundane spaces of everyday life. It adds to an emerging body of literature on everyday misconduct and sensory transgressions in contemporary cities (e.g. Clarke, 2019; Pennycook and Otsuji, 2015; Shantz, Kearns and Collins, 2008; Tan, 2013). The study further contributes to mobilities scholarship by zooming in on public transport environments as 'quintessential' urban space (Benediktsson *et al.*, 2018) and key arena in which minor manner breaches become problematic (Smith, Phillips and King, 2010). Building on prior scholarly observations that passenger behaviour is always potentially problematic (Benediktsson *et al.*, 2018; Bissell, 2010; Evans and Wener, 2007; Mattioli, 2014; Wilson, 2011), it will examine how mundane passenger behaviours become the target of transport provider interventions – a question that so far has only received limited attention (but see Ureta, 2012).

Examining the management of incivilities through poster campaigns, this thesis helps us understand how everyday misbehaviour is dealt with in contemporary cities. It contributes to scholarship on education- and design-based (see Smith, Phillips and King, 2010), 'soft' and 'subtle' governmental efforts aiming to

elicit desirable modes of public conduct and urban citizenship (Chriss, 2016; Clarke, 2019; Margier, 2016; Negishi, 2016; Thörn, 2011). Exploring the perspective of transport and advertising companies involved in the creation of manner improvement campaigns, it offers a rare glimpse at the production side of regulatory efforts in everyday urban contexts (see Clarke, 2019 for other research in this vein) and highlights the involvement of private actors. The thesis provides insights into everyday incivilities and non-assertive modes of regulatory intervention; two phenomena that are, although they are frequently encountered in everyday urban life, under-researched in comparison to criminal forms of deviance and assertive disciplinary strategies (e.g. policing). Accordingly, the thesis seeks to correct two relative blind spots in the existing scholarship on urban deviance and mobilities.

The thesis advances our understanding of the use of signage in the management of urban spaces and public behaviour: The degree of sociological attention that has been awarded to signage is disproportionate to its ubiquity in contemporary cities. The majority of the existing literature on signage takes the form of linguistic and semiotic explorations (Backhaus, 2007; Hickey, 2012; Huebner, 2009; Itagi and Singh, 2002; Landry and Bourhis, 1997; Shohami and Gorter, 2009). Although there is a growing recognition among social scientists that signage plays an important role in modulating behaviour in public and shaping the socio-material order of urban environments (Fuller, 2002; Smith, Phillips and King, 2010; Woolgar and Neyland, 2013), many of the existing studies only discuss signage in passing, and do not yet form a coherent field of study. Accordingly, there is a clear need for dedicated sociological accounts of signage. This thesis seeks to provide one such account. Following Hermer and Hunt (1996), it highlights signage as a technology of mundane governance that organises urban space by conveying behavioural expectations. It examines public transport etiquette posters as a type of signage that can be found in cities around the world (Bissell, 2018; Butcher, 2011; Moore, 2010, 2011; Symes, 2015; Ureta, 2012), but has not yet been analysed in depth. Inquiring into the logics and considerations that drive Japanese railway companies' poster campaigns, the thesis offers rare insights into the making of regulatory signage.

The thesis advances our understanding of Japanese cities and public transport: It is difficult to overstate the importance of railways for city life in Japan. Urban railways are integral for the operation of socio-economic life in Japanese cities (Negishi and Bissell, 2020) and constitute the primary means of transport in Japanese metropolises (Enoch and Nakamura, 2008; Miki, 2005). Regardless of the centrality of railway transit and commuting practices in contemporary Japanese urban life and the importance of etiquette in imaginings of Japanese society, focused accounts of the behavioural expectations governing mass transit are scarce. This research addresses this oversight by examining corporate efforts to manage passenger behaviour on Japanese urban railways. Examining the logics shaping manner poster deployment and design, it advances our understanding of manner posters as a genre of public communication that is a pervasive presence in Japanese urban public transport environments and has received significant media attention both in Japan and internationally (Asahi Shimbun, 1976, 1992, 2009; Kawakita, 2008), but has not yet been awarded sufficiently in-depth scholarly attention.

Exploring prior research on mundane incivilities, the management of passenger behaviour, signage, and Japanese urban mobility, this chapter has offered an overview of scholarship related to poster-based etiquette improvement initiatives on urban public transport in Japan as this thesis' area of inquiry. Together with Chapter 2, it thus introduced the thesis' analytical foundation. In the following chapter, I will discuss the thesis' methodological considerations and research approach.

Chapter 4 Methodology

As outlined in the previous chapters, this thesis examines transport companies' efforts to shape the passenger conduct on the urban rail network in Tokyo. Specifically, the thesis is concerned with the logics of railway company initiatives seeking to improve passenger etiquette. The primary focus lies not on passengers' behaviour in urban mass transit environments, but rather the processes and considerations that shape the design of company-led manner improvement initiatives. As my primary disciplinary training was in anthropology, my initial idea was to conduct participant observation in a Japanese railway company to gain first-hand knowledge of the social setting and processes that produce manner improvement campaigns. I imagined that ethnographic fieldwork in a company – e.g. sitting in on meetings in which the content and style of manner posters was decided – would allow me to analyse the logics driving the design of manner improvement initiatives and the inclusion of specific transgressive behaviours (see Condry, 2013's work on anime for a successful example of such research). However, having lived in Japan for 4 years prior to starting the PhD, I also had serious doubts whether it really would be possible to gain permission to conduct ethnographic fieldwork in a major Japanese company. I was aware that organisational life in Japan tends to be shaped by rigid bureaucracy and regulations. If there is an established process for a certain request, application or other procedure, things often run very smoothly. If there is no predetermined pathway however, even seemingly simple requests can quickly morph into an impossible undertaking. My concern was that there would not be a set pathway for a postgraduate researcher to conduct fieldwork in a major Japanese company.

Undeterred by such concerns, my supervisors and I spent the initial period of my PhD course exploring potential access avenues. Eventually, there was a flicker of hope when one of my supervisors contacted a former colleague of his, who had previously worked with large Japanese companies and was now a professor at Keio University in Tokyo. They kindly agreed to host me at Keio University and inquire into potential fieldwork possibilities. Making use of personal connections, they were able to contact a senior figure in the East Japan Railways (JR East) group, who asked their colleague Mr. Uematsu¹⁶, a mid-level manager at JR East to facilitate the research project. In the following months, Mr. Uematsu and my host at Keio University repeatedly discussed the project, and it seemed like I would indeed be able to gain research access to Japan's largest railway provider. However, in a typical fieldwork twist, all of this fell apart as soon as I arrived in Japan. During an initial joint meeting at the company's Shinjuku headquarters, Mr. Uematsu informed my host and me that it would be more difficult for him to assist me than he previously thought. He had been transferred to a subsidiary company of the sprawling JR East group, and the head of a section involved in planning manner improvement initiatives, a close friend of his, similarly had just been transferred to a different company section. Mr. Uematsu did not know the new section head well enough to approach him with my research request. In other words, any potential route of (semi-)informal access negotiations was now closed. I left the meeting feeling clueless about how to proceed.

After re-visiting the research plan and consulting with my host professor and my supervisors, I eventually decided on a multi method approach featuring expert interviews, document analysis, visual analysis, and transit ethnography. In the following, I will first give an overview of the employed methods and the

¹⁶ Pseudonym.

rationale behind them. This will be followed by a discussion of ‘studying up’ as a core challenge that shaped the research process. The chapter will conclude with a discussion of research ethics.

4.1 Methods

As an explorative study, this project employs an inductive qualitative research approach that combines four different methods: expert interviews, document analysis, visual analysis, and transit ethnography. The combination of archival and ethnographic modes of research allowed an ‘polymorphous engagement’ with urban rail manner improvement initiatives useful for circumventing access difficulties (Gusterson, 1997, p. 116), and facilitated a comprehensive inquiry into the into the subject and its history. I will refer to the combination of these methods as fieldwork, as all research was conducted on site in Japan (McLaughlin, 2010), and even the archival components of the project required negotiating access and consultations with archivists, librarians, and curators.

4.1.1 Expert interviews

Interviews with individuals involved in planning and designing manner improvement initiatives were a central methodological pillar of this study. As interviews with individuals with specialised occupational knowledge of a certain field or topic, these interviews are best described as *expert interviews* (Bogner, Littig and Menz, 2009; Littig, 2009). Although an established research method in German-language social science literature, expert interviews have only found infrequent employment in sociological work coming out of anglophone countries where ‘elite interviews’ are a more common method (Bogner, Littig and Menz, 2018; Littig, 2009). However, there are clear structural similarities between these two interview approaches. In both expert and elite interviews, the power balance is usually skewed in favour of the interviewee rather than the researcher, and access can prove difficult. Furthermore, ‘expert’ and ‘elite’ statuses often overlap, as it is not uncommon for experts to possess high social status, and for elites to have access to expert knowledge (Littig, 2009). Accordingly, the primary difference between elite and expert interviews lies not in methodological approach or interviewee identity, but in their principal research interests. While the former are usually employed by studies inquiring into societal aspects of elite groups themselves (e.g. beliefs and lifestyles within influential strata of society, reproduction of privilege and power), the latter focus on interviewees’ special knowledge as experts in a certain field. Expert interviews can provide contextual knowledge about structures, processes, and events within organisations, as well as insider interpretations of them (Bogner, Littig and Menz, 2018; Littig, 2009, p. 100). In other words, expert interviews allow researchers to gain insights into privileged professional knowledge (Bogner, Littig and Menz, 2018). In lieu of extensive ethnographic access to railway companies, expert interviews were thus an ideal methodological tool to inquire into the logics and considerations driving the design of manner improvement campaigns. Together with the analysis of industry publications (see Section 4.1.2), they provided insights into the emic understandings of manner poster design and deployment of the individuals and organisations involved in manner poster production.

I conducted 22 semi-structured expert interviews with 34 individuals working in the Japanese transport and advertising industries who were directly involved in the planning and deployment of manner improvement initiatives or related activities. Interviewees included managerial and regular staff in railway companies’ ‘service quality’ and ‘customer service’ departments, as well as illustrators, designers, art directors, and producers involved in creating the visual media used by railway companies to appeal to passenger conduct. With the exception of three email interviews, interviews were conducted in person or via video call and lasted between 45 min and 150 minutes. Eight interviews were conducted as group

interviews with different members of a team of employees working on a related issue. With the exception of one interview, all interviews were conducted in Japanese. 17 out of 22 interviews were recorded with the consent of the research participants.

As a form of 'studying up' (see Section 4.2), expert interviews are often accompanied by access difficulties (Bogner, Littig and Menz, 2018; Hertz and Imber, 1995). In line with this, interviewee recruitment was one of the most challenging parts of fieldwork as it was usually impossible to directly approach potential research participants. While business elites often have high visibility (Thomas, 1995), the same cannot be said of the majority of my research participants. Although I knew which railway companies engage in manner improvement campaigns, I usually did not know the names of the individuals in charge of these. Similarly, the names of the involved advertising and design companies and freelance illustrators is usually not publicly advertised. Even when I succeeded in identifying the individuals involved, I usually had no way of contacting them directly. Instead, most participants were recruited through corporate gatekeepers by emailing a company's public relations department or using a website inquiry form to ask whether it would be possible to speak to staff involved in manner improvement campaigns. This added a substantial hurdle to the recruitment process, as there was no immediate incentive for companies to participate in the study and the initial point of contact usually was protective of employee (i.e. company) time. Furthermore, as the point of contact was different for each company, I needed to start the access negotiation process from scratch for each company. These difficulties made a systematic sampling process near impossible. Accordingly, expert interviewees were recruited through a process that is perhaps best described as convenience (Morse, 2004) – or rather inconvenience – sampling.

The interviews were conducted according to topic guides featuring open questions designed to inquire into processes involved in designing manner improvement initiatives. A semi-structured interview approach has the advantage that it allows the interviewer to ask ad hoc follow-up questions while at the same time focusing interviewees' responses. This is a necessity in interviews with experts and elites which are often conducted under tight time constraints (Conti and O'Neil, 2007; Hertz and Imber, 1995). Interviews were usually conducted in meeting rooms at the interviewee's place of work which needed to be vacated at a certain time for subsequent meetings. Topic guides were tailored to each specific interview based on preliminary research about the manner improvement activities of the respective organisation. This is in line with methodological advice for expert and elite interviews which recommends preparing thoroughly for interviews to offset the power imbalance between interviewee and interviewer (see Section 4.2). Demonstration of expert knowledge and familiarity with a company's specific initiatives or posters can help gain the interviewees' respect, and convey to participants that you are looking for more than just general information. To ensure that I did not miss any relevant topic, I ended all interviews by asking research participants whether there is anything else they would like to add. Topic guides were generally based on one of two industry-specific template guides (i.e. for railway and advertising companies) that I developed over the course of my fieldwork.

Topic guides were sent to interviewees in advance of the interview along with an explanation sheet introducing them to the research project and their rights as research participants. Sharing the questions with participants ahead of the interview served multiple purposes. First, it helped put participants at ease by briefing them about the content of the interview. In most cases, the research participants initially only had limited information about what to expect from the interview, as they only knew me from emails and had little to no prior experience with research interviews. Furthermore, when making initial contact with companies I usually could only give limited information about the research project due to the brevity that

was required when cold calling companies. Together with the research explanation sheet, the topic guide thus gave interviewees a thorough understanding of the direction and aims of the study. An added benefit was that it allowed interviewees to prepare for specific questions in advance, such as by confirming internal data or bringing along relevant documents to the interview. In fact, in a few cases interviewees had prepared written answers which I could subsequently analyse (see Section 4.1.2 below). Furthermore, several companies asked to see the questions before scheduling an interview, in which cases it is likely that the respondent was chosen according to the direction of the topic guide.

4.1.2 Document analysis

The second methodological pillar of the present study was document analysis. Analysis of transport and advertising business documents and discourse helped deepen my understanding of emic company perspectives on passenger (mis)conduct and manner improvement initiatives and allowed me to position corporate manner improvement initiatives campaigns in a wider company, industry, and society context. Document analysis also enabled me to inquire into the antecedents of contemporary manner improvement initiatives and their development over time (Chapter 5) in a way that would not have been possible through interviews alone due to the fallibility of human memory (Decker and McKinley, 2020).

Documents for analysis were acquired through archival research at the Japanese National Diet Library, the Advertising Museum Tokyo, the Saitama Railway Museum reading room, as well as multiple university libraries in Japan. During my fieldwork, I acquired copious amounts of industry documents and literature related to the field of study, ranging from advertising yearbooks to railways company press releases and guidelines regarding station and vehicle signage, together amounting to 20kg of copies and print material, 17GB of digital storage, and 50 physical books. Among these, the main source for my analysis were industry magazines. There is an array of monthly publications that report on developments and trends in the Japanese transport and advertising industries. Carrying articles by industry practitioners and specialist journalists, these magazines provide insights into industry discourse and are a rich resource of expert knowledge. Based on consultations with librarians and a magazine catalogue curated by the Japanese National Diet Library, I identified 11 journals to scour for articles related to passenger (mis)behaviour, customer service, poster campaigns, and transit advertising. Relevant articles were identified through manual review of article headlines in each issue of the targeted journals published between 1945 and 2020.

This admittedly laborious data gathering strategy was designed to account for the limitations of the archival databases I was working with. Like prior research on Japanese industry discourses, this thesis had to rely on 'partial archives and incomplete or not-fully-catalogued published materials' (White, 2018, p. 81). While the titles of the majority of articles in the identified industry journals could be searched for using key terms on the National Diet Library database, not all selected journals and time periods were available via the digital system, meaning that I frequently had to refer to physical copies. Furthermore, the idiosyncratic way in which articles were titled and had been entered into the digital archive meant that listed article names were not always a reliable indicator of a given article's relevance for the study. Finally, conducting a keyword-based search can be problematic in historical archival research as the terms used to describe a phenomenon might change over time, and it may not be until further into the research process that researchers become aware of earlier ways of talking about the phenomenon being studied (Rapley and Rees, 2018). For example, while I started my search looking for material related to *jōsha manā* (transit manners), I soon realised that only a few decades ago it was much more common to speak of

kōtsū dōtoku (transport morals) instead. Accordingly, a manual review of article titles was deemed the most suitable sampling strategy in order to avoid missing relevant material an automated keyword search might not pick up. Each article that was deemed relevant was entered into an excel sheet along with bibliographic information (e.g. issue and page numbers) for later acquisition in form of a print-out, copy or scan. In total, I acquired copies of ca. 2700 articles from railway and advertising industry journals through this process. In addition to this systematic process of document acquisition, I also collected relevant documents that I encountered during other parts of my fieldwork, such as printed matter acquired during interviews (e.g. internal documents or newsletters provided by interviewees) or picked up in train stations (e.g. company pamphlets and flyers related to passenger manners and safety). Accordingly, the generated corpus of documents consists of ‘actively’ (e.g. industry journals, press releases) and ‘passively’ acquired documents (e.g. documents acquired from interviewees or in train stations). Together, they helped provide insights into company engagement with passenger behaviour and the motivations and considerations driving company initiatives.

While time-consuming, the process of combing through decades worth of industry discourse was of analytical value. It familiarised me with the industries that were of central importance to my study, providing me with background information that informed my analysis (e.g. state of the industry and historic social context), and equipped me with specialist vocabulary and knowledge that was integral for successfully navigating expert interviews in Japanese (see Section 4.2). Furthermore, the process of gathering archival material also suited the exploratory nature of the research project (Decker and McKinley, 2020) which was necessitated by a relative lack of prior studies on the subject matter (see Chapters 1 and 3).

The analytical process was as follows. Each identified article or other document item was assigned ‘high’ or ‘low’ priority status when entered into the excel sheet. ‘High priority’ items refer to those I considered key to understanding railway company efforts to improve passenger behaviour when initially skimming through the documents, whereas ‘low priority’ items refer to documents that might become relevant during analysis and writing-up phase. After returning from the field, I carefully read high priority documents and compiled short memos consisting of a summary and ad-hoc analytical notes for each read item. After finishing my initial survey of key documents, I then revisited the memos to consider the documents in context of each other and look for larger themes. Emerging themes were confirmed and adjusted by perusing a selection of items previously assigned ‘low priority’ status relevant to the issue at hand. Overall, I closely examined more than 250 documents. The analytic process was interwoven with the analysis of expert interviews, and helped confirm, flesh-out, and complicate information and accounts given by interviewees.

4.1.3 Visual analysis

Taking up the case of corporate poster campaigns that visually appeal to passenger etiquette, this thesis has a distinct visual focus. Although the examined posters also feature written language, visual elements fundamentally shape poster meaning and usually dominate the poster layout (see Chapters 5 and 7). This section will outline the research approach that has been adopted to make sense of the visual aspects of manner posters.

According to Rose (2016, pp. 24–46, 373–376), visual analysis can be directed at four different ‘sites’ of visual meaning-making:

1. *The production of visual material*: Who produced a given visual artifact and why? When, where, and how was it created? Which social, cultural, or economic factors shaped the production process?
2. *The image itself*: Which visual components make up the image? How are they arranged and tied to each other to create meaning? What do they signify?
3. *The circulation of visual material*: How does the image travel as a medium? What actors and factors shape this process? How does it alter the visual material and shape its reception?
4. *The audiencing of visual material*: Who consumes the visual material? How do audiences create meaning from images and relate to it? How does the viewing context influence meaning-making processes?

This thesis zooms in on the first two sites of visual meaning-making: the production of manner posters as a medium of persuasive visual communication, and the design techniques and strategies they employ to visually appeal to passenger conduct. Expert interviews and document analysis (see Sections 4.1.1 and 4.1.2) are employed to explore the first site, the *production* of public transport etiquette posters, and examine the considerations and logics that drive manner poster design and deployment (see Aiello, 2012 for an example of another study that makes use of interviews to inquire into the representational choices and social context shaping the production of visual material). Document analysis is also used to trace the history of manner posters as a genre of public communication in Japanese cities, and specify the socio-economic factors that shaped its development (Chapter 5). The second site, that of the *image*, will be explored through a two-pronged content analysis approach that is outlined below.

4.1.3.1 *Visual content analysis*

The method of content analysis was originally developed for the empirical analysis of written – and predominately journalistic – texts (see Krippendorff, 2004) but has since been adapted for the examination of visual material by several scholars (e.g. Bell, 2001; Parry, 2019). Berelson (1952), who is largely credited with ‘codifying’ classic content analysis into a ‘canonical form’, defines the method as ‘a research technique for the objective, systematic, and quantitative description of the manifest content of communication’ (Berelson 1952 in Aiello and Parry, 2019, p. 22; Ball and Smith, 1992, p. 20). Following this definition, content analysis has been primarily understood as a quantitative method that seeks to make sense of texts by ‘quant[ifying] content in terms of pre-determined categories’ (Bryman, 2008, p. 274; Serafini and Reid, 2019). It is a ‘methodologically explicit’ research approach that requires researchers to follow clearly defined analytical procedures (Rose, 2016, p. 85). Rose (2016, pp. 88–99) identifies four steps of visual content analysis:

1. *Finding images*: selecting images for analysis through established sampling strategies to ensure representativeness. The sampling process should fit the research questions and phenomenon.
2. *Designing coding categories*: develop a coding scheme with code categories that are exhaustive and mutually exclusive. The coding scheme will help researchers dissect images into their individual components. To ensure that codes are analytically significant, they should be devised after consulting relevant theory and literature.
3. *Coding*: systematic and thorough application of coding scheme to images, aiming for replicability.
4. *Analysis*: producing a quantitative account of the coded sample (e.g. through frequency counts or examining the relationships between different coding categories). The results should be interpreted through contextual knowledge of the studied phenomenon.

Critics of the method have pointed out that there is a limit to the insights that can be gained through a purely numerical analysis (e.g. frequency counts; see Bell, 2001; Kracauer, 1952). While Berelson and his followers have argued that the integration of qualitative elements into content analysis would threaten its ‘scientific’ and ‘objective’ character and bring it closer to subjective literary textual interpretation (Ball and Smith, 1992, pp. 28–29), there have been multiple attempts to reconcile content analysis with qualitative research methodologies. For example, Kracauer (1952) proposed a qualitative approach to content analysis that moves beyond quantitative content analysis’ exclusive focus on ‘manifest content’ and numerical analysis (Ball and Smith, 1992, p. 29). Similarly, Lutz and Collins (1993) and Krippendorff (2004) incorporated qualitative elements and interpretative processes into content analysis (Rose, 2016, p. 87), with Krippendorff (2004) contending that it is not the quantifiability of findings, but rather their validity and replicability that is important (Rose, 2016, p. 87). While Berelson’s (1952) definition of content analysis remains influential, contemporary visual research questions its positivist orientation and exclusive focus on numerical analysis. Instead, visual scholars such as Aiello and Parry (2019, p. 22) encourage us to think of content analysis as a systematic description of manifest content. In other words, the defining characteristics of visual content analysis are not that it is ‘quantitative’ and ‘objective’, but rather that it examines the *palpable* visual elements of a corpus of images (as opposed to the latent meaning that is the focus of semiotic analysis) in a *consistent* manner (see Aiello and Parry, 2019, p. 22; Ball and Smith, 1992, p. 21). This paves the way for a conceptualisation of visual content analysis as a flexible methodological spectrum that can be tailored to the demands of the specific empirical case (Ball and Smith, 1992).

This thesis employs a two-pronged approach to visual analysis that blends quantitative and multimodal content analysis approaches to provide insights into manner posters’ semiotically complex communication of behavioural expectations. The first part of the visual analysis consisted of a quantitative content analysis (see above; Parry, 2019; Rose, 2016, pp. 88–99) of 120 annual campaign posters issued by Tokyo Metro between 2010 and 2021 (excl. the 2011-2012 series; see below for the reasons for this exclusion). Tokyo Metro’s posters were chosen because they are considered to be leading examples of manner posters within the industry and have repeatedly been the focus of media attention (e.g. Asahi Shimbun, 1992, 2009; Ōtani, 2009). Focusing on poster themes and character figuration (see Table 1), the quantitative analysis allowed me to systematically inquire into the content and visual structure of Japan’s most well-known annual manner poster series.

Quantitative coding scheme	
Coding category	Values
Targeted behaviour	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Seating etiquette 2. Boarding and deboarding etiquette 3. Noise 4. Positioning luggage 5. Transporting luggage 6. Walking while using smartphone 7. Other mobile device/smartphone-related offenses 8. Cleanliness and sensory sanitisation
Total number of characters represented (i.e. participants)	Numerical value

Character types	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Passengers & numerical value 2. Railway company employees & numerical value 3. Fictive characters & numerical value
Character roles	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Offenders & numerical value 2. Victims & numerical value 3. Beneficiaries & numerical value 4. Onlookers & numerical value 5. Exemplars & numerical value 6. Intervening agents & numerical value
Distribution of character roles	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Offender × [character type {a. passenger, b. employee, c. fictive character}] & numerical value 2. Victim × [character type {a. passenger, b. employee, c. fictive character}] & numerical value 3. Beneficiary × [character type {a. passenger, b. employee, c. fictive character}] & numerical value 4. Onlookers × [character type {a. passenger, b. employee, c. fictive character}] & numerical value 5. Exemplars × [character type {a. passenger, b. employee, c. fictive character}] & numerical value 6. Intervening agent × [character type {a. passenger, b. employee, c. fictive character}] & numerical value

Table 1 Quantitative coding scheme. See Chapter 7 for more information on character roles and types.

While quantitative content analysis is the most established form of content analysis (see above), it only fulfilled a supplementary role in this thesis due to the nature of the examined visual material. Manner posters are characterised by a significantly greater range of creative visual expression than the journalistic photographs that are often the subject of quantitative content analyses (see Lutz and Collins, 1993; Parry, 2019). For example, manner posters' comic-style drawings on posters often depict passengers as anthropomorphic characters and feature fictive environments and artificial camera angles. The diversity of the employed visual formats (see Figures 1-6 and 10-11 for examples) made it difficult to develop a uniform coding scheme. In addition, the employed drawing style often rendered socio-demographic characteristics (e.g. age, gender) of the depicted characters indiscernible, particularly in the case of anthropomorphic characters. These visual characteristics present a challenge for researchers seeking to conduct a quantitative content analysis which requires unambiguous definitions of predetermined variables and values to ensure consistent coding and, thus, reliable findings (Bell, 2001, p. 17). Accordingly, I was only able to develop a 'minimalist' coding scheme that focused on univocally describable visual features such as targeted behaviour, and the types and roles of image participants (see Table 1). Even under this seemingly straightforward coding scheme, I had no choice but to exclude one annual series by Tokyo Metro (2011-2012) from the sample because the employed visual format was simply too different from other posters issued by the company during the surveyed period: it did not feature illustrations of passenger misconduct in transport environments but rather used photographs of animals as affective metaphors of etiquette transgressions.

I tackled the above described challenges by combining quantitative content analysis with multimodal content analysis (MMCA). MMCA, a recent variation of qualitative content analysis developed by Serafini and Reid (2019), draws on prior approaches to qualitative content analysis, interpretative research design, and social semiotics in order to appropriately address the complex multimodal nature of contemporary

communication. Next to its explicitly multimodal focus, one of the defining characteristics that sets MMCA apart from quantitative visual content analysis is that it does *not* involve devising a coding scheme. Instead, researchers review the sample of visual material, document observations through analytical memos, and develop an analytical *template* based on this (Serafini and Reid, 2019, pp. 12–14). A typical MMCA template includes categories regarding visual, textual and design elements, as well as intermodal relations (Serafini and Reid, 2019, p. 15). Whereas in quantitative content analysis findings are recorded via pre-determined codes and values, MMCA’s analytical template allows researchers to record free form observations, while facilitating systematic examination of the studied corpus of material.

I conducted a multimodal content analysis of 40 manner posters issued by Tokyo rail- and subway companies between 2011-2021. Following Serafini and Reid (2019), I completed an analytical template for each examined poster, thus ensuring a systematic and in-depth examination (see Table 2). Like the model template discussed by Serafini and Reid (2019), the analytical categories in my template were inspired by Kress and van Leeuwen’s (2006) influential work on ‘reading’ images (see Chapter 2). For example, the categories ‘number, age, gender, appearance (of characters)’ and ‘behaviour, attitude, relations between characters’ facilitated the inquiry into narrative structures and representational meaning of images. Similarly, the categories ‘perspective’, ‘relation to viewer’, and ‘saliency’ allowed me to explore posters interactive and compositional meaning (see Chapter 2). Accordingly, the adopted MMCA approach enabled me to fruitfully combine content analysis and social semiotics for a systematic qualitative analysis of a larger corpus of images (as opposed to the focus on individual images common in traditional social semiotic studies). Accordingly, an MMCA approach, by combining flexibility and consistency, allowed me to overcome the methodological challenges posed by a highly diverse corpus of visual material.

I. Poster
Targeted behaviour
Setting
Perspective
II. Characters
Number, age, gender, appearance
Behaviour, attitude, relations between characters
Location and saliency
Relation to viewer
III. Composition and syntax
Visual style
Colour
Visual strategies
Verbal strategies
Font and script
IV. References
Intertextuality
Temporality
General comments

Table 2 Analytical template used in multimodal content analysis.

The analytical template was applied to 40 manner posters issued by Tokyo rail- and subway companies between 2011-2021. The sample consists of posters targeting four different types of etiquette infractions: noise nuisances, 'unclean' behaviour (e.g. littering), rushing onto the train at the last minute, and walking while using a smartphone. These behaviours were chosen as they are representative of efficiency, comfort, and safety as underlying themes of transit etiquette campaigns (see Chapter 5). For each behaviour, 10 posters were randomly selected from a private collection of 500 photos of manner posters issued by Tokyo railway companies between 2011-2021. This approach allowed me to account for the internal diversity of the manner poster genre. Manner posters employ a variety of textual and visual formats; a diversity that can be explained through the sheer number of companies and different company sections involved in making manner posters (see Chapter 5). While some companies – like Tokyo Metro – publish recent manner posters series on their website, these are only representative of *one* production pathway at *one* company. To this date, there is no comprehensive archive or database of manner posters that brings together posters from various companies and production pathways, making 'real' random sampling near impossible. Seeking to uphold the gold standard of random sampling, the quantitative content analysis was thus necessarily limited to posters series of a company that publishes their manner posters online. The MMCA was not bound by this restriction and thus able to provide broader insights into manner posters as an urban media phenomenon.

Despite the above discussed challenges and workarounds, content analysis overall proved well-suited for examining manner posters as media of visual communication. Previous visual studies of manner posters have provided rich insights into the design of individual posters or poster series by employing a (social) semiotic framework (Eberhardinger, 2019; Padoan, 2014). However, this thesis is less concerned with specific posters as media artifacts than it is with manner posters as a genre of public communication that is pervasive in Japanese urban environments. Accordingly, it needed to adopt a different method of visual analysis. This was achieved through a two-pronged content analysis approach. The quantitative content analysis offered insights into the visual content of Tokyo Metro manner posters as well-known examples of the visual communication campaigns. In addition, the MMCA approach allowed me to draw on social semiotic thought (see Chapter 2) to explore the visual and design structure of manner posters, while at the same time ensuring a systematic analysis of the visually diverse material. Taken together, they thus allowed me to identify patterns in a larger corpus of manner posters as a genre of public communication in Japanese cities (Bell, 2001; Rose, 2016, p. 85). Finally, as I was already familiar with the visual material before the start of my research due to extensive previous Japan experience, the 'methodologically explicit' (Rose, 2016, p. 85) nature of content analysis was also useful for circumventing potential presumptions and biases (Rose, 2016, pp. 87–88): the coding scheme (quantitative content analysis) and analytical template (MMCA) forced me to carefully examine each poster without relying solely on prior assumptions.

4.1.4 Transit ethnography

While expert interviews and document analysis helped me understand the organisational logics driving corporate manner improvement initiatives, transit ethnography enabled me to inquire into the passenger conducts that are the target of such initiatives. This involved participant observation as a passenger on public transport in the Greater Tokyo area as well as passenger interviews.

Tokyo's urban rail system is essential for the operation of socio-economic life in the city and as such was crucial for my work and private life during fieldwork. Train and subway were my first transport choice whenever I had to venture outside of the immediate vicinity of my university guesthouse accommodation. Not only were they quicker and more convenient than bus connections, but they were often my only

option as I did not have access to a bicycle or car, and Tokyo taxi fares are prohibitively expensive. I conducted participant observation as a passenger whenever I took public transportation, paying attention to commuters' demeanour and occurrences on the train or in the station, as well as the level of crowdedness and noise while typing fieldnotes into my phone. Commonly, it was only possible to take short notes, so I often continued writing fieldnotes after returning home. In total, I wrote 197,000 words of fieldnotes during my fieldwork (note that these also included reflections on access negotiations, interviews, and archive visits). I recorded approximately 300 trips on trains and subways during fieldwork, which often included transfers between different lines and companies.

The ethnographic documentation of transport environments was 'organic' – it emerged out of my actual mobility needs in the city, rather than systematically designed passenger practices (e.g. riding specific lines at specific times). While a structured approach arguably could have benefited the strength of my ethnographic data, I decided on an unstructured approach for three reasons. First, as trains depart every few minutes on most inner city lines and I was just able to conduct observations in one out of 8-15 carriages of one particular train, my sample size would always have been too small to make any convincing claims that are representative in quantitative terms. Second, while a focus on a particular line would have been appropriate if my research would have focused on *station* level engagement with passenger manners, my concern for *company* level initiatives required a more comprehensive approach to the ethnographic study of Tokyo's railway network. Finally, there were pragmatic considerations. Systematic ethnographic documentation of the transport system would have required significant additional expenses in terms of both time and money that did not seem warranted as my primary research focus was not on commuter experience but company initiatives, and comprehensive autoethnographic studies of the Tokyo urban rail network already exist (Negishi, 2016).

Transit ethnography further included interviews with passengers. Passenger interviews facilitated insights into commuters' experience of transport spaces and moments of transgressive behaviour. Due to the demands of local transit etiquette, interviews were *not* integrated into my participant observation as a passenger in form of unstructured informal interviews, but conducted as formal sit-down interviews. In general, approaching strangers is not permissible on trains and stations in Tokyo, and even conversations among friends or colleagues travelling together are potentially problematic as they could disturb or annoy other passengers. Anthropologist Michael Fisch (2018, p. 175) found that even when faced with a major disruption of normal transit operations such as a forced delay caused by a commuter suicide, fellow passengers were often unwilling to answer his questions regarding the occurrence. In other words, although I was surrounded by commuters whenever I stepped on the train, transport environments were not a suitable place to recruit research participants. Instead, I turned to my existing social networks to obtain insights into commuter perspectives. I conducted a total of 11 formal, sit-down interviews with Japanese and non-Japanese residents in the Tokyo area. Interviews were semi-structured (Brinkmann, 2014) and focused on experiences of unusual and annoying occurrences involving other passengers, and participants' own histories of breaking transit etiquette. Interviews also featured an open card-sorting exercise (Conrad and Tucker, 2019) during which participants were asked to write down manner infractions they can recall on flash cards and arrange them according to interviewer prompts (e.g. 'Please sort them in groups that make sense to you') which allowed me to inquire into interviewees' perception of manner transgressions, and surrounding mental models, i.e. how they made sense of passenger misbehaviours. In addition to this, I engaged in numerous informal conversations about the Tokyo railway system, commuter manners, and company manner improvement efforts with Japanese and non-Japanese

residents of Tokyo over the course of my fieldwork that I documented as part of my fieldnotes. Finally, I conducted 19 online interviews focusing on transit experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic together with a research participant and collaborator which became the basis for a collaborative research manga (*Illustrating Anthropology*, 2020; see Appendix A, B).

The reader will note that the number of formal, sit-down passenger interviews is comparatively low. While I intended to recruit more participants and branch out into different passenger groups that were underrepresented due to my convenience sampling approach (e.g. talking to more middle-aged and elderly passengers), these plans were cut short by the COVID-19 pandemic (see Section 9.4.1). Although my original passenger interview research plans remained unfulfilled, this did not affect the overall research goals. As the present thesis places its analytical focus firmly on manner improvement campaigns and the logics that shape their design rather than actual passenger experience and commuter practices, transit ethnography largely was a supplementary method that supported the three methodological pillars of expert interviews, document analysis, and visual analysis. Still, transit ethnography presented a highly valuable component of the current research. Participant observation allowed me to root my analysis in first-hand knowledge of actual social life in transit spaces: for example, what trains and stations feel like at different times of the day, what manner infractions are common, and how commuters react to them. Four years of experience as a user of the city's public transport system prior to beginning fieldwork also informed my analysis. Similarly, interviews and conversations with fellow passengers allowed me to compare my perceptions of transit spaces and practices to that of other users, and thus ensure that my analysis is not disconnected from emic interpretations and concerns. Transit ethnography also presented the basis for a research-themed comic I created together with a Japanese illustrator and research participant, working on which further informed my thinking on the topic of analysis¹⁷, as well as a visual essay (Schimkowsky, forthcoming). Due to the supplementary function transit ethnography had for this thesis and time restraints imposed by the submission deadline, I chose not to submit passenger interviews and fieldnotes to the same in-depth analysis as expert interviews, documents, and visual material. Transit ethnography chiefly presents something I root my analysis in, rather than a primary data source.

4.2 The challenges of studying up

As an individual PhD student researching the activities of large Japanese companies and interviewing professionals and managers in the transport and advertising industries, I was 'studying up' (Gusterson, 1997; Nader, 1974). This section will examine the challenges of this process and reflect on its impact on the research. Originally coined by US anthropologist Nader (1974), the terminology of 'studying up' and 'studying down' refers to researchers' relative positionality towards research participants. While there is a tendency in sociological research to study 'down' to groups and individuals that are less 'powerful' than the researcher (e.g. in terms of access to financial, cultural, and social capital; Mikecz, 2012), there have been repeated calls to 'redirect the academic gaze upwards' (Aguar, 2012). 'Studying up' allows researchers to understand the mechanisms by which influential organisations, institutions, and individuals shape everyday life and thus gain a more complete understanding of the social world (Aguar, 2012; Gusterson, 1997; Nader, 1974; Robbins, 2013). However, although there is a tradition of sociological

¹⁷ The comic, which is reproduced in the appendix of this thesis (see Appendix A, B), was originally created for the Royal Anthropological Institute's *Illustrating Anthropology* project (see Section 9.3; *Illustrating Anthropology*, 2020). Next to the transit ethnography described above, it is also based on additional 19 online interviews with commuter I conducted together with my collaborator.

research of social elites (Mills, 1956), overall studies on powerful and influential organisations and groups remains far and few between compared to research on ordinary citizens and marginalised groups in society. The reasons for this have previously been explained as relating to methodological challenges involved in studying up (e.g. access; Gusterson, 1997), as well as a preference for ‘underdogs’ or ‘suffering subjects’ shared by many social scientists (Hertz and Imber, 1995; Nader, 1974; Robbins, 2013). This thesis bucks the trend of social science research by directing the academic gaze upwards. The majority of my participants consisted of staff from multiple leading businesses in the Japanese transport and advertising industries, including one Fortune Global 500 company. Similarly, many of the creators I spoke to are highly successful and regarded in their field.

A core challenge of studying up is that of access (Gusterson, 1997, p. 115). While access problems are something most fieldwork researchers face to some degree (Nader, 1974), they are exacerbated when studying large organisations or elite individuals as these possess a greater ability to ‘surround themselves with [...] impenetrable bastions of enclosure’ (Ortner, 2010, p. 221). Instead of being able to contact potential interlocutors directly, researchers studying up often need to go through secretaries, PR departments, and other forms of professional gatekeepers (Littig, 2009; Mikecz, 2012; Thomas, 1995). Access difficulties were pronounced in this study and determined my research approach. As discussed towards the beginning of this chapter, I needed to revise my original plan of conducting ethnographic fieldwork within a railway company after my arrival in Japan as it was simply not feasible to gain corporate permission. This experience reflects Gusterson’s (1997, p. 115) argument that ‘participant observation is a research technique that does not travel well up the social structure’. Originally developed for the study of small-scale societies where visiting researchers could be easily integrated ‘into the flow of daily life’ (Gusterson, 1997, p. 115), researchers seeking to employ the method in modern organisations often face difficulties as their presence usually needs to be officially legitimised and permitted. Unable to rely on participant observation as centre piece of data collection, ethnographic studies of large institutions or powerful groups thus need to pursue a ‘polymorphous engagement’ with the fieldsite and draw on an ‘eclectic mix’ of methods (Gusterson, 1997, p. 116; Ortner, 2010), as I did with the multi-method approach described in the Section 4.1.

Another aspect in which the methodological challenges of studying up became evident during fieldwork was negotiating access for interviews. As mentioned above, I usually was not able to recruit participants directly but needed to contact them through organisational channels. The process of negotiating interview access was inherently unequal: I was an individual foreign PhD researcher petitioning large companies for interview appointments. Whereas researchers studying down can argue that they empower their research subjects by giving them a voice or helping them in other ways, I struggled to identify a meaningful way in which my research benefitted my participants. Accordingly, I largely depended on a ‘donation’ of time from my research participants (Conti and O’Neil, 2007, p. 71).

Researchers studying up often describe the process of negotiating access and scheduling interviews as labour-intensive (Odendahl and Shaw, 2001; Thomas, 1995). In line with this, I experienced the recruitment of research participants as a time-consuming and burdensome process. In most cases, negotiating access involved a string of formal emails, faxes, and/or phone calls, and consisted of multiple ‘stages’: initial inquiry, further explanation of the project and my request, and finally scheduling an appointment. I needed to allow ample time for the negotiation process as requesting an appointment on a short notice would have implied a lack of respect for the other party’s work schedule, and scheduling

an appointment might require internal discussions within the target organisation and/or approval from management. Usually it took around one month from initial contact to the actual interview.

The recruitment process was particularly laborious because of the implications of conducting fieldwork in a foreign language. Contacting companies was a formal process that required appropriate language use. Using complex, honorific forms of Japanese language was necessary not just to show deference to gatekeepers and interlocutors of higher social status than myself, but also to demonstrate to potential participants that I spoke their language (*business Japanese*) and was familiar with cultural requirements. As my inquiry – a foreign researcher requesting an interview – was unusual for most interlocutors, it was important to frame it in a language and format that was familiar to them.

The power imbalance between me and my participants is also evident from the interviews themselves. When studying up, researchers usually have no choice but to heed interviewees' demands regarding interview time and location (Thomas, 1995, p. 9). As a consequence, I conducted most interviews on participants' 'home turf' (i.e. their place of work). Not only did this further skew the power dynamics in their favour, but the mere physical process of accessing the interview location served as a reminder of the power relationship between us. Interviews commonly took place in towering office buildings in central Tokyo where I needed to register at a reception or security desk upon arrival, and sometimes received a badge needed to pass security gates. Like the scheduling process preceding the meetings, interaction at interviews was highly formal, with interviews usually taking place in company meeting rooms and beginning with an exchange of business cards. While the interaction with all participants was generally pleasant and respectful, there were some stark reminders of the underlying power relationship between me and my participants. An example of this is one group interview during which the most senior participant, a vice company director, took charge of the interview by selecting questions from the topic guide I had prepared and delegating them to other interview participants (see Conti and O'Neil, 2007, p. 70 for a similar experience). More significantly, the formal character of the access negotiations and interview interactions, meant that the interviews were 'structured one-off appointments' which granted little scope for establishing long-term relationships with my participants (Mukherjee, 2017, p. 294). Asking for follow-up interviews was similarly out of the question (Mikecz, 2012).

When studying up, researchers often employ a set of common strategies to alleviate the methodological challenges that come with studying powerful organisations or individuals (Conti and O'Neil, 2007; Mikecz, 2012; Ryan and Lewer, 2012). This was evident from my own research approach. When contacting companies, I stressed my affiliation with a leading Japanese university, and emphasised my status as a 'Visiting Researcher' rather than PhD student, to augment my status in the eyes of potential participants. Later on in the fieldwork process, I also tried to present myself as a (semi-)insider by referring to previous research interviews with industry organisations. However, this was not always enough. For example, in the case of JR East – by some measurements the largest railway company worldwide – contact was established through contacts of my host professor. In other words, research access was facilitated through another elite (Ryan and Lewer, 2012). It also reflects the often-emphasised importance of introductions for interview studies in Japan (Bestor, Steinhoff and Lyon-Bestor, 2003; Kottmann and Reiher, 2020).

Prior research and preparation was another key to navigating access and interviews with industry actors (Ostrander, 1993; Ryan and Lewer, 2012). I thoroughly researched manner initiatives by target organisations before reaching out to them, and created tailored topic guides for each interview. Furthermore, as part of my archival research, I familiarised myself with industry-specific terminology

which helped convey to participants that I already possessed significant knowledge of the research topic. Finally, I spent a considerable amount of resources on polishing emails and faxes I sent to organisations such as by utilising specialist websites for Japanese novice employees struggling with business communication and by hiring a Japanese language instructor to check my drafts for mistakes. This was part of impression management designed to present myself (as much as possible) as a ‘professional’ researcher in order to be taken seriously by my research participants. Pursuing the same goal, I also usually wore a suit to interviews to fit in in the corporate context (Conti and O’Neil, 2007; Mikecz, 2012).

The dichotomous pair of ‘studying up’ and ‘studying down’ does not encapsulate all possible research directions (Hannerz, 2006). In recent years methodological discussions have placed greater focus on the notions of ‘studying sideways’ and ‘studying across’ to draw attention to situations in which there is relative status equivalence between researcher and participant (Gazit and Maoz-Shai, 2010; Ortner, 2010; Plesner, 2011). For example, Ortner (2010, p. 213) argued that ‘much of what is called studying up is really “studying sideways”, that is studying people [...] who in many ways are really not much different from [...] academics’. In her interviews with individuals in the film industry, Ortner found that she was mostly talking to members of the ‘knowledge classes’ that she herself is a member of, and concluded that ‘these folks are not “up” relative to us, they are [...] us’. I can say with confidence that this was not the case in my study. While Gazit and Maoz-Shai (2010) argued that a shared social background can reduce the distance between researchers and participants, turning situations of ‘studying up’ into ‘studying across’, in my case the opposite was the case: my personal characteristics (e.g. nationality, ethnicity, language ability, and employment status) only further increased the social distance between me and my participants. While they were Japanese nationals and native speakers, I was a European national and Japanese language learner; while they were employees, I was a student. As a consequence of this, some of the strategies designed to alleviate the challenges of studying up suggested in the methodological literature were unavailable to me. For example, while Odendahl and Shaw (2001) argue that power imbalances between researchers and high-status research participants can be partially offset by stressing one’s position in the university, this was largely unfeasible as a PhD researcher. It was particularly difficult in the Japanese corporate context where engaging in full-time employment is seen as necessary to become a full-fledged adult (*shakaijin*), and people pursuing their PhD are usually understood as students, rather than independent researchers. Similarly, ‘promoting’ myself and the project to key gatekeepers (Okumus, Altinay and Roper, 2007) was also difficult as common academic achievements a PhD researcher might have (e.g. paper publications) do not translate easily into the corporate context. Furthermore, ‘boasting’ is viewed as problematic in most formal settings in Japanese cultural contexts. Accordingly, while a dichotomous understanding of ‘studying up’ and ‘down’ certainly does not encapsulate the complete universe of possible researcher positionalities in the field, ‘studying up’ is still a fitting description of my research experience. As a foreign PhD student studying major corporations in the world’s third-largest economy and a former colonial power, fieldwork often felt like an uphill battle.

I want to conclude this section with some final observations about the role of language in the fieldwork process as it gives further weight to this argument. With the exception of one interview, all interviews were conducted in Japanese: the first language of my interviewees but my third. Although I studied Japanese intermittently for close to a decade and spent several years in Japan before starting fieldwork, managing interview situations was still often a challenge. Even for native speakers, Interviews are cognitively challenging situations, as they require interviewers to simultaneously follow abstract (and often ill-structured) interviewee narratives, take notes, signal attention through para-linguistic responses,

and make strategic decisions about follow-up questions (Portigal, 2013). Needless to say, not only are all of these tasks more challenging to complete for language learners, but the non-native interviewer might also face additional difficulties, such as the extra stress 'foreign language anxiety' (Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope, 1986) can add to interview situations. Furthermore, the use of specialist vocabulary or non-standard expressions can make interviews difficult to navigate. In the case of this study, not only did the interview demand the use of formal business Japanese that was far removed from the casual and everyday Japanese I was used to, but it also revolved around industry-specific terminology I had little exposure to prior to starting this research. Such language issues not only present practical challenges, but they also impact the power relation between researcher and participant. As a language learner interviewing a native speaker, I was 'handicapped' in the interview situation, and did not meet interviewees on even ground linguistically. Suboptimal language skills necessarily impact the researcher's interviewing abilities. For example, it was sometimes difficult for me to 'push' interviewees on evasive answers, or to nimbly respond to unexpected turns in the conversation. Furthermore, language learner status also impacts the interviewers' ability to make use of strategies suggested to offset power imbalances when interviewing high-status individuals. For instance, Ryan and Lewer (2012, p. 78) suggest researchers should emphasise their expert status by 'appearing competent, having a firm grasp of your topic area'. Naturally, this can be difficult as a language learner struggling to describe abstract content eloquently. Accordingly, researcher's and participants' unequal language abilities can further deepen power imbalances between them (or arguably offset them when 'studying down'). Accordingly, my disadvantaged position as a non-native interviewer reiterates the power imbalance between my participants and me, and points to language ability as an often overlooked aspect of 'studying up'.

4.3 Research ethics

The research was conducted in line with university ethics regulations and received full ethical approval by the University of Sheffield's Ethics Committee prior to fieldwork (Department of Sociological Studies; Reference Number 026450). My affiliation with local universities as a visiting researcher further helped vouchsafe the credibility of the project. During fieldwork, I had regular conversations with professors at my host universities (Keio University and Waseda University) who advised me on my research approach, and helped ensure that the research methodology was in line with local expectations of research ethics, practice, and etiquette.

All interviews were conducted with the full informed consent of interviewees. Interviewees were sent a Japanese language information sheet before the interview, which explained the direction and purpose of the study, and informed them how the data would be handled. The information sheet further advised participants that they could withdraw from the study at any time without any negative consequences. Finally, the document also included the contact details of my fieldwork advisor and host in Japan. Accordingly, my affiliation with Keio University provided participants with the option to contact a Japanese institution with further questions regarding the project. This presented an extra level of safety for participants, who were able to reach out to a recognised local institution in their native language, and without the potential access hurdles that might come with having to contact a foreign university. In addition, participants received an oral explanation of the research project before the start of the interview, and were encouraged to ask questions in case there was anything they did not understand. In most cases interviewees were also sent a complete list of questions before the interview. Research participants thus entered the interview fully informed about the direction of the project.

The interviews focused on standard work processes and did not touch on any sensitive topics. In a few cases, participants voluntarily brought up information they described as sensitive (e.g. interactions with clients and co-workers), and I have omitted references to this information in this thesis and associated publications (Schimkowsky, 2021b, 2021c, under review). Except for Mr. Uematsu at JR East, who was given a pseudonym in this chapter for narrative purposes, all research participant information was completely anonymised. In general, I do not attribute information to specific individuals and companies, but just provide a general source (e.g. 'interview with a customer service officer at a large railway company'). This extra step was taken as the interviews often relate to the potentially delicate topic of company-customer interactions, and I am aware that the participating companies generally take great care when composing official customer communication. It also reflects recommendations by the University of Sheffield's Ethics Committee. Furthermore, I have omitted all other information that could be used to identify interviewees or participating companies (e.g. details about specific poster series). Similar care was also taken when discussing information gained from internal documents shared by participants. I generally refrained from making references to the activities of specific companies unless information about them is publicly available. Regardless of these comprehensive measures, anonymisation did not negatively affect my analysis, as the thesis examines railway company-led transit manner improvement initiatives as a general phenomenon (i.e. as opposed to a case study approach comparing the approaches of different companies). All interview data has been stored on an encrypted device that only I have access to, and will be destroyed three years after the completion of my PhD study.

It was not feasible to gain the informed consent of commuters present during observational work as a passenger. Observations focused on the general presence of company interventions in passenger behaviour, unspoken rules of public transport and passengers' general interaction with them, as opposed to the behaviour of identifiable individuals who are followed through their journeys without their knowing. Accordingly, the observations did not exceed the general visibility of one's conduct as a passenger that is to be expected when taking public transport. I did not gather any data that would allow the identification of individual passengers or transport company employees.

One final note about the role of research ethics in the context of studying up. While ethical guidelines and regulations are rightfully in place to protect the interests of research participants, we should not forget that many research participants actively look after their own interests. This is particularly true in the case of studying up, where researchers often face powerful individuals and organisations that can erect numerous barriers to keep them out. The significant hurdles I encountered when negotiating research access indicate that my participants carefully weighted their participation in the project, and were often hesitant to associate themselves with an external researcher or commit time to an academic study. In a few cases, potential participants also requested to see a document confirming my affiliation with Keio University or a CV, illustrating that interlocutors might choose to vet researchers before agreeing to participate. While university processes ethics review processes often take 'studying down' situations as a starting point, ethical research practice thus needs to consider the demands of the specific research situation.

This chapter has introduced readers to the thesis' employed research approach and process. It concludes our three-part introduction to the thesis' analytical and methodological foundation (Chapters 2-4). In the subsequent chapters, we will turn our attention to the empirical analysis of Japanese public transport manner posters.

Part II. Empirical Analysis

a Preamble to Part II

As outlined at the beginning of the thesis, the following set of three empirical chapters take a paper format in line with University of Sheffield guidelines regarding a 'publication format' thesis.

Chapter 5, the first chapter in this section, was originally published in *Japanese Studies* and provides an introduction to the manner poster phenomenon by discussing posters' content and structure as media texts. Distinguishing between posters taking up passenger offenses related to comfort, safety, and efficiency, it highlights three interrelated poster categories. It further traces the history of manner posters as a genre of public communication in Japanese urban public transport spaces, and relates it to changes in the Japanese railway and advertising industries, as well as wider societal transformations. The chapter, which primarily draws on archival research and expert interviews, contributes to scholarship on Japanese cities and society by familiarising readers with the nature and history of a media phenomenon that, while pervasive in public transport spaces and frequent focus of public and media attention, has been subject to limited dedicated scholarly inquiry.

The subsequent Chapter 6, originally published in *Mobilities*, explores the rationale behind Japanese railway providers' manner poster-based interventions in passenger etiquette. Based on expert interviews with individuals involved in the production of manner posters and analysis of industry documents, it inquires into the corporate and creative considerations driving manner poster design and deployment. It highlights that poster campaigns are fundamentally shaped by companies' concerns for customer comfort, sensibilities, and satisfaction, rather than a disciplinary desire or explicit regulatory will. The chapter contributes to scholarship on urban mobilities and socialities by examining the production logics of a media phenomenon that can be observed in public transport environments in cities worldwide, but has not yet been the focus of in-depth academic examination.

Chapter 7, under review by the journal *Visual Communication* at the time of writing, explores how railway companies attempt to appeal to passenger etiquette through visual design. It employs a two-pronged visual analysis approach to analyse the semiotic strategies poster producers employ to address passenger misconduct while protecting customer sensibilities. Discussing how railway companies' considerations of customer service and satisfaction are translated into a visual format, the analytic direction of the chapter is informed by the preceding Chapter 6. Chapter 7 contributes to social semiotic scholarship on visual communication, as well as the scholarly debates of routine incivilities and their management or regulation, by asking how corporate stakeholders address mundane misbehaviours through communication campaigns.

It is possible to frame the three chapters as exploring the 'what' (Chapter 5), 'why' (Chapter 6), and 'how' (Chapter 7) of the manner poster phenomenon. While originally designed as standalone publications, the three papers build on each other. For example, insights into the diversity of the manner poster genre, as exemplified through different production pathways discussed in Chapter 5, informed the sampling strategy of Chapter 7's visual analysis. Similarly, analytic distinctions between posters targeting comfort, safety, and efficiency-related passenger offenses, developed in Chapter 5, are adopted as coding categories in Chapter 7's visual content analysis, the results of which highlight the interrelated nature of these three categories. Furthermore, the arguments advanced by the three chapters are closely interrelated, as is evident from an underlying focus on considerations of customer comfort, sensibilities, satisfaction, and service as shaping manner poster production. We will return to this in the coda to the

present Part II which discusses parallels and connections between the empirical chapters that would have been ill-placed in the standalone journal publications.

Chapter 5 Manner posters: a genre approach¹⁸

Posters appealing to people to regulate their behaviour are inescapable in Japanese cities. So-called ‘manner posters’ (*manā posutā*), for example, are a ubiquitous presence in trains and stations, and target a broad scope of passenger conduct including the ‘correct’ way to transport luggage or hold a smartphone on a crowded train. Manner posters are usually issued by public transport providers and employ diverse textual and visual strategies to persuade passengers to adopt desirable mobility practices. Rather than setting out straightforward behavioural rules or restrictions through pictograms and slashed-out red circles, these posters feature cultural references, elaborate drawings, or cute characters. Their creative design has brought them to public attention in Japan and abroad. For example, three manner posters by Seibu Railways are on display in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London (since 2018)¹⁹. Recognising illustrated appeals to desirable conduct as a genre of public communication, this chapter discusses manner posters as an important presence in Japanese transport spaces that reflects, and is shaped by, shifts in urban sociality and society.

Despite the ubiquity and popularity of manner posters, their conceptual and sociocultural importance has received only limited scholarly attention. So far, students of Japanese society have discussed manner posters as part of the linguistic landscape of Japanese public transport settings (Bayne, 2018), and in the context of a broader media genre of visual problematisations of improper behaviour (Miller, 2011a). They have also analysed the linguistic and semiotic organisation of posters (Eberhardinger, 2019; Mizuta, 2013; Padoan, 2014), and recognised the use of a ‘soft’ and playful visual and linguistic style featuring informal modes of address and illustrated characters (Fisch, 2018; Negishi, 2016). Through this, scholars have argued that manner posters evoke a ‘sense of a collective’ through a combination of affective and prescriptive modes (Fisch, 2018, pp. 62–63), and positioned them as one element in a wider network of mechanisms of ‘soft control’ on public transport (Negishi, 2016). In this chapter, I build on these previous studies and a wider body of scholarship examining the role of public transport in imaginations of urban modernity in Japan (Freedman, 2011; Pendleton and Coates, 2018) to provide a dedicated account of manner posters as a type of transit media and the socio-cultural context of its development. Drawing on industry publications and interviews with transport and advertising company professionals, I introduce manner posters as a genre of communication in Japanese public transport spaces – a type of text following ‘conventions of form and content which are shared by other texts of that type’ (Chandler and Munday, 2020) – and link its development to social shifts in post-war Japan. The chapter begins with a discussion of the content and structure of manner posters. I then discuss the historical development of the genre, and situate it in the context of changes in the railway and advertising industries.

5.1 Manner posters as a genre

Manner posters are print or digital media that combine elaborate verbal and visual texts to solicit or deter specific passenger conducts. Their ubiquity in public transport spaces is due to diverse production paths. Most urban transport providers issue their own posters, and might even produce multiple series at the same time. Different company sections often produce posters independently of each other, employing

¹⁸ This chapter has been previously published as a stand-alone article in *Japanese Studies* under a CC BY-NC-ND 4.0 licence. Minor adjustments have been made to the article manuscript to ensure the internal consistency of the thesis. Please see ‘Note to the reader’ at the beginning of the thesis for a list of changes and the bibliographic information of the original article.

¹⁹ Accession numbers FE.271-2018, FE.272-2018, FE.274-2018.

them as part of diverse departmental initiatives with goals such as improving customer service or decreasing delays (Interview, advertising agency employee, April 2020). Other posters emerge from joint initiatives involving multiple railway companies or collaboration with third-sector organisations. While the majority of manner posters are a result of professional design work that is commissioned by railway companies, other posters are created internally. For example, some manner posters are produced in independent efforts by station staff.

Professionally designed manner posters are a form of advertising: attention-grabbing media that is seeking to persuade audiences (Chandler and Munday, 2020). Posters frequently draw on modern advertising techniques as discussed below. Similarly, their production process usually resembles that of other print advertisements in Japan: clients (the transport companies) commission advertising and design production companies that work with external artists to create posters. As posters are specifically produced for train stations and carriages, their design is shaped by conventions of the advertising sub-genre of ‘transit’ advertisements (*kōtsū kōkoku*). For example, designers are aware that passengers might only glimpse posters while passing through hectic stations (see Chapters 6 and 7). However, manner posters are different from regular commercial advertisements: they promote visions of desirable passenger conduct rather than commercial goods and services. Accordingly, they are closer to the genre of public service advertisements (*kōkyō kōkoku*) and transport providers sometimes refer to them as a form of public communication (*kōhō*). As inscriptions in the urban environment communicating the rules and expectations guiding behaviour in public spaces, manner posters can also be understood as a form of regulatory signage (Hermer and Hunt, 1996), a technology of governing ‘at a distance’ used to shape self-regulating subjects (Miller and Rose, 1990, p. 9; see Chapter 2).

The diverse circumstances of manner poster production explain their varied format. Manner posters are created by different actors with different goals and priorities, and might vary in terms of targeted behaviour, design style, format, tone, as well as the duration and location of their display. Nevertheless, it is possible to identify some common characteristics regarding the content and textual structure of manner posters as a genre.

5.1.1 Targeted behaviours

The term *manā* refers not just to matters of etiquette but rather the ‘correct’ way of doing something. Concerned with the ‘right’ way of using public transport, manner posters have been employed by railway companies to address a wide range of behaviour (Table 3).

Seating order and practices
Boarding behaviour
Handling and positioning of luggage and belongings
Use of mobile electronic devices
Noisy and rowdy behaviour
Littering
Cigarette consumption and intoxication

Table 3 Examples of behaviours taken up by manner posters. Underlying themes identified from a corpus of posters.

Previous scholarship has made attempts to categorise the various behaviours taken up by manner posters. Bayne (2018, p. 76) distinguishes between posters discouraging ‘negative’ actions (inconsiderate, dangerous, illegal behaviour), and those that encourage ‘positive’ (considerate) or ‘necessary’ actions (e.g. rules of movement). Fisch (2018, p. 62) on the other hand distinguishes between posters that deal with

the transit system's 'mundane operational requirements' (such as, queuing and boarding process) and signs that are concerned with the 'quality of commuter experience' (e.g. noise nuisances). Building on these efforts, I argue that manner posters target behaviours that affect the *efficiency, comfort, and safety* of public transport operations.

Maintaining and facilitating the *efficiency* of the public transport system is a common theme among posters' appeals. Posters remind passengers to board in an orderly fashion and keep their prepaid smart card charged, revealing a concern for conduct that could impact passenger flow or the smooth operation of the transport network. While integral to the functioning of urban public transport networks worldwide, the issue of *efficiency* gains additional significance in Japanese metropolitan areas' public transport networks due to their extreme passenger volume and traffic frequency. Tokyo's public transport network operates 'beyond capacity' (Fisch, 2018, p. 1) and tight intervals between train departures mean that delays easily ripple through the system. While Fisch (2018, p. 2) argues that such delays can be integrated into the transport network's operations, temporal order remains of fundamental importance. This is evident from the strict temporal discipline railway companies demand from their operating staff (Negishi, 2016). The biggest threat to the transport network's operational schedule, however, is posed by passengers themselves. High levels of congestion can affect the boarding process, forcing an extension of the 'dwell time' of trains in stations (Fisch, 2018, p. 40). Furthermore, passengers rushing onto the train sometimes get stuck in closing carriage doors, which then need to be re-opened. Together, such incidents are responsible for more than 60 per cent of all delays below ten minutes in Tokyo (MLIT, 2019b). It is thus unsurprising that boarding behaviour is a core concern of transport company manner communication that can be traced to the origins of the genre (see Section 5.2.2). Tokyo transport companies present manner posters as one of the primary 'soft' measures they employ to facilitate a smooth boarding process and fight delays, along with measures such as signage on platform floors indicating boarding positions (MLIT, 2019b).

Concerns for efficiency do not just relate to the temporal, but also the spatial order of public transport. Taking up seating practices and luggage transport, the positioning of bodies and objects is a common theme in posters. For example, posters ask passengers to place their belongings between their legs or on the luggage rack. Past posters also asked passengers not to open newspapers widely or stretch out their legs too much. Some posters in the 1970s and 1980s even implied passengers should avoid wearing overly thick clothes during rush hour in winter due to the additional space they occupied (Eidan, 1991b, p. 26). Accordingly, posters concerned with behaviours relating to spatial efficiency inscribe minimising the space taken up by passenger bodies and belongings as desirable passenger *manā* that help maximise the space available for what Fisch (2018, p. 36) refers to as the 'commuter collective' and allow more passengers to board. Like concerns for temporal efficiency, concerns for the spatial organisation of the train interior gain additional importance because of the operational pressures faced by public transport networks in Japanese cities (Fisch, 2018). During the morning rush hour, Tokyo commuter trains often run at close to 200 per cent capacity (MLIT, 2019a), highlighting the crucial importance of space inside the train carriage.

Passenger *comfort* is another core theme in transport companies' manner communication, with posters addressing behaviours that are seen as negatively impacting the transit experience of other passengers such as noisy conversations or littering. Planning manner poster campaigns usually falls into the remit of 'service quality' or 'customer service' departments, which choose poster topics based on passenger surveys and complaints (see Chapter 6). Transport company officials describe manner posters as part of efforts to create an environment in which 'all passengers can travel in comfort' (Interview, railway

company employees, October 2019). Accordingly, poster production is presented as driven by company considerations for passenger satisfaction. However, while linked to other company efforts to improve passenger amenity, such as optimising carriage temperature, manner campaigns are distinct as they depend on passenger collaboration. As ‘annoying’ passenger conduct can lead to unpleasant transit experiences, companies employ posters as a ‘reminder’ or ‘occasion’ for passengers to ‘consider their manners’ (Interview, railway company employees, January 2020). Accordingly, while a focus on *efficiency* in manner posters reveals companies’ concern with maintaining the ‘operational integrity’ (Fisch, 2018, p. 20) of the transport network, *comfort* helps us understand manner posters as a technology of customer service.

Safety is the final theme among the behaviours taken up by manner posters. Bringing together hectic passenger flows and speeding machinery, train stations are inherently dangerous spaces. Safety is a core theme of transport companies’ passenger messaging globally, as is evident from reminders to ‘mind the gap’. Japanese manner posters feature a large array of safety-related messages, asking passengers to stay behind the yellow line or hold onto escalator handrails. Critics might rightfully argue that appeals to safe conduct could be seen as a genre of communication separate to that of *manā* (*anzen keihatsu*). However, I argue that their inclusion is warranted due to the overarching focus of *manā* communication on ‘correct’ mobility practices, and because safety-oriented messages frequently feature in annual manner poster series.

Efficiency, *comfort* and *safety* do not constitute autonomous poster categories, but are closely interconnected. Posters frequently relate to multiple themes at the same time. For example, appeals not to place luggage on seats aim to maximise the space available inside the train carriage (*efficiency*) and enable more passengers to sit (*comfort*). Similarly, rushing onto the train can present both a danger (when getting stuck between the closing doors) and a nuisance (when the train departure is delayed because of it). Transport companies themselves also consider ‘manner improvement’ and ‘accident prevention’ as closely connected because ‘manner problems can often lead to accidents’ (Interview, railway company employees, January 2020). Even when targeting the same behaviour, posters can thus employ or combine different argumentative strategies (e.g. highlighting delay or danger). Accordingly, while efficiency, comfort, and safety are helpful concepts for describing the varied behaviours targeted by manner posters, they are effectively inseparable²⁰. I will return to this observation much later in the thesis, in Section 7.3. In the following section, I will instead examine the structure of manner posters as media texts.

5.1.2 Textual structure

Bayne (2018, p. 126) observed that manner posters consist of four components: 1) main text, 2) visual, 3) sub-text, and 4) issuing authority. Inspired by these categories, this section will take a closer look at the verbal and visual components of manner posters, and examine how they interact to appeal to passenger behaviour.

The verbal components of most manner posters are arranged in a two-level structure consisting of primary and secondary manner messages. These can be distinguished based on their relative prominence within a poster. Primary messages are usually written with a large font size, conspicuously placed and likely the first thing a passenger will read. In contrast, secondary messages are often written in a smaller

²⁰ Significantly, no research participants reported efforts to test poster campaigns’ effectiveness. See Chapters 6 and 8 for a more in-depth discussion of the logics of manner poster production.

font, and commonly less prominently placed. Whereas the primary message usually defines the overall topic of a poster or seeks to attract passengers' attention through a clever copy, secondary messages tend to fulfil a support function, such as by reiterating or explaining the primary message. Notably, while posters generally have just one primary message, they can feature several secondary messages. The basic textual structure of manner posters is evident from Figure 1.



Figure 1 A 1978 manner poster. The primary message reads 'kenen no naka' which is usually written with the Chinese characters for 'dog' and 'monkey' to describe an adverse relationship. However, here it is written with homonym characters expressing a dislike for smoking. Source: © Japan Belier Art Center / Kawakita Hideya. Reuse not permitted. [Figure redacted for copyright reasons. Please see the associated journal publication for the image.]

Primary and secondary messages usually take the form of *direct*, *descriptive*, or *implicit appeals*. *Direct appeals* directly encourage the viewer to engage in, or refrain from, specific behaviours. Often, these messages are phrased in the volitional *mashō* form, presenting an inclusive appeal for passengers to act in a particular way. An example of this is the secondary message in Figure 1 which asks passengers 'not to smoke during crowded hours' (*konzatsuji no tabako ha yamemashō*). However, other linguistic choices such as the more direct *te* or *kudasai* forms are also frequent, particularly when posters address kids or target serious offenses. Posters might also opt to thank their readers in advance for observing good behaviour (as in Figure 2). Similarly straightforward as *direct appeals*, *descriptive appeals* specify the potential effects of a behaviour, defining it as a cause of delays and accidents, or highlighting other negative consequences it might have. For example, a 2020 poster in JR's Shinjuku station reminded

passengers that rushing onto the train can lead to delays and judgmental glances by other passengers (*kakekomi jōsha de okureru densha to tsumetai shisen*).



Figure 2 Poster from a 2016–2018 ukiyo-e style manner poster campaign. Source: © Seibu Railways/Dentsu Inc. Reuse not permitted. [Figure redacted for copyright reasons. Please see the associated journal publication for the image.]

In contrast, *implicit appeals* indirectly appeal to passenger conduct. Rather than calling out the targeted behaviour, the text might instead describe a feeling, pose a question, feature a joke – or even appear unrelated to the targeted behaviour at first glance. As in the case of the copy *Space Invader* (a reference to a similarly titled video game) in Figure 3, messages of this kind require a more engaged decoding process because message meaning must be inferred from the poster’s context (e.g. its visual content). Other textual elements can also provide interpretative clues. For example, an *implicit appeal* primary message might be accompanied by a *direct appeal* secondary message (Figures 1 and 3). The overall

format of the poster as a recognisable genre of public communication (e.g. its placement in a train station), further facilitates audiences' interpretations of implicit manner messaging. Notably, longer manner messages can combine components of *direct*, *descriptive*, and *implicit appeals*. Accordingly, while the three rhetoric forms provide a roadmap to understanding different textual strategies employed by posters, they do not always present clear-cut categories.



Figure 3 'Space Invader', a 1979 manner poster. Source: © Japan Belier Art Center / Kawakita Hideya. Reuse not permitted. [Figure redacted for copyright reasons. Please see the associated journal publication for the image.]

The use of visual elements is a defining feature of manner posters that distinguishes them from other textual inscriptions in public transport spaces. Posters employ various visual techniques such as drawings,

photographs, and image manipulation. Visual elements usually dominate the layout, and often serve as platform for verbal components. While many posters feature a *primary visual element* that is framed by primary and secondary manner messages (Figure 1), other posters consist of assemblages of various visual elements (Figure 2). The combination of multiple visual elements can allow an individual poster to target multiple behaviours, or serve a reiterative function similar to language-based secondary messages. In addition to such *primary visual elements*, posters usually feature *secondary visual elements* (e.g. company or campaign logos) that allow audiences to identify the poster's context (Figure 1).

Manner posters can employ two distinct visual strategies to communicate desirable conduct: *literal* and *abstract visual appeals*. *Literal appeals* directly illustrate the targeted behaviour(s). Their degree of elaboration can vary. Early manner communication often only depicted the immediate conduct itself, omitting the socio-spatial context in which it occurred (see below). In contrast, more complex *literal appeals* clearly situate manner offenses as part of social situations by depicting the train carriage and other passengers (Figure 2). Notably, even simple *literal appeals* usually feature visually complex depictions of 'characters' rather than pictograms. Conveying additional information via the position, posture, and facial expression of characters, such detailed portrayals facilitate the creation of micro-narrative assemblages (see also Wilde, 2018a). Utilising illustrations of public transport spaces, *literal appeals* can tell bite-sized moral stories about passenger manners, and might even take the form of short multi-panel comics. In contrast, *abstract appeals* follow a more indirect approach, such as by employing images that might appear unrelated to the targeted behaviour (e.g. photographs of animals). They employ images not as illustrations, but as affective-persuasive tools or rhetorical devices (Figure 1). Like *implicit appeal* manner messages discussed above, *abstract appeals* often depend on passengers' utilisation of other textual elements to decode the poster's message.

The above discussion highlights the semiotically complex structure of manner posters. While conventional prohibition signage employs slashed-out red circles in a formal approach to visualising behavioural rules that could be described as *direct visual instruction*, such an approach is rare in manner posters. Although direct visualisations of 'correct' and 'wrong' behaviours might occasionally find use in manner posters, they are usually integrated into larger semiotic assemblages. Indeed, it is this higher degree of textual (linguistic and visual) complexity that sets the genre apart from other forms of regulatory signage. Their semiotically complex structure enables manner posters to not just *instruct* passengers in appropriate and orderly behaviour, but to attract their attention, and persuade them of their message. This attests to their position in the genre of advertising (see above). Chapter 7 will continue the visual analysis of manner posters by examining the specific design techniques posters employ to appeal to passenger manners. In the remainder of this chapter, I will instead contextualise manner posters as a socio-cultural phenomenon by looking at their history.

5.2 Genre development

5.2.1 The dominant narrative

Most accounts of manner posters trace them to the monthly posters published by Eidan²¹ since September 1974 (Eberhardinger, 2019; Eidan, 1995; Imaki, 2017; Kumano and Tsuno, 1997). Created by the design company Japan Belier Art Center under the direction of Kawakita Hideya, these posters employed celebrities, cultural references and puns to appeal to passenger manners. Their innovative and

²¹ Short for *Teito Kōsokudo Kōtsū Eidan*, or Teito Rapid Transit Authority (TRTA). Now Tokyo Metro.

playful design – and the fact that they were issued by an organisation with a ‘formal’ image such as Eidan – brought them significant public attention. Eidan received inquiries regarding their posters from across the country (Satō, 2017, p. 182) and particularly popular posters were even stolen from stations (Kawakita, 1989, p. 92). For example, 90 per cent of the copies of a 1976 poster featuring an airbrush drawing of Marilyn Monroe were removed from subway stations within the first week of their display (Asahi Shimbun, 1992). The poster series also gained the attention of the Japanese advertising industry. Non-commercial, public service advertising was still an emerging field in Japan at the time. The predecessor organisation of AC Japan, Japan’s primary producer of public service advertisements, had only been founded in 1971, and its activities had been largely limited to the Kansai area until 1974 (Uejō, 2005). According to Kawakita (1989, p. 62), the design of public service advertisements lagged behind that of commercial advertisements and only a few designers worked in the field. However, this had changed by the end of the 1970s. The Belier Art Center had been in charge of Eidan manner posters from 1974 to 1979; a collaboration that had emerged out of Kawakita’s work on the Eidan subway network map. From April 1979, the production of posters was opened up to other companies, and major advertising companies like Dentsū and Hakuhōdō started to present poster designs at competitive biannual presentations (Yomiuri Shimbun, 1980). Kawakita’s manner posters, seen as an example of successful advertisements that gripped the attention of passengers, also became a reference for the design of transit advertisements in general (JNR, 1980, p. 7).

Manner posters became a more frequent sight in Japanese transit spaces as other companies started to produce poster series. Only one month after Eidan, Odakyū Railways issued its own poster series (Asahi Shimbun, 1976). By the mid-1980s, multiple companies in the Tokyo Metropolitan area were issuing their own manner posters (Yoshida, 1989). In Kansai too, manner posters became more widespread. Hankyū started to produce regular manner posters in April 1977 (Yomiuri Shimbun, 1986), and Keihan followed in the 1980s (Keihan Railway, 2009). Like Eidan’s posters, these series are still running today, making manner posters a long-running and established form of public transport media.

Manner posters received another boost in popularity in the late 2000s. Like Kawakita’s series, the innovative designs of Yorifuji Bunpei’s 2008–2010 ‘Please do it at home’ (*ie de yarō*) and ‘Please do it again’ (*mata yarō*) poster series were the subject of media reporting. Several creative professionals observed that the series made manner posters more popular and had a lasting impact on their design (Interviews, freelance illustrators, February, March 2020). Today, manner posters are such a recognisable sight in Japanese public transport spaces that they even have become a design reference for commercial advertising, as in the case of a 2018 Softbank in-train advertisement series that adopted the format and style of manner posters to promote a mobile data plan.

5.2.2 An extended history

The above section drew on media reports and company publications to tell the commonly known story of manner posters (Eidan, 1995; Imaki, 2017; Kumano and Tsuno, 1997). According to this narrative, now ubiquitous manner posters trace back to Kawakita and Eidan’s 1974 poster series. The focus that is placed on this series is understandable due to its exceptional design and influence. However, this emphasis on the Eidan series as a singular point of origin risks obscuring other factors that influenced the development of the genre. Previous academic commentary has hinted at a longer media history of manner posters. Fisch links contemporary manner posters to a 1925 poster urging orderly boarding conduct in order to avoid delays (Fisch, 2018, p. 63). Bayne (2018, p. 128) goes even further, arguing that posters can be

viewed in the tradition of illustrated religious behavioural manuals from the Tokugawa era (1603-1867). Upon closer examination however, both of these statements are problematic. The ‘train-manner poster’ Fisch (2018, p. 63) refers to was entirely text-based, lacking the use of visual elements that is a distinguishing characteristic of contemporary manner posters. The connection proposed by Bayne (2018) is also precarious, as Tokugawa era *etoki* and transport company manner posters are characterised by vastly different production and reception contexts. Examining early evidence of manner messaging in Japanese transit spaces, this section will discuss the (pre-)history of manner posters, arguing that the genre has to be understood within the context of a media history that reaches back to at least the 1920s. It thus challenges dominant industry and media narratives of the history of manner posters.

Defining manner posters as a media artefact combining verbal and visual elements to appeal to passenger behaviour in public transport spaces, it is possible to trace the genre to at least the late Taishō era (1912–1926). Early manifestations of the genre were primarily concerned with the efficiency and safety of the railway system. In a striking parallel to current initiatives by Tokyo transport providers to alleviate rush hour congestion, already in 1923 illustrated posters asked passengers to avoid non-essential travel during morning and evening hours of congestion. Other posters warned passengers of dangerous behaviours on trains, such as a 1924 poster cautioning passengers not to get their fingers stuck between the carriage doors, or a 1925 poster telling passengers not to reach or lean out of carriage windows (Tokyo Railway Bureau, 1927). Presenting an exception to this focus on safety and efficiency, a 1925 poster reminding passengers not to forget their belongings prefigures post-1974 Eidan posters on the same topic. Notably, all of the above posters feature only simple visual elements illustrating the conduct addressed by the posters. While the scope of passenger conduct targeted in these posters is limited, other printed appeals to passenger etiquette from the time reveal concerns for a broader range of behaviours. Starting from 1921, Japan National Railways (JNR) printed slogans appealing to passenger etiquette, such as seating manners, on in-train notices and the packaging of train bento-boxes (*ekiben*) (Eidan, 1983, p. 59). In the 1930s, the Japanese Association for Travel Culture magazine *Tabi* featured comics and full-page manner advertisements encouraging orderly boarding conduct and lining up at the ticket gate. Cleanliness was another core focus, with frequent reminders to appropriately dispose of food leftovers, cigarette butts, and newspapers. As the war advanced, the tone and content of these appeals became increasingly militaristic. Similarly, illustrated posters targeting boarding behaviour published by Hankyū during the later years of the war also started to draw on propaganda discourse to request passengers’ cooperation.

There is sparse evidence of posters appealing to passenger conduct in the immediate post-war years. Railway infrastructure had sustained heavy damages during the war, limiting the capabilities of the public transport system (Oikawa, 1996, pp. 258–260). Simultaneously, the transport needs of GHQ forces, returning settlers and soldiers, as well as changes in urban residence structure led to a surge of demand for railway transport (Suda, 2012, pp. 4–7). Even though Japan’s damaged railway system repurposed freight carriages for passenger transport, it still struggled to withstand the pressures placed upon it. Accidents were common, and trains were often so overcrowded that passengers had to stand or sit *outside* of the carriage (JNR, 1997). Accordingly, train operators were focused on meeting basic transport demands, and repairing railway infrastructure in the years after the war (Oikawa, 1996, pp. 258–260). This does not mean that station media did not exist. In fact, JNR actively employed adverts to ‘beautify’ war-torn stations and train carriages. However, most elaborate advertisements during this time were painted directly on wooden planks, as the quality of the available paper usually did not permit advanced, multi-coloured poster designs (East Japan Railways Advertising Association, 1975, p. 77). Accordingly, not only

was the production of illustrated manner notices likely a secondary concern for railway companies, but their design possibilities were limited. It is thus likely that only a few elaborate printed appeals to passenger behaviour were produced at the time.

There exists some evidence of illustrated appeals to passenger behaviour in the early post-war period. Towards the end of the 1940s, Hankyū published posters asking passengers to 'board and deboard in an orderly manner'. Published as part of the 'Cheerful Carriage Movement' (*akarui shanai undō*), the poster warned of the possible consequences of a disorderly boarding process through a drawing of a man with a torn coat and broken glasses (Hankyū Railway, 1979). While the poster infers the transport company's resolution to maintain order under conditions of extreme congestion, it also reveals considerations of *efficiency* and *safety* as enduring themes in manner messaging. Simultaneously, records of other signage show the unique challenges Japan's transport system faced in the aftermath of war. A photograph of Shinjuku station from the late 1940s depicts a signboard asking travellers to 'take good care of our trains', carrying images of a train and smiling passenger faces, along with information about the numbers of stolen and destroyed carriage equipment (Suda, 2012). The signboard must be understood within the context of the extreme poverty that shaped early post-war Japan (Tipton, 2002, p. 144). Struggling for survival, many people turned to desperate means, including theft of train equipment such as light-bulbs and seat covers (Noda *et al.*, 1986, p. 273). Similar to the 1920s and 1930s notices discussed above, the focus of appeals to passenger conduct in the mid-to-late 1940s was on the basics of operational integrity, rather than particular passenger manners that are evident from posters concerned with matters of comfort. Notably, the use of smiling faces on the 'take good care of our trains' signboard demonstrates that visual elements did not exclusively fulfil an illustrative function, but were also used as affective appeals.

By 1949, the Japanese railway system had overcome the greatest challenges of wartime devastation, and shifted its efforts from restoration and repair (*fukkyū*) to revival (*fukkō*) (Suda, 2012). Japanese society also started to recover from defeat. In 1955, Japan entered a period of high-economic growth, leading to improved living standards (Tipton, 2002, p. 169). Accordingly, the 1950s were an era of recovery and growth, in which both railway companies and their customers gained breathing room after years of struggle. This newfound leeway led to an extension and diversification of manner communication. At the beginning of the 1950s, JNR issued 'travel etiquette' posters featuring *senryū* poems, *hyōgo*, and manga illustrations (JNR, 1952b). Encouragement of good train etiquette also appeared next to light-hearted articles on domestic travel or fruit deliveries from rural Japan as part of the JNR-edited *Photo Travel News* which was displayed in train stations. Articles with headlines such as 'Let's improve travel etiquette for the sake a new Japan' targeted a wide range of behaviours including littering, noisiness, and signs of romantic affection with reminders such as 'Please keep love scenes in moderation' (*rabu shīn ha hodohodo ni*). Groups of revelling passengers on their way out of the city were portrayed as particularly problematic. For example, a *Photo Travel News* page from 1951 carries a photograph of an intercity train carriage filled with smoking and drinking salarymen and an appeal to 'refrain from holding parties onboard the train' (*shanai de no enkai ha yameyō*). The new challenges growing prosperity posed to the maintenance of order on public transport is also evident from late-1950s JNR posters which targeted passenger behaviours such as drunkenness and listening to portable radios without earphones as part of the 'Improving Travel Etiquette Campaign' (JNR, 1959).

Accordingly, the 1950s saw important developments in the history of the genre. The range of problematic passenger behaviours grew, with a bigger focus placed on comfort-related offenses. Another innovation was the adoption of new visual technologies. While the previously discussed posters relied on illustrations,

Photo Travel News made extensive use of photography. However, with photographs of groups of drinking passengers and conductors cleaning messy carriage interiors, the focus again was on *literal visual appeals* illustrating the problematic behaviour and its consequences. Despite such innovations, the extent of appeals to passenger behaviour was seen as insufficient. When a group of Keio university students surveyed passenger manners on public transport as part of the New Life Movement²², they encouraged JNR to employ more posters and signage to improve the ‘moral sense’ (*dōtokushin*) of passengers and tackle uncivil behaviours such as littering (Keio Tourism Industry Research Society, 1959, p. 39). JNR itself pondered the problem that their signage and posters were often lost among more eye-catching commercial advertisements (Shimizu, 1960).

Much of JNR’s manner communication since the end of the 1940s emerged out of joint efforts with other organisations (JNR, 1952b, 1959). Such collaborative efforts continued in the following decade. Together with the Association for Morals in Public Transport, JNR issued several posters appealing to passenger conduct, aiming for example to prevent railway track crossing accidents (1963), or encouraging passengers to offer their seats to people in need (1967). Hankyū also expanded its poster efforts during this decade, issuing posters that targeted a range of passenger conduct such as orderly boarding behaviour, showing consideration for co-passengers, or opening the windows of the then non-climatised carriages. By 1967, Regulations for Railway Notices outlined rules for the use of ‘notices’ (*keijihyō*) ‘related to the spread of morals in public transport’, indicating that they had become a common form of communication in public transport spaces (JNR, 1967). Accordingly, verbal-visual encouragements of good passenger behaviour were an established genre of public communication in public transport spaces before the start of Eidan’s monthly manner posters in 1974.

5.2.3 Genre innovations

The previous section examined early forms of manner messaging in Japanese public transport spaces. The parallels to contemporary manner posters are clear. Like later posters, the *manā* communication discussed above addresses ‘problematic’ passenger behaviours that could affect the efficiency, comfort, and safety of public transport through a combination of verbal and visual elements. These continuities suggest that contemporary transit manner posters can be traced back to at least the 1920s. Accordingly, Eidan’s 1974 poster series should not be seen as the beginning of the history of manner posters, but rather as a turning point in their development. Whereas their predecessors often resembled slogan-based appeals (*hyōgo*), during the 1970s manner posters adopted more complex designs and became established as a form of modern advertising. This section will analyse this shift.

Most of the early examples of manner communication discussed above employed a straightforward approach to the communication of behavioural expectations. *Direct verbal appeals* were the most dominant and the use of visual elements was similarly straightforward, with images primarily serving as illustrations of the targeted behaviour or its consequences. In contrast, later posters reveal a trend towards more complex textual structures. While *direct appeals* remain common (e.g. in form of secondary messages), indirect and abstract approaches to manner messaging now find widespread adoption, such as through use of a playful rhetoric (e.g. puns, wordplay). The visual designs of posters also become more intricate, such as through advanced *literal appeals* that do not stop at illustrating problematic behaviour,

²² The post-war New Life Movement aimed to ‘improve’ Japanese citizens’ everyday life, conduct, and morals through a set of campaigns advanced by government and civil society organisations that trace back to pre-war initiatives. For further information see Garon (1997).

but feature more narrative elements. There is also a shift towards abstract and artistic visualisations, such as in a series of posters that use the children's game '*densha gokko*'²³ ('train make-believe') as a visual metaphor to problematise undesirable passenger practices. Some posters do not depict transport spaces at all. *Abstract visual appeals* that require passengers to draw on other available information to decode them became a frequent strategy in poster design, leading to a greater interdependence of textual levels. While in early posters, visual elements often played a supplementary role, illustrating *direct appeal* text messages that could be understood without them, later *abstract appeals* make visual elements an integral part of poster design. Posters such as Figure 1 require reference to both verbal and visual levels of information to decode them at a glance.

In addition to this growing intratextual interdependence, post-1974 manner posters also set themselves apart from earlier forms of manner communication through the widespread use of cultural references. Next to puns on common expressions as in Figure 1 above, intertextual references to other forms of media become an integral part of poster design. For example, early Eidan posters made visual references to famous movie posters and other forms of iconic imagery. Pop singers, kabuki actors, and manga characters also made cameo appearances in posters. In other words, manner posters adopted the advanced design technologies of modern advertising. Drawing on established persuasive strategies of commercial advertisements such as cultural references, star endorsements, as well as humorous and abstract copies, *manā* communication now took the form of manner *advertisements*.

This shift towards advertising is also evident from the discourse about manner posters. While manner posters now commonly find mention in publications by the advertising industry (Imaki, 2017; Kumano and Tsuno, 1997), this was not the case before the success of Eidan's poster series. Neither of the two special magazine issues publisher Senden Kaigi dedicated to the topic of transit advertising in 1973 mention manner posters, and they are similarly absent from a 223-page history of railway advertising from 1975 (East Japan Railways Advertising Association, 1975). Accordingly, passenger manner communication appears not to have been primarily perceived, or taken seriously as, a form of advertisement. Instead, it is likely that it was thought of and designed as *hyōgo* (slogans) and company notices. *Hyōgo* had been used by government institutions since the Taishō era to enrol citizens in campaigns seeking to improve health, safety, or productivity (Tsukushi, 2006, p. 256). The Ministry of Railways had employed *hyōgo* since 1921 as part of efforts to improve 'morals on public transport' (Tsukushi, 2006, pp. 31–32) such as through guidance about boarding behaviour (*minna isogeba, minna okureru*; if everyone rushes, everyone will be late). *Hyōgo* were also employed in visual media designed to instruct citizens in a 'modern' lifestyle (Tsukushi, 2006, p. 26). Enabled by Taishō era advances in print technology, illustrated *hyōgo* posters (e.g. promoting health, hygiene, and accident prevention) became a common sight in Japanese cities in the 1920s and 1930s (Umeda, 2001), and remained a primary tool of governmental communication initiatives until after the war (Hinoue, 1956). The influence the genre had on early manner communication is clear. Like the 1920s train-etiquette themed messages JNR printed on *ekiben* wrapping and in-train notices in the 1920s, the verbal (and sometimes visual) components of many 1950s JNR manner posters were selected from passenger submissions to competitions (JNR, 1952b), thus following the conventions of the *hyōgo* genre (Tsukushi, 2006). Some posters even explicitly portrayed their manner message as a *hyōgo* submitted by a member of the public. For example, a 1950s poster criticising drunkenness on trains

²³ *Densha gokko* is a game of make-believe in which a minimum of two participants walk around while matching walking speed and carrying a hoop, rope, box or similar object meant to symbolise a train, around their body. Participants can 'deboard' (exiting the hoop or other object) or 'board' (entering the object) the train.

emphasised that it was based on the submission of an elementary school student. Recruiting poster designs by calling for submissions from passengers remained a common approach after 1974 (Itō, 1990; JR Gazette, 2002).

Early train manner communication was also influenced by company notices as an established form of passenger communication. The 1925 poster explaining the consequences of disorderly boarding behaviour discussed by Fisch (2018, p. 63) resembles other text-only, fact-oriented notices train company employees posted in stations during that time to inform passengers about train delays or route closures (Tokyo Railway Bureau, 1927). ‘Request’ (*onegai*) notices asking passengers to refrain from problematic conduct had been common before 1974 (Nakada, 1991) and there is evidence that they sometimes employed visual elements for decorative purposes (JNR, 1959). Text-only invocations of desirable passenger conduct could also be found on signs on station pillars or inscriptions on refuse bins (Yoshikawa, 2008, p. 129). Accordingly, the development of manner posters as a genre needs to be seen in the context of various mediated appeals to passenger conduct that were – and remain – common sights in public transport spaces.

5.3 Historical context

In the previous section, I have shown that Eidan’s 1974 manner poster series presents a turning point in the history of the genre that established passenger manner communication as a form of advertising. In this final section, I will explore the context of this shift, and argue that it reflects wider societal changes. While company officials have retrospectively explained the start of Eidan’s 1974 manner poster series campaigns as a company response to an alleged decline in public manners during a time of social change (Eidan, 1995), I argue that the turn to manner advertisements needs to be understood through developments in the railway and advertising industries.

5.3.1 Railway impulses

The proliferation of elaborate manner advertisements that started in the mid-1970s can be understood in the context of public transport developments in Japan. Until the 1970s, urban transport providers in metropolitan areas were focused on meeting surging transport demands brought on by rapid urbanisation. Whereas in 1940 only 37.7 per cent of Japanese lived in cities, by 1970 this number had grown to 72.1 per cent (Sorensen, 2002, p. 172). Tokyo, Osaka and Nagoya grew rapidly as opportunities promised by the booming economy attracted workers from across the country. Between 1950 and 1975, the Tokyo and Osaka metropolitan areas witnessed an average net in-migration of 285.7 and 115.4 thousand people per year respectively (Sorensen, 2002, p. 174). This meant a sharp rise in passenger numbers. Between 1955 and 1975, the number of passengers transported by train and subway in Japan’s largest cities annually grew almost three-fold, increasing from 3.2 to 9.4 billion in Tokyo and from 1.7 to 4.4 billion in Osaka (Noda *et al.*, 1986, p. 297). Simultaneously, the urban sprawl placed additional pressures on the transport system, as people lived further away from the urban centres where they worked (Suda, 2012, p. 5). These extreme transport demands led to the intensification of the notorious ‘commuting hell’ (*tsūkin jigoku*). During the morning rush in 1951, major Tokyo train lines such as the Yamanote, Chuō, and Keihan lines were operating at average congestion rates of 280 per cent to 340 per cent (Oikawa, 1996, p. 295). Alleviating congestion thus presented an urgent task. Both transport companies and government bodies ventured to strengthen the capabilities of the urban transit system. The Ministry of Transport’s plans to expand Japan’s subway network heralded a period of major infrastructural expansion for subway companies. Eidan’s network grew from 14.3 km to 104.9 km between 1950 and 1970, while the Osaka city

subway grew from 8.8 km to 64.2 km (Noda *et al.*, 1986, p. 299). Train companies also expanded their urban transport capabilities. JNR made improving transport capacities in Tokyo and Osaka part of their 1956 and 1961 five-year plans (Noda *et al.*, 1986, p. 300), and further stepped up their efforts with the 'Five Direction Strategy' between 1964 and 1971. However, while such initiatives increased the number of train tracks and carriages, reduced the interval between train departures, and created more direct connections to the subway network, they could not solve the commuting problem (Oikawa, 1996, pp. 291, 296–298). As transport capacities grew, so did the urban population. Average congestion rates on morning commuter trains in 1960 showed little change compared to 1951, and some train lines even recorded an increase (Oikawa, 1996, p. 296). Efforts to grow urban transport capacities thus only provided provisional improvement. It was only when economic downturn led to a deceleration of urban population growth in the early 1970s that transport companies began to catch up and congestion levels became more manageable (Noda *et al.*, 1986, pp. 298–300).

This deceleration prompted a shift in the focus of transport providers' initiatives. While the previous period of rapid economic and urban growth was dominated by quantitative expansion seeking to boost urban transport capacities in an endless game of catch up, railway companies could now focus on qualitative improvements (Noda *et al.*, 1986, p. 300). During the 1970s, transport providers engaged in various initiatives aimed at improving passenger comfort, such as improving station facilities or the introduction of air-conditioned carriages (Noda *et al.*, 1986, pp. 300–301). Following endeavours to modernise stations and reduce disturbance caused by operational noise inside carriages in the late 1960s and early 1970s, Eidan expanded their 'service improvement' efforts in the late 1970s with better directional signage in stations and support for 'vulnerable' passenger groups such as the elderly (Eidan, 1991a). Greater concern for passenger comfort was also evident from the introduction of priority seats on trains in 1973, which in turn was tied to communication campaigns (including posters) informing passengers about their location within trains, and encouraging them to offer their seats to people in need (Yomiuri Shimbun, 1976).

The proliferation and increasing quality of manner posters – portrayed by companies as an effort to create a 'comfortable transport environment' thus needs to be seen in the context of wider initiatives seeking to improve the quality of public transport at this time (see also Chapter 6). While industry journals indicate that 'service improvement' and passenger behaviour had been on the mind of transport companies since the early post-war period, companies were concerned that appealing to passengers manners would backfire as long as their own services were still wanting (JNR, 1952b). Transport providers worried that passengers would have little sympathy for company-driven educational efforts when trains were already over-crowded at the departure station (JNR, 1952a). Such concerns also influenced the format of early manner posters examined above. Early manner communication media was often created in collaboration with other organisations such as the Association for Morals in Public Transport (JNR, 1959) or took the form of passenger-submitted *hyōgo*. Accordingly, manner communication was frequently positioned not as a top-down company request, but as an appeal from wider society to itself.

As congestion levels decreased and companies started to expand efforts aimed at 'passenger comfort' in the early 1970s, proactive manner appeals became more acceptable, leading to more professional design work commissioned directly by railway providers. This turn to manner advertisements also served to address difficulties of passenger manner communication. While improvements to the quality of public transport had made manner appeals permissible, the question of how to tell paying *customers* to behave in a certain way remained a challenge. The adoption of advertising techniques and greater semiotic

complexity in posters offered a solution to such concerns as it enabled playful and ‘soft’ approaches to manner messaging. Furthermore, advertisements’ attention-managing techniques enabled posters to hold their own in the dense semiotic landscapes of Japanese public transport spaces, which blander company communication had failed to do in the past (Eidan, 1995; Shimizu, 1960). Accordingly, stylistic innovations in the genre present a response to communicative requirements of passenger messaging (see Chapters 6 and 7).

Customer service concerns have continued to fuel manner poster campaigns. JNR’s transformation into the JR group in 1987 added further weight to the importance of passenger comfort and responding to passenger concerns (Arashiyama, 1989), leading to new manner improvement campaigns. When infractions of travel etiquette emerged as cause of passenger dissatisfaction in a travel experience survey conducted by JR West shortly after privatisation, the company recognised addressing such complaints and calling upon passengers to improve their manners as part of their ‘duty (*gimu*) as a train company’ (Hosokawa, 1994, p. 2). This led to the establishment of a long-running manner improvement campaign the following year, which prominently featured manner posters. As became evident in the discussion of *comfort* as an underlying theme of manner appeals above, considerations for passenger amenity and service remain important for manner poster initiatives today.

5.3.2 Advertising and design impulses

The proliferation of transport manner posters in the 1970s was further facilitated by developments in the advertising and design sectors, such as an increasing appreciation of posters as advertising art. Progress of print technology and graphic design had aided the recognition of posters as art both within the advertising industry and wider society since the 1950s (Uchikawa, 1980, p. 168). However, it was in the 1960s that Japanese poster design soared to new heights. The World Design Conference, held in Tokyo in 1960, led to a greater recognition of design work among Japanese corporate leaders, and the celebrated poster and pictogram designs for the 1964 Tokyo Olympic Games brought further renown to the field (Katō, 1991). Simultaneously, rapid economic growth and social change led companies to increase their advertisement spending, invigorating advertisement and design industries (Bartal, 2016, p. 180), and greater market segmentation and the adoption of multi-media marketing campaigns facilitated the use of posters as an advertising medium (Uchikawa, 1980, pp. 501–502). As a result, the second half of the 1960s saw the emergence of various high-quality posters with distinct designs, which frequently attracted popular attention. Foreshadowing the fate of later manner posters, a 1966 Shiseido poster featuring the actress Maeda Bibari was so popular that it was frequently stolen (Uchikawa, 1980, p. 502). Anticipating a similar fate for an advertisement poster with psychedelic design, Pepsi Cola turned to an adhesive, sticker-like print format to prevent theft (Uchikawa, 1980, p. 502). By the late 1960s, advertising posters had become a popular cultural artifact and were displayed at frequent exhibitions and even sold in new, specialised shops (Uchikawa, 1980, p. 503). The public attention attracted by posters further spurred their widespread adoption as an advertisement medium (Senden Kaigi, 1978). Transport companies followed this trend. In 1970, JNR commissioned Dentsū to produce the long-running and critically acclaimed *Discover Japan* campaign to encourage domestic train travel (Ivy, 1993, p. 251). Similarly seeking to attract more passengers, Eidan started an in-station poster series promoting places of interest along their subway network in 1972. Though a monthly series, posters were only displayed for two weeks, and the metal frames designated for their display were regularly left empty (Kawakita, 1989, p. 57). This prompted Eidan to consider their use for other purposes, which led to the creation of the 1974 manner poster series.

Changes in the scope of advertising topics and the style of public communication further facilitated the emergence of manner advertisements. In the late 1960s, Japanese society became increasingly aware of the costs of rapid economic growth (Tipton, 2002, p. 178), and corporations now needed to confront growing concerns for environmental and social problems. This not only led to the integration of societal issues into commercial advertising (Bartal, 2016; Yamaki, 1992, p. 294), but also the emergence of advertisements dedicated exclusively to such topics. In 1971, the predecessor of AC Japan was founded with the goal of producing advertisements that address societal problems (see Section 5.2.1). Environmental issues and ‘public morals’ were among the core topics taken up by its campaigns, which since 1973 frequently received industry awards for their creative achievements (Uejō, 2005). The emergence of high-quality ‘public service’ advertisements was part of a wider shift in strategies of public communication. *Hyōgo*-carrying posters had long been criticised by advertising professionals for their inferior design and lack of persuasive capabilities. For example, a 1956 article in the advertising magazine *Senden* warned that ‘PR’ by government and public institutions – to which transport providers like JNR and Eidan belonged at the time – can easily sound like lecturing (*osekkyō*). Instead, official communication should consider utilising a ‘soft’ approach (Hinoue, 1956). Articles from subsequent years similarly criticised the strict tone of many *hyōgo* and commended examples with playful language use, such as slogans which ‘warmly’ or ‘smartly’ appeal to readers. Official discourse started to live up to these expectations in the 1960s, when *Senden* reported innovative communication initiatives by government and public institutions, such as ‘informal’ and ‘humorous’ signs in Tokyo’s Asakusabashi subway station (Senden, 1968), and the Tokyo Metropolitan Government hired the graphic designer Aoba Masuteru to create posters addressing issues like littering as part an urban beautification campaign. These developments indicate a shift in government and institutional communication – away from *hyōgo* appeals and towards softer expressions, wit, and the adoption of contemporary advertising techniques. This shift came to fruition in Eidan’s manner poster series. The popularity of the series ushered in a ‘boom’ of ‘public communication posters’ (*kōhō posutā*) by government and official organisations that employed humorous and daring advertising techniques to address diverse topics such as nuclear energy and water pollution in efforts to attract public attention (Yomiuri Shimbun, 1978).

5.4 Conclusion

This chapter introduced manner posters as a genre of communication in Japanese public transport spaces. It is constrained by the limited extent of publicly available documentation of transport companies’ manner communication campaigns prior to 1974. Conversations with railway company staff revealed that transport companies often perceive manner posters as a mundane medium that does not merit record or archival. Accordingly, this chapter partially had to make do with a precarious data base, which presents a caveat to the history of the genre laid out within it (see Chapter 9 for a more in-depth discussion).

I began this chapter with a discussion of common characteristics of transport company manner posters, identifying efficiency, comfort, and safety as underlying themes, and examining the textual structure of posters. I then inquired into the history of the genre. Contrary to industry accounts that portray Eidan and Kawakita as inventors of manner posters, the chapter traced the genre’s roots to the Taishō period. I argued that rather than origin of the genre, the 1970s mark a turning point that spurred the greater adoption of manner *advertisements*. In the final section of the chapter I inquired into the background of this shift by examining developments in the transport and advertising sectors. Here, I showed that the adoption of semiotically complex manner posters needs to be understood in the context of increased efforts by railway companies to improve the quality of public transport, advances in graphic design, and

changes in the style of public communication. Whereas most previous research on manner posters was limited to examinations of specific aspects of individual poster series, this chapter provided an introduction to Japanese manner posters as a genre of communication, and provided a cultural history of the genre that links its development to socio-economic shifts in post-war Japan.

Considering the ubiquity of manner posters in Japanese trains and train stations and the significance of public transport for the organisation of urban life in Japanese metropolitan areas, their study can provide important insights into Japanese society and culture. With a history reaching back at least to the Taishō era, railway company manner posters provide ample material for scholarly inquiry into such diverse topics as the development of public communication, passenger manners and aesthetic sensibilities, as well as a socio-semiotic analysis of the regulation of mundane deviances. It is my hope that this chapter will provide a starting point for further inquiries into the genre.

Chapter 6 Managing passenger etiquette in Tokyo: between social control and customer service²⁴

Mundane mobility practices can become problematic when they transgress norms of civility and good conduct. Mobility scholars have examined initiatives by authorities seeking to educate mobile subjects in appropriate mobility practices, such as in regard to dangerous or deviant driving behaviour (Lumsden, 2015; Merriman, 2006; Roth, 2019) or excursions into the countryside (Merriman, 2005b). Attempts to ‘civilise’ mobile bodies are also evident from transport companies’ efforts to shape passenger conduct. Public transport providers often attempt to prevent passenger conduct they consider dangerous, deviant, or otherwise undesirable. For example, transport companies employ media technologies such as posters and announcements to convey behavioural expectations ranging from boarding behaviour to mobile phone etiquette (Bissell, 2018; Butcher, 2011; Moore, 2011; Symes, 2015; Ureta, 2012). This chapter explores the rationale of such mediated company efforts to manage passenger conduct. Taking up the example of ‘manner improvement’ poster campaigns by urban rail providers in Tokyo, I examine the motives and considerations guiding interventions into passengers’ everyday mobility practices. In other words, this chapter inquires into the logics of transport companies’ engagement with problematic passenger behaviour on urban transit.

Prior scholarship on passenger-related disruptions of urban transit has largely focused on crime and anti-social behaviour (Moore, 2010, 2011; Newton, 2014), and found that the occurrence of deviant behaviour on public transport is facilitated by factors such as overcrowding, lack of supervision, and the transient nature of ridership (Smith and Clarke, 2000). Much more frequently than criminal or semi-criminal conduct, however, passengers on public transport encounter mundane or ‘low-level’ deviance: behaviour which is not illegal, but simply inconsiderate or inappropriate. Breaches of etiquette such as *queue-jumping* or occupying multiple seats are common on public transport and make it one of the principal locations where urban dwellers encounter ‘rude strangers’ in their everyday lives (Smith, Phillips and King, 2010). The forced proximity to other passengers in public transport environments comes with an inherent potential of annoyance. The likelihood of aggravation is heightened as urban transit brings together highly diverse individuals with divergent mobility goals (e.g. work or leisure) who are ‘stuck’ with each other for the duration of their journeys (Moore, 2012; Smith and Clarke, 2000; Symes, 2007). There’s a near-innumerable array of demeanours that can become sources of discomfort. In line with interpretations of external stimuli as stress factors in urban spaces (see Mubi Brighenti and Pavoni, 2019; Simmel, 1995), noisy conversations, loud music, or smelly food may present ‘sensory infections’ or cause passengers ‘unwanted arousal’ (Stradling *et al.*, 2007; Watts, 2008, pp. 720–722). Even trivial micro-behaviours such as the repetitive tapping of fingers can irritate other commuters (Bissell, 2010).

Lack of adherence to a commuter ‘code of conduct’ can cause co-passengers emotional discomfort or annoyance, and might even discourage public transport usage (Jain, 2011, p. 1021; Stradling *et al.*, 2007). Violations of transit etiquette can also cause accidents or operational delays (see Chapter 5; Schimkowsky, 2021c). Public transport companies combat risks of deviant or disruptive behaviour through diverse strategies. Next to the employment of CCTV, patrols, and automated ticket gates to keep transit networks

²⁴ This chapter has been previously published as a stand-alone article in *Mobilities* under a CC BY-NC-ND 4.0 licence. Minor adjustments have been made to the article manuscript to ensure the internal consistency of the thesis. Please see ‘Note to the reader’ at the beginning of the thesis for a list of changes and the bibliographic information of the original article.

secure and profitable, transport companies utilise semiotic devices to orient and direct commuter conduct. While directional and informational signage seeking to facilitate smooth passenger flows are the most common example of this (Fuller, 2002), transport companies use a range of media technologies to guide passenger conduct and attitudes (Moore, 2011; Symes, 2015). For example, posters and notices are often employed to educate potentially problematic passenger groups like new users or students in a desirable 'code of conduct' (Butcher, 2011, p. 243; Höhne, 2015; Symes, 2007). Social science scholarship has tended to view such company interventions into passenger conduct as practices of social control. Signage addressing passenger conduct and etiquette has been portrayed as a 'disciplinary device' seeking to make passengers act in accordance with company-determined 'rules of circulation' and 'good manners' (Ureta, 2012, p. 604) and characterised as a means of 'semiotic control, direction and regulation' encouraging passengers to '[check] their conduct against textual benchmarks of appropriate behaviour' (Symes, 2015, pp. 72, 86). Poster campaigns aiming to discourage mundane transgressions of transit etiquette such as hogging seats, littering, or being noisy have also been described as a form of 'mundane governance' (Bissell, 2018; Woolgar and Neyland, 2013) or material manifestation of power (Symes, 2015). In other words, previous scholarship has largely discussed company efforts to shape commuter conduct as attempts to mould desirable passenger subjects.

This chapter will approach company interventions in passenger conduct from a different perspective. Taking up the case of 'manner poster' campaigns employed by Tokyo railway providers to improve passenger etiquette, it discusses company efforts to manage passenger behaviour not as a strategy of social control, but as technology of customer service. The chapter draws on interviews with transport and advertising professionals as well as industry publications to argue that passenger manner improvement initiatives by Japanese transport providers are not primarily driven by regulatory will, but company perceptions of customer needs. Although signage addressing passenger conduct is a common sight in public transport environments and has found mention in several studies of urban transit spaces and practices (Bissell, 2018; Butcher, 2011; Moore, 2011; Symes, 2015; Ureta, 2012), company perspectives on such initiatives have found only limited attention. Inquiring into transit etiquette posters from the perspective of transport and design companies involved in creating them, this chapter presents a novel contribution to studies of urban mobilities and the governance of urban life. Taking Tokyo's urban railway network as a case study, the chapter also responds to calls to move mobilities research beyond 'Western' countries and inquire into practices, processes, and logics of mobility and transportation in diverse socio-cultural contexts across the globe (Cresswell, 2014; Lin, 2016; Steele and Lin, 2014). The chapter sets out with an introduction to Tokyo's urban railway network and the research approach. This will be followed by an in-depth analysis of the considerations defining manner posters as a genre of company communication. Examining posters' content and aim, design, and the limits of their regulatory potential, I will argue that the production and deployment of etiquette posters on Japanese urban public transport is primarily driven by concerns for customer sensibilities.

6.1 Background and research approach

Tokyo's railway system is essential for the operation of socio-economic life in the city. The Greater Tokyo area is home to more than 30 million people, and traversed by 2500 km of train tracks which are operated by multiple railway companies (see Section 1.4). Millions of residents in the Japanese capital and the surrounding prefectures depend on the urban rail network in their working and private lives alike (Negishi and Bissell, 2020; Pendleton and Coates, 2018). In total, ca. 15 billion passenger journeys are made on the railway system every year (MLIT, 2020b). As one of the world's most extensive urban transit systems,

Tokyo’s railway network clearly deserves the attention of urban mobility scholars. The city’s railway network is particularly well-suited for studying transport company interventions in passenger conduct due to the comprehensive and ubiquitous nature of initiatives aiming to improve passenger etiquette. Although such campaigns can include varied measures such as company-hosted events or educational pamphlets, their most common media are semiotic devices such as station and in-carriage posters that communicate desirable passenger etiquette in situ. Making their way across the city, Tokyo train and subway commuters encounter a plethora of posters, stickers, announcements, and digital displays promoting good ‘transit manners’, targeting a wide range of passenger behaviours which are believed to interfere with the transit system’s safe and smooth operation, or cause nuisance to other passengers (see Chapter 5; Schimkowsky, 2021c). For example, next to basic mobility skills such as boarding or luggage etiquette, manner posters also take up minute behaviours such as the ‘correct’ way to hold a smartphone on a crowded train²⁵ (Table 4). In other words, transit manner improvement initiatives by Tokyo rail companies stand out because of the scope of targeted behaviours, which is shaped not only by company considerations of operational integrity, efficiency, and safety, but also by strong social norms that view inconveniencing others in public spaces as a serious faux pax (see Coates, 2017b, p. 35).

Seating etiquette Boarding and deboarding etiquette Handling and positioning of luggage and belongings Noisy and rowdy behaviour Behaviours deemed unsanitary or ‘polluting’ (e.g. littering, eating) Use of mobile devices Helping passengers in need
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Table 4 Examples of behaviours taken up by manner posters.

Another aspect that distinguishes semiotic devices deployed by Tokyo railway companies from regulatory signage found on urban transit systems elsewhere is their design. Instead of a formal pictogram-based layout, Japanese manner posters utilise innovative visual designs featuring complex and appealing imagery, humour, and cultural references (Figures 1-3). While elaborately-designed passenger etiquette posters have been used by transport providers in other cities such as London (Moore, 2011) or Sydney (Bissell, 2018; Symes, 2015), Tokyo manner posters stand out as they present the go-to tool for addressing passenger conduct-related issues for the majority of transport providers in the area, and have a decades-long history (see Chapter 5; Schimkowsky, 2021c). Accordingly, Tokyo manner posters are well-suited for studies of company interventions in passenger conduct as they are not the product of a temporary company policy of an individual transport provider but present a general phenomenon.

²⁵ Although posters addressing criminal behaviours (e.g. sexual assault, violence against company staff) exist, this paper is exclusively concerned with initiatives addressing more benign forms of deviant passenger conduct, namely transgressions of transit etiquette.



Figure 4 Manner poster featuring folk tale characters advising passengers to be careful with their wet umbrellas. Source: © Tokyo Metro / Metro Cultural Foundation / Metro Ad Agency. Reuse not permitted. [Figure redacted for copyright reasons. Please see the associated journal publication for the image.]



Figure 5 Poster asking passengers not to block the carriage doors. Source: © EAST JAPAN RAILWAY COMPANY / JR East Marketing & Communications, Inc. / OX CO./ Amaebi (STUDIO SUE). Reuse not permitted. [Figure redacted for copyright reasons. Please see the associated journal publication for the image.]



Figure 6 Poster asking passengers not stop the doors from closing so that they can board at the last minute. Source: © EAST JAPAN RAILWAY COMPANY / JR East Marketing & Communications, Inc./ OX CO./ Amaebi (STUDIO SUE). Reuse not permitted. [Figure redacted for copyright reasons. Please see the associated journal publication for the image.]

This chapter inquires into the logics of public transport company efforts to shape passenger conduct through an analysis of the considerations guiding the employment and design of manner posters. It primarily builds on semi-structured expert interviews (Bogner, Littig and Menz, 2009) with individuals engaged in the creation of manner posters. As posters are usually professionally designed by advertising and production companies on behalf of railway companies, interviewees did not just include railway company staff but also designers, illustrators, and producers working in the advertising industry. I

conducted 22 interviews, eight of which were group interviews with multiple members of a relevant work team, bringing the total number of interviewees to 34. Interviews were conducted in Japanese and lasted between 45 and 150 minutes. With the exception of three written email interviews, all interviews were conducted in person or via video call. Informed consent was obtained from all interviewees, and 17 out of 22 interviews were recorded with permission of the participants. My inquiry into company perspectives on manner improvement initiatives was augmented by a qualitative analysis of over 200 industry documents relating to passenger conduct and customer service including articles in industry journals, press releases, company position papers, and internal documents. In addition, this chapter is also informed by insights gained through conversations with passengers and observations during year-long ethnographic fieldwork in Tokyo, as well as four prior years of experience as a user of the city's public transport system. My analysis was guided by two overarching questions: 'Why do Japanese manner poster campaigns target such a wide range of behaviours?' and 'Why do Japanese public transport providers employ elaborately designed posters rather than more standard forms of regulatory signage?'. I will suggest that the answer to these questions lies in manner posters' function as technology of customer service.

6.2 Manner posters as a technology of customer service

It is tempting to understand company-issued etiquette posters as a disciplinary device and agent of social control. Manner posters present persistent reminders of good passenger etiquette and ostensibly seek to 'organise and order' passenger bodies (Symes, 2015, p. 71). For example, Padoan (2014) described Tokyo manner posters as 'regulators of social life' which 'construct a form of subjectivity for [...] passengers' by placing them 'under the gaze [...] of other commuters'. Similarly, Negishi (2016, pp. 184–185) argues that manner posters call on passengers to become 'vigilant policing subjects' surveilling the conduct of their fellow passengers. This is a credible analytical approach. Padoan and Negishi's understanding of manner posters is in line with established themes in the study of the governance of Japanese urban space and society (e.g. lateral surveillance and friendly authoritarianism; see Coates, 2015, 2017b; Davidson, 2013; Schimkowsky, 2021a; Sugimoto, 2014) and takes into account the verbal-visual particularities of manner posters. Posters usually refrain from direct invocations of authority found in regulatory signage in other urban rail systems (e.g. signs threatening fines for eating and drinking on the Taipei Metro). Their attractive visual design clearly sets them apart from the prohibitive 'slashed-out red circle' approach to communicating behavioural expectations usually found in regulatory signage (Hermer and Hunt, 1996; see also Chapter 7). Accordingly, it is possible to understand poster campaigns as a 'soft' technology of control which draws on 'encouragement and promotion [...] rather than discipline and punishment' (Negishi, 2016, p. 13). However, while valuable from the perspective of social scientific analysis, this chapter argues that such an interpretation is far from the emic concerns of companies involved in planning manner improvement campaigns and creating manner posters. Rather than a quest for innovative and effective strategies of social control, the design and deployment of manner posters is driven by company perceptions of passenger concerns and sensibilities. The following three subsections will argue that manner improvement campaigns on Tokyo transit should be primarily understood as a technology of customer service rather than a tool of passenger regulation through an analysis of posters' aims and content, presentation and design, and their limitations.

6.2.1 Aims and content of manner posters

Tokyo transport companies position manner improvement initiatives as part of efforts to maintain and improve customer satisfaction. Campaigns are planned (and posters commissioned) by company sections

in charge of ‘service quality’ or ‘customer service’. Interviewees and industry publications alike state that the primary goal of initiatives is to improve the experience of rail travel by safeguarding passenger comfort. Ensuring passenger comfort is an important task for companies seeking to increase the appeal of their transport services. A cornerstone of this is cushioning passengers from the violence of speed and movement of the service vehicle (Martin, 2011; Virilio, 2008). For example, compared to the early days of aviation, aeroplane passengers are now largely protected from the adverse sensations of air travel (Budd, 2011). However, the pursuit of traveller comfort does not stop at shielding passenger bodies from potential discomforts and anxieties caused by vehicular movement. Instead, it is a complex – and commercialised – endeavour to provide an overall ‘pleasant’ and ‘relaxing’ travel experience (Bissell, 2008; Lin, 2020b). In line with these industry goals, Japanese railway companies have consistently sought to improve the ‘comfort’ of rail transit and travel, striving to enhance passenger experience through a wide array of measures ranging from reducing noise and vibration inside the train to refining employees’ customer service techniques (see also Chapter 5). Railway company officials I interviewed presented ‘ensuring passengers’ comfort and peace of mind’ as a company ‘mission’ (*shimei*) that is second only to obligations of ensuring safe and on-time operations. This position is mirrored in industry publications that describe efforts towards ‘more comfortable, more accurate, and safer’ transport services as the ‘basis’ of railway business operations (JR Gazette, 1994), and connect them to pledges of ‘putting the customer first’. Manner improvement initiatives are part of such efforts. Railway companies portray manner posters as aiming to improve transport experience, ‘so that everyone can use the train comfortably’ (JR Gazette, 2017a). The reason for this is that inconsiderate passenger behaviour is seen as negatively affecting passenger experience and endangering service quality:

We want passengers to feel comfortable and at ease when using our services. We do what we can to achieve this [...] by improving facilities and training staff and so on. [...] However, the thing about trains is that our customers are really diverse...inconsiderable behaviour by just one customer can make ‘safety’ and ‘comfort’ unachievable. It’s only if we gain the cooperation of all customers that we can truly improve our services [...]. Manner improvement and service improvement really are proportionate to each other. (Interview, railway company customer service officer, August 2020)

We take measures to maintain order and improve the environment of our transport facilities to provide safe [...] and comfortable journeys. However, like other forms of public space, our trains and stations are used by the general public. We wish customers to have a pleasant and safe journey through observing transit etiquette and showing mutual consideration and will continue to conduct appropriate manner improvement campaigns in the interest of this. (JR Gazette, 2017b)

These quotations hint at the ‘vulnerability’ of sensations of comfort (Bissell, 2008). Even in well-maintained and clean carriages, commuter comfort can quickly deteriorate if fellow passengers behave ‘inappropriately’. In other words, companies recognise that comfort depends not just on direct company services but also passenger adherence to a ‘code of conduct’ (Jain, 2011, p. 1021; Symes, 2015, pp. 67–68). While conventional approaches to passenger comfort seek to cushion the passenger against potential adverse sensations caused by the vehicle as a moving physical body (e.g. heat and noise insulation), manner improvement initiatives take the pursuit of passenger comfort one step further by addressing potential negative stimuli that can arise in trains and stations as shared social environments: infractions of transit etiquette in form of annoying, inconsiderate, or out of place behaviour. They are thus a company effort to ward off feelings of discomfort in order to ‘encourage, steer, and [...] enable particular affects to take hold among customers’ (Lin, 2020b, p. 164). As such, customer service endeavours such as manner

improvement initiatives can be conceptualised as a form of care, i.e. as companies' 'proactive interest' in the well-being of passengers and the translation of this interest into practical efforts to ensure customer comfort and peace of mind (see Conradson, 2003, p. 508). In other words, customer service principles direct transport providers to view passengers as subjects in their care (see Power and Williams, 2019, pp. 3–4).

Manner posters' function as a technology of customer service is not just evident from underlying concerns for passenger comfort, but also the impulses driving manner improvement initiatives. Initiatives are motivated by customer demands. Japanese railway companies operate various 'customer opinion' communication channels through which they gather and respond to passenger feedback (e.g. online forms). Received complaints are taken very seriously: for example, grievances regarding 'too hot' or 'too cold' in-carriage temperature are followed up upon by checking the air conditioning unit for technical faults and operation errors before responding to the complainant. In an interview, a former member of the customer service section of a private railway company in the Kansai area further reported that in severe cases section staff made home visits to complaining passengers to formally apologise for inconveniences caused if they could not be assuaged via the phone. Companies aim to connect complaints to service improvements. For example, at JR West, one of Japan's biggest railway providers, all customer feedback is entered into a central database and, once entered, requires a two-fold response: a reply to the complainant, but also a written response from the concerned station or section to the customer care department (JR Gazette, 2011). Companies use complaints as a resource to identify and reform shortcomings in their customer service. 'Success stories' of customer complaints which could be tied to service improvements are published in industry journals (e.g. train timetable adjustments, reduction of overhead announcements; JR Gazette, 1992). This commitment to understanding passenger experience and adapting company services accordingly is evidence of a strong market orientation (Molander *et al.*, 2012). Companies emphasise that manner improvement initiatives are a response to customer feedback. Although most complaints companies receive focus on station facilities, employee attitude or the train schedule, complaints about the 'manners' of fellow commuters are also frequent. Grievances address a diverse array of inconsiderate or 'annoying' conduct and range from simple expressions of frustration to specific demands for company interventions through educational efforts (*keihatsu*) or formal regulation. They directly shape manner improvement initiatives, with frequent complaints about specific behaviours often translating into initiatives targeting the issue. For example, *Service Quality* officers from one railway company told me that they responded to a recent increase in complaints about 'bad' behaviour by foreign tourists on trains and in stations by creating more multilingual posters and launching a manner initiative aimed at foreigners. In addition, companies also draw on findings from company 'monitor' studies and an annual survey of the 'most annoying commuter behaviours' by the Japanese Private Railway Association to tailor manner improvement initiatives to passenger concerns.

This is not to say that manner improvement efforts are purely reactive. The main agency behind manner improvement campaigns remains with railway providers – ultimately it is companies which decide the content and form of initiatives. For example, companies moderate passenger concerns. The decision what kind of transgressions to address is not just based on the frequency of grievances but also their perceived appropriateness. *Customer Service* staff from one railway company told me that while they often receive complaints about 'noisy' foreign passengers, addressing these in a targeted campaign is not an option, as it would imply a lack of intercultural tolerance and it was questionable 'whether *Japanese* passengers are really all that quiet'. Company officials also actively 'arrange' the topics of manner improvement

campaigns. Manner posters are often issued monthly as part of annual poster series, meaning that companies need to decide which passenger conducts to take up when. Such decisions are influenced by seasonal concerns (e.g. the problem of ‘wet umbrellas’ in the carriage during the rainy season) and the rhythms of Japanese society (e.g. the perceived need to teach basic commuting skills when schools and companies take in new students and employees in April). In other words, railway companies design manner improvement campaigns to respond to anticipated frictions and changing regulatory needs. Companies also insert their own priorities into manner improvement initiatives. Passenger behaviours which could affect the operational integrity, efficiency, or safety of the transit system are staple topics of poster campaigns even though they are often not the focus of customer complaints (see also Chapter 5). For example, rushing onto the train when the carriage doors are closing (*kakekomi jōsha*) is not explicitly listed in the ‘annoying behaviours’ survey of the Private Railway Association, and did not find much mention in passengers interviews I conducted. However, it is a core concern for railway providers as it is responsible for more than 60 per cent of train delays below 10 minutes in Tokyo (MLIT, 2019b). In contrast to the customer-led inclusion of other manner transgressions, the inclusion of behaviours such as *kakekomi jōsha* is thus likely driven by underlying company priorities. However, this should not be understood as a top-down imposition of normative conceptions of ‘good’ or ‘bad’ passenger conduct, but as emerging from underlying considerations of customer service and satisfaction. Safe and punctual operations are the very basis of railway services, and any shortcoming in this regard would betray fundamental passenger expectations and damage the company image²⁶. In addressing behaviours which could cause delays, manner posters help safeguard the punctual operation of the transit system, thus fending off a core source of customer dissatisfaction.

In the above, I have shown that manner improvement initiatives are primarily driven by company concerns for customer service. Transit etiquette posters are an expression of railway providers’ determination to provide a ‘comfortable’ transit experience and respond to customer feedback. The frequency of manner-related customer complaints indicates that many Japanese commuters view inconsiderate and inappropriate passenger behaviour not as an issue that needs to be solved by commuters themselves, but as the responsibility of transport providers. Transport providers also subscribe to this interpretation and describe responding to customer complaints about transgressions of transit manners as part of their ‘duty (*gimu*) as a train company’ (Hosokawa, 1994, p. 2). Railway providers view improving passenger etiquette as a meaningful area of customer service, and measure passenger satisfaction with manner improvement efforts as part of customer satisfaction surveys (JR East, 2019; Tokyo Metropolitan Bureau of Transportation, 1995), illustrating a ‘holistic’ understanding of customer service which includes factors outside of company control (Olsson *et al.*, 2012, p. 413). Accordingly, manner posters are not a company effort to encourage commuters’ mutual policing of transgressions of transit etiquette among passengers (cf. Negishi, 2016, pp. 184–185), but are tied to passengers’ inclination to delegate dealing with ‘feelings of distress and discomfort’ to companies²⁷ (Mubi Brighenti and Pavoni, 2019, p. 147). The following section will continue my examination of manner improvement initiatives as a technology of customer service by examining the considerations shaping manner poster design.

²⁶ Companies also see threats to transit safety, efficiency and comfort as fundamentally interrelated (see Chapter 5; Schimkowsky, 2021c for a more in-depth discussion).

²⁷ This interpretation is supported by the fact that public transport passengers in Tokyo almost never intervene in manner transgressions of their co-passengers.

6.2.2 Design considerations and customer sensibilities

While manner improvement initiatives demonstrate Japanese railway companies' willingness to problematise a range of mundane passenger behaviours, the extent of these company interventions is fundamentally limited by the demands of company-customer relations. Although manner improvement campaigns recognise specific behaviours as problematic, they do not seek to regulate them through prohibitions. Managing transit etiquette through formal rules is considered unworkable because most of the behaviours in question are not 'deviant' per se, but only become problematic in specific situations (e.g. reading newspapers on a crowded train), or due to their excessive degree (e.g. loud headphone volume).

[Imposing fines for eating and drinking] is a difficult thing to do as an individual railway operator. If a higher-level authority like the Tokyo Metropolitan Government would get involved it might be possible... but whether an outright ban is appropriate is a different question. People need to drink to avoid heatstroke and so on [...], so it is not something we would consider. (Interview, railway company customer service manager, January 2020)

There are things that we cannot forcefully demand. For example, while we ask passengers not to talk loudly on the train, in some situations people need to talk and so on... there are many things which we cannot completely prohibit, so the only stance we can take is 'We humbly ask for your cooperation'. (Interview, railway company customer service officer, August 2020)

This section will advance the argument that manner improvement initiatives are a technology of customer service by examining how considerations of customer sensibilities shape the format and design of manner posters. As shown by the above quotations, companies view their ability to intervene in passenger etiquette as limited. Authoritative prohibitions are not an option, as they would present an inappropriate limitation of passenger freedoms. This leaves persuasive appeals as only suitable approach for company management of passenger etiquette. Regard for passenger sensibilities is also evident in the medium choice. Posters have emerged as the go-to tool of manner improvement campaigns not just because they are a relatively budget-friendly way of communicating with passengers while they traverse the transit system, but also because of their affordances as a medium of customer communication. Combining verbal and visual text, posters allow for more elaborate and nuanced persuasive strategies than exclusively verbal media such as notices or announcements. Furthermore, companies view posters as a less intrusive means of educating passengers in transit manners than other media such as overhead announcements (which are thought to easily annoy passengers because of their required frequency). Considerations of customer sensibilities thus fundamentally shape the approach taken by manner improvement campaigns.

Poster design is another area where the anticipated effect on the customer is of prominent influence. Deliberation of visual impact presents a common starting point when designing posters for transit spaces. Tokyo trains and railway stations are packed with advertisements and notices, leading to a semiotic oversaturation of the urban transport environment and a fierce struggle for commuter attention (Figures 7-9). To compete, manner poster designers have adopted techniques of advertisement design such as using bold colours and cultural references (see Figures 4-6; Chapter 5; Schimkowsky, 2021c). Railway company and design staff stress that a visually appealing or interesting poster design is of particular import because passengers are 'generally not interested' in reading reminders of desirable commuter etiquette. Whereas commercial advertisements can capture passenger attention through their content (e.g. tourism adverts that can spark mental escapes from the carriage (Negishi and Bissell, 2020)), manner posters lack similar 'naturally' interesting content and need to be *made* interesting and appealing to

attract passenger attention. At the same time, posters must be 'simple and easy to understand' as passengers usually just briefly glance at posters from afar while navigating crowded stations.



Figure 7 Advertising spaces on a Japanese commuter train. Source: © JR East Marketing & Communications, Inc.(2021). Reuse not permitted. [Figure redacted for copyright reasons. Please see the associated journal publication for the image.]

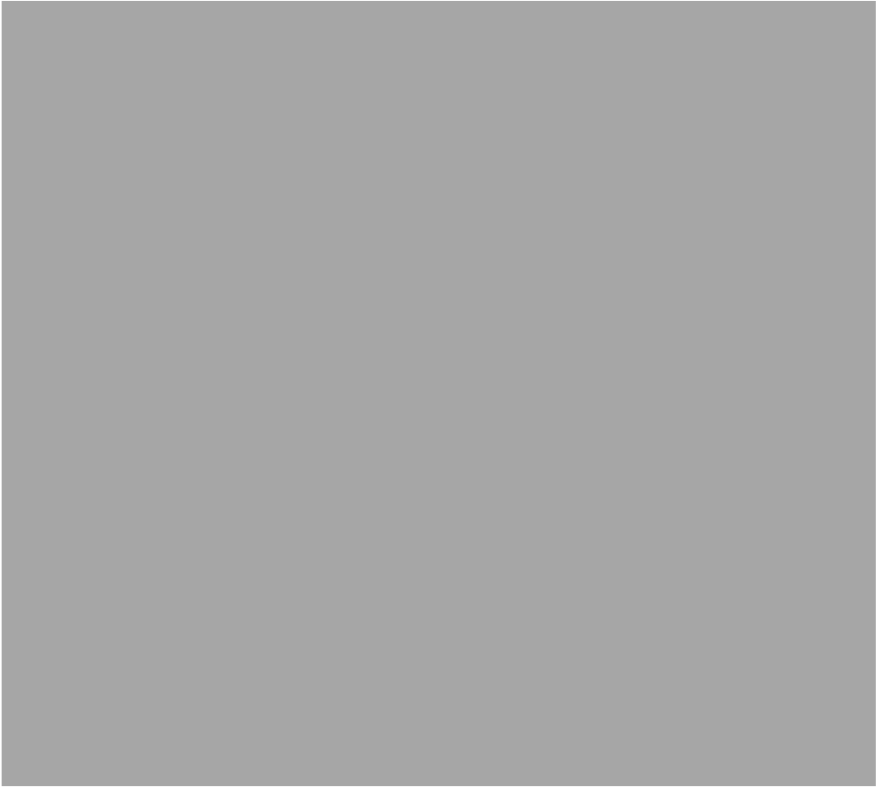


Figure 8 Advertising spaces in a Tokyo train station. Source: © JR East Marketing & Communications, Inc.(2021). Reuse not permitted. [Figure redacted for copyright reasons. Please see the associated journal publication for the image.]



Figure 9 Posters inside a subway station in Tokyo. Source: Author.

Overwriting these concerns of visual impact are considerations of appropriateness. Transit etiquette posters are a channel through which railway companies address customers. Dominant Japanese cultural norms award customers higher social status than service providers and require companies to show deference to their clients. Japanese railway companies are acutely aware of the etiquette demands of company-customer interaction: complaints about employee ‘attitude’ are among the most frequent grievances passengers submit to companies, and were a primary cause of reputational problems faced by Japan National Railways before it was privatised. Driven by concerns that insufficiently respectful employee conduct could negatively affect the company image and passenger numbers²⁸, Japanese railway providers have developed comprehensive training schemes to foster a customer-oriented mindset and communication skills among frontline workers. It is unsurprising that a similar concern for passenger sensibilities shapes the design of manner posters. Above all, posters need to avoid coming across as a command:

Railway companies’ position [when conducting manner improvement initiatives] is something like ‘We want to encourage the cooperation of our valued customers’. Accordingly, they tell us [company in charge of poster design] that we cannot say direct things like ‘Don’t do this’ and so on. [...] We can *show* bad manners in posters, but we cannot say things like ‘Walking while using your smartphone is not allowed’. That’s a no-go because it would turn into a prohibition. We cannot say ‘You can’t’. A possible solution is to say ‘It’s dangerous’ or ‘You could bump into someone’ instead. (Interview, creative director at an advertising agency, April 2020)

Any textual expression of a direct ‘order’ would invert the expected status hierarchy of customer and company and risk offending passengers. Assertive and authoritative phrasing such as imperative mood

²⁸ Reputational damage is particularly harmful in Tokyo as passengers – depending on their destination – might have the choice between different railway providers.

must be used with utmost caution, as it could easily lead to complaints ('Is that how you speak to your customers?!'). Deference requirements also limit the visual repertoire available for poster appeals to passenger manners (see also Chapter 7). For example, railway companies ask designers to avoid visual shortcuts that could be interpreted as an official proscription, such as crossing out a specific behaviour. Depictions of passengers in posters present another potentially problematic area. Designers must avoid negative portrayals as 'all passengers – including those with bad manners – are customers' and thus need to be treated with respect. This poses a tricky creative challenge: while posters must clearly show the bothersome behaviour, they must avoid making it look like a passenger is deliberately flaunting transit etiquette, and refrain from exaggerating the inconvenience it causes. Accordingly, designers and illustrators often carefully calibrate visual details such as characters' position, posture, and facial expression. Furthermore, designers refrain from repeatedly depicting the same passenger group (e.g. students, white-collar workers) as 'offenders' to prevent perceptions of bias:

Ultimately, passengers who do not observe appropriate manners are also customers, so I took care that posters do not look like they are criticising or ridiculing a specific passenger type. For this reason, the [fictive setting]²⁹ of the posters was perfect, as the characters that appear in them do not actually exist. We could use them as symbols of passengers with bad manners. (Interview, art director at an advertising company, June 2020)

Strategies of semiotic dissociation such as choosing a design theme that is removed from contemporary urban everyday life can help sidestep risks that posters could be interpreted as a criticism of a particular passenger type. Similarly, using fictive characters (e.g. from anime shows) to address passengers on behalf of the company can help prevent potential perceptions of posters as 'unilateral implorations' by the transport provider (JR Gazette, 2012). Manner poster design thus utilises advanced creative strategies to protect customer sensibilities and maintain the expected hierarchy between company and customer³⁰. Efforts to avoid customer offence go hand in hand with a broader, underlying design goal of making company etiquette messages more acceptable to passengers:

We go for designs that people can laugh about, so that they do not mind being told about etiquette things so much. (Interview, railway company customer service manager, January 2020)

I think all companies aim for an interesting and friendly design – they do not want their posters to come across as nagging or bossy. (Interview, railway company customer service officer, August 2020)

While advertising techniques such as puns and cultural references are employed by poster designers to increase manner posters' visual impact, the same persuasive strategies are used to sugar-coat their regulatory message and minimise the chance of passenger discomfort. Posters' visual appearance is in line with Japan's popular *kawai* culture of cuteness (Allison, 2004) and has been described as 'mangaesque' (Wilde, 2018a). An 'interesting' poster design serves the double purpose of making the poster a more appealing visual artifact *and* softening the tone of its manner directive. Railway companies view the use of humour or cute illustrations as essential persuasive strategy for etiquette campaigns as they expect passengers to ignore posters that are too 'pushy' or come across as 'lecturing' them. Accordingly, an 'inappropriate' tone or poster design would risk undermining the goals of companies' manner improvement efforts. Unsuitable poster designs could even trigger passenger discomfort and complaints,

²⁹ Details omitted to protect the identity of the research participant.

³⁰ This is in line with the challenges of managing consumer deviance highlighted in Section 2.7.

thus contradicting posters' intended purposes of increasing passenger comfort and addressing customer feedback. As one illustrator told me, 'for railway companies [...] a good public transport manner poster is one that doesn't lead to any complaints'. Accordingly, manner poster designers need to balance considerations of impact and appropriateness. While staple visual expressions of regulatory intent such as slashed-out pictograms would likely communicate expected passenger conduct with greater urgency, they are consistently avoided by transport and design professionals as they are considered unsuitable for customer communication. Similarly, while provocative poster design or humour could help attract commuter attention, posters cannot be *too* 'edgy' as this would risk offending customers. Although striking such a balance is important in advertising in general, the creative professionals I interviewed emphasised that its importance is amplified when designing railway manner posters due to the 'public nature' (*kōkyōsei*) of urban transit and transport providers. Manner poster designs need to be of near-universal appeal because public transport brings together diverse individuals with varying sensibilities.

This section has shown that the format of manner posters as linguistic-visual texts is determined by their function as a technology of customer service. Poster design is shaped by a need to avoid offending passengers and soften the tone of the manner message. Railway companies are reluctant to issue straightforward prohibitions of problematic behaviour and avoid linguistic-visual expressions that could be interpreted as such in order not to risk upsetting the expected hierarchy between company and customer. Setting out behavioural guidelines for customers in manner posters is a delicate task, and often involves repeated fine-tuning and adjustment of visual and verbal expressions. The individual addressed by company manner improvement campaigns is in the first instance always a customer, rather than a passenger subject that needs to be regulated.

6.2.3 Manner posters and the limits of control and service

The above section has shown that manner poster design is essentially influenced by company considerations of customer sensibilities. This last section will advance my argument that manner posters are a technology of customer service by showing that exerting control over passengers is not the primary goal of transit etiquette improvement campaigns. Rather than regulatory strategies, interviewees spoke of the ways in which company control of passenger behaviour is impossible or inappropriate, and focused on posters' role in ensuring customer satisfaction. This is particularly evident from interviewees' reflections on posters' effectiveness. So far, this chapter has deliberately avoided questions of effectiveness due to difficulties involved in measuring poster influence on passenger conduct in natural settings (i.e. controlling for other factors that might influence peoples' conduct; identifying a suitable control population). Railway company officials I interviewed seemed to be aware of such methodological challenges and stated that it is 'difficult' or 'impossible' to verify the effect of manner poster campaigns. While companies could refer to changes in the number of received customer complaints to speculate about the impact of poster campaigns, such numbers present an unreliable indicator of the actual occurrence of manner transgressions. No railway company professional I spoke to reported dedicated attempts to measure posters' effectiveness. In general, the interviewed transport and advertising professionals were sceptical about posters' influence on commuter behaviour and even voiced doubts whether passengers notice posters at all. Not one interviewee was convinced that posters are an effective means of shaping passenger conduct.

There is always some uncertainty whether [our measures] actually reach the people they are meant to reach. For example, a person who is walking while looking at their smartphone is unlikely

to see posters... and a person who is listening to loud music on their earphones is unlikely to hear announcements. (Interview, railway company customer service officer, August 2020)

This uncertainty about the effect of manner improvement initiatives limits the budget available for poster campaigns:

You cannot really measure the effect in numbers. If you want to create a 'good' poster series [...] you need to invest money. If you create a tourism advertising poster for a certain region, it is relatively easy to check whether there was an increase in tourists in that area afterwards. You can calculate whether the investment was worth it -- for companies it is important that there is a proportionate relationship between investment and pay-off. But with manner posters you cannot really confirm the effect, so that makes things more difficult. (Interview, railway company customer service officer, August 2020)

It might appear astonishing that Japanese transport companies have continued to invest money into elaborate poster campaigns for decades despite such doubts. Once again, the explanation lies in manner posters' function as a technology of customer service. Although they address shortcomings of transit etiquette, their primary goal is not to discipline passengers but to ensure customer satisfaction. Customer complaints create a need for a company response. Manner posters provide exactly this, regardless of their actual impact on passenger behaviour:

Ultimately, our main goal is to show that we as a company are doing something to improve passenger etiquette. As I said earlier, we frequently get complaints... we need to show that we are earnestly engaging [...] with manner issues. After all, you cannot really prove the effect of things like this. (Interview, railway company customer service manager, January 2020)

In other words, manner improvement campaigns are a way of creating proof of earnest engagement with customer concerns and company efforts to provide a comfortable transit experience; something transport companies can point to when confronted with customer complaints about poor passenger conduct. At the same time, posters are a way of meeting customer expectations. Company reminders of good transit etiquette have been a part of Japanese urban transit spaces for decades (see Chapter 5; Schimkowsky, 2021c) and thus have become something passengers *expect* to see in stations and on trains. A hypothetical decision to drop manner improvement efforts would be difficult to justify to complaining passengers, particularly because manner posters have become a standard form of communication that is employed by most competing railway companies. Passengers sometimes even complain about a *perceived* lack of manner improvement efforts even when a company is actually engaging in such initiatives:

All these people wearing their backpack on the train are really a nuisance! Why don't you do something to improve passenger manners, like [major railway company] does? (Customer complaint cited in an internal company newsletter)

Manner improvement campaigns have become a criteria of a comprehensive customer service for Japanese railway companies. Their effectiveness in reigning in transgressions of transit etiquette is only a secondary concern.

Company manner improvement initiatives are not just defined by the limitations railway providers face when addressing passenger etiquette, but they also reveal the limits of public transport companies' customer service capabilities. As discussed earlier, passenger experiences of comfort are always fragile and can be easily disrupted by factors beyond company control such as 'inappropriate' or 'rude' behaviour by fellow commuters. Accordingly, 'comfort' is not a finished service railway companies provide to

passengers as passive recipients, but is produced together with them (JR Gazette, 2007). This frames public transport users as dual entities: as potentially deviant passengers whose conduct might demand intervention, and as esteemed customers who need to be satisfied and cannot be commanded. In other words, commuters are imagined as both recipients of a pleasant transport environment as a form of customer service, and as a variable upon which the successful production of such spaces depends. The manner improvement initiatives discussed in this chapter are defined by the tension between these bifurcating dimensions of how public transport users are imagined. While rude or uncivil conduct on public transport requires rectification to ensure customer satisfaction and efficient operation of the transit system, the form company interventions can take is inherently limited by deviant passengers' overriding status as customers.

6.3 Conclusion

This chapter discussed company efforts to improve passenger etiquette on public transport. Taking the example of urban railways in Tokyo, the chapter argued that railway companies primarily engage in manner improvement efforts to ensure customer satisfaction. It showed that company regard for customer concerns and sensibilities is the principal driving factor behind manner improvement campaigns. Examining the content and aim of manner posters, I first demonstrated that manner improvement initiatives present a form of company response to customer demands and concerns. Company definitions of inappropriate passenger conduct do not present a normative framework that is imposed on passengers, but are largely taken from customer feedback. Japanese manner poster initiatives are driven by a symbiosis of passenger desires (to experience a comfortable and nuisance-free commute) and company will (to satisfy customer demands). They are the outcome of a shared consensus that the management of passenger (mis)conduct is the responsibility of public transport providers, and can be interpreted as form of corporate care seeking to ensure customer comfort. The following section focused on poster design, and showed that the visual and verbal format of media devices Japanese railway companies employ to improve passenger etiquette is shaped by concerns for customer sensibilities. The question of how to tell *customers* – the declared focus of company services – how they should or should not behave presents a formative challenge for manner improvement initiatives. The final section argued that rather than effective regulation of passenger conduct, showing engagement with customer complaints is the principal concern of Japanese transport providers issuing manner posters. Manner improvement initiatives should thus be understood as primarily a technology of customer service. This is not to deny that manner improvement efforts possess regulatory potential and could not also be interpreted as a disciplinary device. Instead, it is to say that the *principal* concern of company manner improvement efforts is not control but customer satisfaction (see also Chapter 8). Manner posters' regulatory potential is inherently limited as posters need to protect customer sensibilities, precluding potentially more effective interventions (i.e. in form of verbal-visual expressions). To put it differently, manner posters' function as a technology of customer service generally takes precedence over its function as disciplinary device. While it is tempting to describe cute and colourful posters carrying reminders of desirable passenger conduct as a subtle regulatory effort, social control is not their driving motivation. Manner posters thus remind us that the governance of conduct in urban spaces is not necessarily the expression of a strong regulatory will. To borrow the words of Mubi Brighenti and Pavoni (2019, p. 146), the management of urban spaces is not 'simply a matter of either disciplinary training or governmental subjection, but more precisely a matter of engineering safe, comforting and entertaining atmospheres'.

While often overlooked as a topic of scholarly inquiry due to its mundane nature, signage plays an important role in the 'staging' of mobilities as it can 'afford, process, and coordinate (or obstruct)' the movement and circulation of mobile subjects (Jensen, 2014, p. 568, 2013). Choreographing and mediating passenger conduct, signage partakes in the production of urban mobilities (Symes, 2015). Although there is a tendency to focus on directional signage (Denis and Pontille, 2010; Fuller, 2002), regulatory signage attempting to deter or elicit specific passenger behaviours plays a similarly important part in the construction of transit spaces and practices. Experiences of anti-social, uncivil, or unpleasant behaviour on urban public transit are recognised as a factor that can deter public transport usage, and thus impact the income of public transport companies (Moore, 2011; Stradling *et al.*, 2007). Transport companies further fear that they can cause accidents and delays (see Chapter 5; Schimkowsky, 2021c). It is thus unsurprising that posters and other signage encouraging good passenger etiquette find employment in urban transit systems around the globe. Although the use of such semiotic devices has been observed in various countries such as the United Kingdom (Moore, 2012), Australia (Bissell, 2018; Symes, 2015) and Chile (Ureta, 2012), the existing literature has largely neglected transport companies' perspectives on their production. Examining the priorities and considerations that shape posters' design and deployment, this chapter presents a novel perspective on the logics of transport companies' use of regulatory signage, as well as companies' engagement with passenger (mis)conduct more broadly. While it is possible that the considerations guiding transport company responses to undesirable passenger conduct vary in different national and cultural contexts, this chapter presents a starting point for scholarly inquiries into public transport provider perspectives on passenger transgressions of transit etiquette. Future scholarship could further examine the different persuasive techniques transport providers employ to elicit certain kinds of passenger conduct and compare how these vary by location or behaviour. For example, it is likely that the assertiveness of company interventions increases proportionally to the seriousness of the targeted offence (e.g. criminal transgressions such as violence or sexual assault; behaviour that may lead to accidents). Another question deserving further attention is how public transport providers choose which passenger misconducts to target in company initiatives. While this chapter has shown that customer complaints are crucial in this, the question remains what kind of passengers complain about 'misconduct' by fellow commuters, and whose complaints and concerns are taken seriously. For example, the customer complaint-based company engagement with passenger misconduct described in this chapter is not necessarily a democratic representation of the concerns of the commuter body as a whole, but might be skewed towards the sensitivities of particular passenger groups. Finally, the chapter demonstrated that public transport providers may address transport users as both passengers and customers. While prior research has largely focused on the figure of the passenger (Bissell, Adey and Laurier, 2011), this study highlighted the need to understand the customer as another key figure of mobility (see Salazar, 2017) with its own characteristics, sensibilities and needs that might overlap with that of the passenger, but might also diverge from it or even run counter to it. Future scholarship should further interrogate the implications of public transport users' dual status as both passenger and customer (or as 'passenger-customers' (see Negishi, 2016)). Studying etiquette messaging by public transport providers thus promises rich insights into the production of urban mobilities.

Chapter 7 Visual communication and the management of passenger conduct: a visual analysis of transit etiquette posters by Japanese railway companies³¹

The visual communication of behavioural expectations plays an important role in the management of urban spaces. Illustrated signs and notices proscribing appropriate or ‘correct’ conduct permeate the semiotic landscape of contemporary cities (Hermer and Hunt, 1996; Jaworski and Thurlow, 2011) and are particularly prominent in transport environments (Schimkowsky, 2021b). Public transport providers frequently employ posters and other semiotic devices to promote good mobility practices. Despite the prevalence of institutional interventions in passenger conduct in public transport systems around the world (Bissell, 2018; Moore, 2010; Ureta, 2012), detailed analyses of the semiotic structure of such persuasive visual media are rare: there is a tendency to leave the role of visual communication in maintaining everyday urban order unexamined (but see Lazar, 2003; Padoan, 2014). This chapter seeks to address this oversight by examining the design strategies employed by ‘manner posters’ issued by Tokyo railway companies to appeal to commuter etiquette. Utilising a two-pronged visual analysis approach combining multimodal and quantitative content analysis (Parry, 2019; Serafini and Reid, 2019), it argues that Japanese manner posters inscribe behavioural expectations into the physical transport environment by modelling their narrative visual content after actual commuter experiences and using salience-increasing design techniques to highlight etiquette transgressions. The chapter thus advances our understanding of the visual communication of behavioural expectations as part of strategies of ‘mundane governance’ (Woolgar and Neyland, 2013).

The chapter begins with a brief review of extant research on the use of signage and posters in the governance of everyday life and urban spaces. It then introduces the methodological approach and case study. This is followed by an in-depth visual analysis of Japanese manner posters that examines 1) character figuration, 2) image-viewer relations, and 3) the portrayal of misconduct.

7.1 Background: managing conduct through signage and posters

Signage is a key element in the production of urban spaces. Not only does it facilitate the navigation of urban environments and infrastructure (Denis and Pontille, 2010), but it also contributes to the governance of urban spaces by inscribing behavioural expectations into the material environment (see Section 3.3.2). Signage is frequently used to guide and regulate behaviour, and has been described as providing ‘instructions for use’ for places of modernity (Augé, 1995, p. 96). As a means of behavioural regulation, signage may carry prohibitions or proscriptions, or announce the presence of other technologies of social control such as CCTV (Lippert, 2009). United by a shared intent to deter or elicit behaviour, these semiotic devices can be understood as regulatory signage (Hermer and Hunt, 1996) and as a technology of mundane governance (Lippert, 2009; Woolgar and Neyland, 2013).

Signage’s role in co-constituting urban space is particularly evident in public transport environments. Train and subway stations feature a wide array of infrastructural media such as directional signage, departure time displays, and announcements (Cockain, 2018; Denis and Pontille, 2010) which facilitate, shape, and

³¹ This chapter is currently under review as a stand-alone article by *Visual Communication* and will be published under an Open Access License in case of acceptance. Minor adjustments have been made to the article manuscript to ensure the internal consistency of the thesis. Please see ‘Note to the reader’ at the beginning of the thesis for a list of changes and the bibliographic information of the original article.

constrain mobility practices (Jensen, 2014). One particular genre of communication often found in urban transit environments are posters and digital signage addressing inconsiderate, inappropriate or otherwise undesirable passenger conduct (Bissell, 2018; Moore, 2010; Ureta, 2012). While the interventional quality of persuasive posters puts them squarely in the category of regulatory signage (Hermer and Hunt, 1996), their visual and semiotic format frequently diverges from the official and standardised format employed by proscription and prohibition signage (e.g. a slashed-out red circle). Transit etiquette posters often avoid an ‘authoritarian’ format carrying threats and warnings (Moore, 2010) and instead embrace diverse semiotic structures and non-standard forms of visual expression (see Chapter 5; Schimkowsky, 2021c). For example, etiquette posters issued by Singaporean authorities as part of courtesy campaigns invoke a shared sense of community and belonging, and employ informal and ‘soft’ rather than didactic modes of address (Lazar, 2003; Yeo and Tupas, 2018). Campaign posters often integrate elements of ‘semiotic play’ such as cute mascot characters and a cheerful colour palette (Lazar, 2003, p. 212) which can be understood as a ‘conversationalisation’ of public discourse that masks power differences between the audience and the issuing authority (Fairclough, 1994). The employment of playful semiotic strategies is also prevalent in Japan where public signage often adopts a ‘mangaesque’ style (Wilde, 2018a). Etiquette posters by Japanese railway companies are known for their friendly and creative visual and linguistic content featuring informal modes of address, humour, cultural references, and cute illustrations (Padoan, 2014; Schimkowsky, 2021c). The use of these innovative design strategies serves the double purpose of attracting viewer attention and avoiding offending customer sensibilities. Communicating behavioural expectations to passengers presents a challenge for railway companies which are bound by dominant cultural norms to pay deference to their customers, and thus consciously choose a visual format that mitigates sermonic and admonitory aspects of etiquette messaging (see Chapter 6; Schimkowsky, 2021b). Accordingly, poster design requires balancing the unequivocal communication of (un)desirable conduct and avoiding causing audience resentment or annoyance. This chapter analyses how passenger misconduct is visually problematised within these limitations.

7.2 Method

This chapter explores the visual communication of behavioural expectations in contemporary cities through a two-pronged content analysis of manner posters issued by Tokyo railway companies. Ideals of customer service and the strain that Tokyo’s urban density places on the city’s public transport system prompt Japanese railway companies to continually engage in etiquette campaigns addressing a wide array of mundane passenger (mis)behaviours (Fisch, 2018; Schimkowsky, 2021b). With ca. 15 billion passenger journeys every year, Tokyo’s urban railway system operates ‘beyond capacity’ (Fisch, 2018, p. 1). To ensure the smooth operation of the transit system, passenger adherence to appropriate mobility practices is crucial (Fisch, 2018). Manner posters (Figures 10 and 11) are among companies’ go-to tools for encouraging desirable passenger conduct, making them a ubiquitous component of the semiotic landscape of Japanese urban transit environments and a suitable case study for exploring the visual communication of behavioural expectations. This study examines the visual strategies employed to encourage desirable conduct in a doubly challenging communication context: poster creators need to secure the attention of audiences hurrying through crowded and semiotically oversaturated

environments (Figure 12³²) while at the same time avoiding offending customer sensibilities (see Chapter 6; Schimkowsky, 2021b).



Figure 10 Poster asking passengers to be careful when handling wet umbrellas. Source: © Tokyo Metro / Metro Cultural Foundation / Metro Ad Agency. Reuse not permitted. [Figure redacted for copyright reasons. Please see the associated journal publication for the image.]

³² This figure, which already featured in Chapter 6, has been included here a second time due to the ‘publication format’ of this thesis.



Figure 11 Poster asking passengers to pay attention to their earphone volume. © Tokyo Metro / Metro Cultural Foundation / HAKUHODO INC. Reuse not permitted. [Figure redacted for copyright reasons. Please see the associated journal publication for the image.]



Figure 12 Advertising spaces in a Tokyo train station. Source: © JR East Marketing & Communications, Inc.(2021). Reuse not permitted. [Figure redacted for copyright reasons. Please see the associated journal publication for the image.]

This chapter blends qualitative and quantitative approaches to visual content analysis in order to provide insights into the semiotic complexity of the visual communication of behavioural expectations. The below discussion of design strategies primarily draws on a multimodal content analysis (MMCA) of 40 manner posters issued by Tokyo rail- and subway companies between 2011-2021. MMCA is a recent variation of qualitative content analysis that addresses the multimodal nature of contemporary communication and draws on interpretivist research designs (Serafini and Reid, 2019). Following Serafini and Reid (2019), I completed an analytical template for each examined poster, facilitating a systematic and in-depth examination (Table 5). The template’s analytical categories were further inspired by Kress and van Leeuwen’s (2006) influential work on ‘reading’ images. While the analysis also covered linguistic content, this chapter focuses on visual elements³³.

I.	Poster
	Targeted behaviour
	Setting
	Perspective
II.	Characters
	Number, age, gender, appearance
	Behaviour, attitude, relations between characters
	Location and salience
	Relation to viewer
III.	Composition and syntax
	Visual style

³³ A discussion of linguistic poster content can be found in Chapter 5.

Colour
Visual strategies
Verbal strategies
Font and script
IV. References
Intertextuality
Temporality
General comments

Table 5 Analytical template

The sample examined here consists of posters targeting four different types of etiquette infractions: noise nuisances, ‘unclean’ behaviour (e.g. littering), rushing onto the train at the last minute, and walking while using a smartphone. These behaviours were chosen as they are representative of efficiency, comfort, and safety as underlying themes of transit etiquette campaigns (see Chapter 5, Section 7.3). For each behaviour, 10 posters were randomly selected from a private collection of 500 photos of manner posters issued by Tokyo railway companies between 2011-2021. This approach allowed me to account for the internal diversity of the manner poster genre (e.g. different production pathways; see Chapter 5; Schimkowsky, 2021c).

The MMCA was supplemented by a quantitative visual content analysis (Parry, 2019) of 120 annual campaign posters issued by Tokyo Metro between 2010 and 2021³⁴. Tokyo Metro’s posters were chosen because they are considered to be leading examples of manner posters within the industry and have repeatedly been the focus of media attention. Focusing on poster content and character figuration, the quantitative analysis allowed me to confirm that the MMCA findings are in line with patterns within a larger corpus of manner posters and shed further light on the employed design rationales.

7.3 Poster content

Japanese manner posters target a wide array of behaviours ranging from boarding and seating etiquette to unruly sensations that passengers might encounter during their commute (Figure 13). Previous research has shown that the majority of posters target passenger behaviours that could affect the efficiency, comfort, or safety of urban railway operations (see Chapter 5; Schimkowsky, 2021c). Rather than autonomous poster categories, these themes present interrelated concerns as railway companies recognise that a single breach of transit etiquette has the potential to impact multiple aspects of transport operations. The interrelations between themes of efficiency, comfort, and safety are evident from the diagram below (Figure 14). What stands out from this quantitative analysis of poster themes is a prevalent concern for passenger comfort. Most posters address behaviours that could negatively affect commuter experience such as noise nuisances or inconsiderate use of seating. This illustrates that the principal target of manner posters is mundane passenger misconduct: behaviours that are considered impolite, inconsiderate, or inappropriate, but do not violate official regulations or bylaws. Accordingly, poster creators are precluded from employing formal prohibitions and instead need to convince passengers of desirable conduct through persuasive design. The following sections will explore the visual strategies employed to achieve this goal.

³⁴ The 2011-2012 series was excluded because it uses a vastly different visual format.

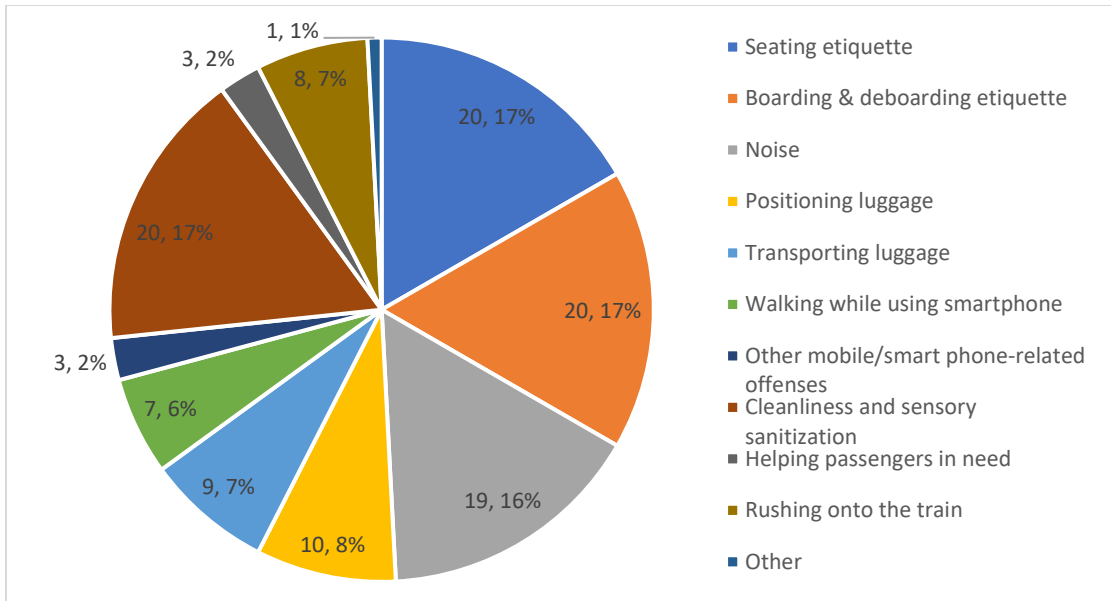


Figure 13 Behaviours targeted in Tokyo Metro manner posters (2011-2021).

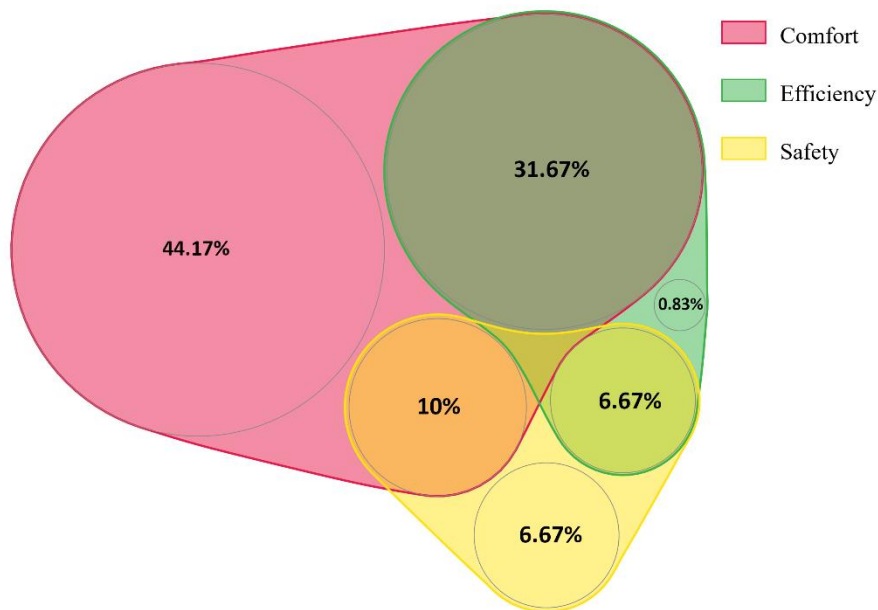


Figure 14 Themes addressed in Tokyo Metro manner posters (2011-2021). Graph created with nVenn (Pérez-Silva, Araujo-Voces and Quesada, 2018).

7.4 Character figuration

The visual component of most manner posters takes a narrative format and usually depicts characters engaging in undesirable mobility practices in public transport environments. To understand how posters

encourage good transit etiquette, it is crucial to examine posters' use of characters to tell bite-sized tales of passenger misbehaviour (see Wilde, 2018a). Character figuration can be analysed along the axes of *type* and *role*. The former refers to the different kinds of characters depicted in posters: company employees, passengers, and fictive characters. The first two categories require little explanation: they are comprised of railway company officials (e.g. conductors, station staff) and commuters. Characters' identity is commonly signalled through visual references to their official status (e.g. uniform) or a recognisable passenger subtype (e.g. businessperson, student). However, it is not uncommon for passengers to remain visually unmarked as anonymous members of what Fisch (2018, p. 36) refers to as the 'commuter collective'. While employee and passenger characters are symbolic representations of their real-life counterparts, the third category consists of characters without such counterparts. These can either be company mascots, licensed characters from media franchises, or 'working characters' whose existence is limited to their appearance as communication tools in posters (see Wilde, 2018a, p. 137). An overview of the distribution of character types in manner posters can be found in Figure 15.

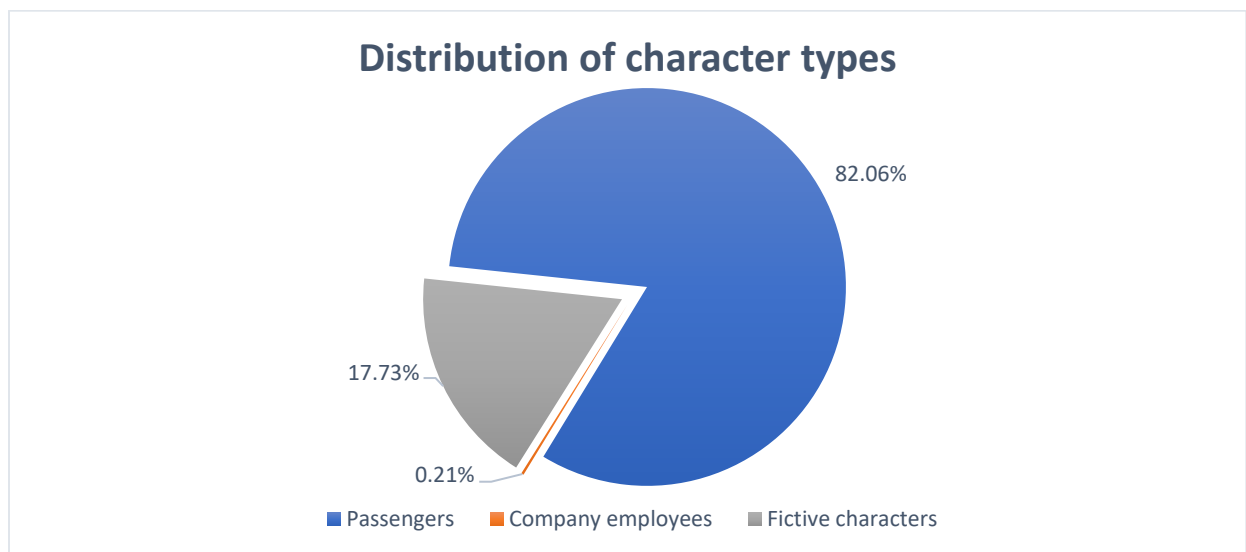


Figure 15 Distribution of character types in Tokyo Metro posters (2010-2021; excl. 2011-2012).

The second axis of character *role* refers to the narrative functions fulfilled by characters. Roles are determined by character figuration, i.e. the way depicted characters relate to each other. The basic figurative structure in posters is the relationship between 'offender' and 'victim': the portrayal of a passenger's breach of transit etiquette ('offender') as negatively affecting a fellow commuter ('victim'). Other character roles include the 'onlooker' (a character who observes the unfolding scene but is not directly affected by it), 'exemplar' (a character exhibiting model behaviour, often in contrast to the breach of the offender), 'beneficiary' (a character benefiting from a fellow passenger's good behaviour), and 'intervening agent' (a character who intervenes in problematic behaviour; Figure 16). While the boundaries between these categories are not always clear cut (for example, the difference between a 'victim' and a 'onlooker' role can be a gradual one), character roles provide posters with a transparent and recurring narrative structure. In other words, the allocation of recognisable character roles increases the salience of posters' manner message by simplifying the depicted narratives of etiquette transgression.

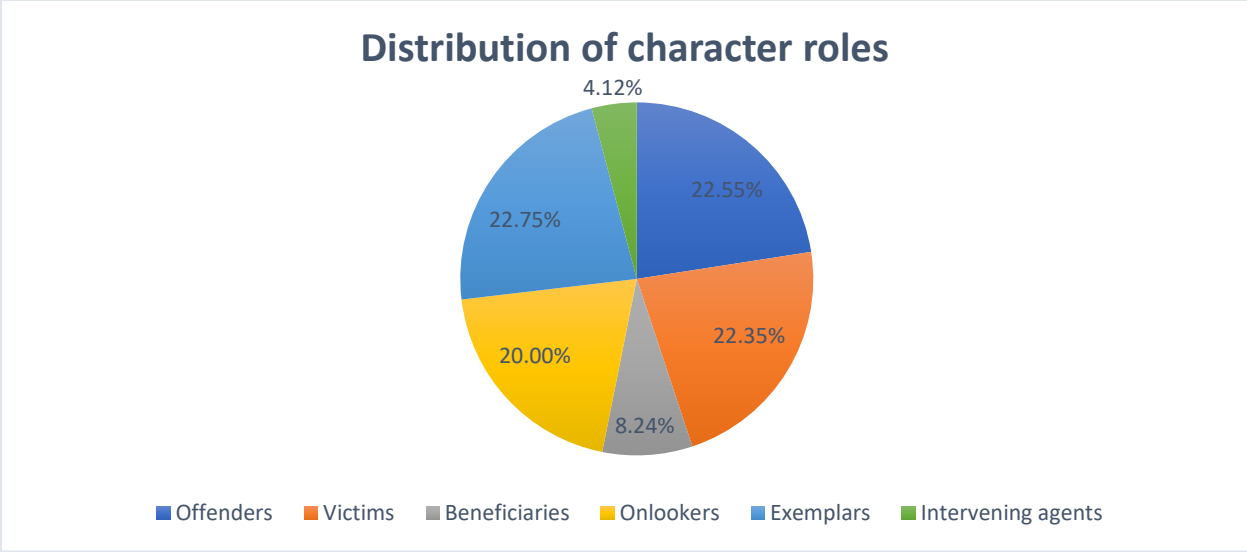


Figure 16 Distribution of character roles in Tokyo Metro posters (2010-2021; excl. 2011-2012).

The examination of character types and roles allows us to identify common figurative structures. Both the multimodal and quantitative content analysis revealed that fictive characters are the character type that most frequently behaves as intervening agent. While there are a few posters in which passenger themselves are portrayed as intervening in misconduct, they are more commonly depicted as passive victims, or as reacting to transgressions of etiquette with a worried, saddened, or upset facial expression. When a fellow passenger is portrayed as actively intervening, the poster usually implies that they are not a stranger but have a pre-existing relationship with the offender. Similarly, not one of the examined posters depicted company employees as intervening agents. This scarcity of portrayals of employee or co-passenger interventions is in line with the reality of Tokyo’s urban railways where most passengers do not intercede in commuter misbehaviour and company officials only step in in cases of extreme misconduct. Moreover, the design decision to avoid depictions of corporate intervention is rooted in axioms of customer service which prevent companies from actively policing customer etiquette transgressions (see Chapter 6; Schimkowsky, 2021b). The policing of transgressive behaviour in manner posters is thus largely the domain of fictive characters. Their ambiguous ontological status turns them into useful intermediaries of company manner messages as they can act as proxies for companies in cases where direct corporate intervention is considered inappropriate. Railway companies further believe that the use of fictive characters can help circumvent potential passenger perceptions of manner posters as unilateral directives by the company itself (see Chapter 6; Schimkowsky, 2021b). In other words, fictive characters are useful persuasive devices that ‘defuse’ the sensitive task of telling customers how to behave (see Wilde, 2018a, p. 145). Their utilisation facilitates the problematisation of improper passenger conduct in manner posters which – as a medium of company-customer interaction – need to avoid upsetting passenger sensibilities by appearing overly didactic. Accordingly, character figuration in posters is shaped by considerations of which kind of character types are appropriate choices to convey behavioural expectations to customers. Put differently, the narrative roles open to characters are curtailed by considerations of customer sensibilities. This also helps explain the general absence of railway company employees on posters (Figure 15): no suitable role is available to them in the portrayed scenes of manner infraction.

This section has demonstrated that posters employ recurring and recognisable character relations to increase the salience of their manner message. While the depicted character relations are broadly reflective of actual conditions in Tokyo's urban transport environments, posters' status as a medium of company-customer communication drives creative design adjustments such as the introduction of fictive characters as interactive agents. In contrast, image-viewer relations remain true to actual transit experiences, as we will see below.

7.5 Image-viewer relations

Image-viewer relations are another dimension of poster design that we need to consider in order to understand posters' visual solicitation of good passenger etiquette. Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) distinguish between 'demand' and 'offer' images as two different kinds of relations between characters depicted in an image ('represented participants') and image audiences ('interactive participants'). In 'demand' images, represented participants visually engage viewers through direct eye contact and/or gesture (Kress and van Leeuwen, 2006, p. 117). Visual engagement of this kind addresses viewers as a visual 'you', and *demands* that interactive participants enter into an (imaginary) relation with represented participants (Kress and van Leeuwen, 2006, p. 118). For example, depicted characters might ask viewers to come closer, stay away, or attempt to seduce or command them. In contrast, 'offer' images lack such direct visual engagement. Represented participants do not look at, or otherwise directly act on, the viewer. Instead, this image type positions the viewer as 'invisible onlooker' to whom represented participants are *offered* as 'items of information' or 'objects of contemplation' (Kress and van Leeuwen, 2006, p. 119). While we might expect that manner posters employ 'demand' images to solicit desirable mobility practices, this is rarely the case. Of the 40 posters examined during the MMCA, only 8 feature 'demand' image elements, such as smiling fictive characters that ask viewers 'to enter in a relation of social affinity with them' (Kress and van Leeuwen, 2006, p. 118). Even in these cases, the 'demand' message is not a dominant component in the poster design. Characters who look directly at the viewer are usually minuscule compared to other visual elements and the poster size, thus reducing the impact of their gaze (see Kress and van Leeuwen, 2006, p. 119). Furthermore, characters' gaze is often rendered opaque due to the detail-reduced drawing style commonly employed by posters which depicts eyes as black dots that look blankly ahead. In some cases, characters facing the viewer are depicted with closed eyes, thus avoiding direct engagement with the audience (Figure 11). In the few exceptions in which a 'demand' element is prominently depicted, it usually takes the form of something like a puppy or anthropomorphised koala – a fictional, non-threatening character who is depicted with a pleading or saddened expression and does not have any apparent connections to actually existing passengers or the issuing railway company. Considering that 'demand' images can be perceived as patronising by viewers (Kress and van Leeuwen, 2006, p. 121), the reluctance to use such images in manner posters can be interpreted as company avoidance of confrontational persuasive strategies. Accordingly, poster producers' preference for 'offer' rather than 'demand' images is evidence of the crucial influence that company concern for customer sensibilities has on manner poster design.

'Offer' images have been described as addressing viewers 'indirectly' (see Kress and van Leeuwen, 2006, p. 119). Manner posters depict episodes of transit etiquette transgressions that are 'offered' to viewers as 'objects of contemplation'. However, while Kress and van Leeuwen (2006, p. 120) argue that such images erect a 'barrier' between interactive and represented participants and facilitate a 'sense of disengagement', this is not the case with manner posters. Rather than inviting audiences to look at represented participants 'impersonally [...] as though they were specimens in a display case' (Kress and

van Leeuwen, 2006, p. 119), the 'offer' format of the majority of manner posters strengthens viewer involvement by imitating a passenger gaze. The portrayal of (mis)behaviour largely resembles how these actions would appear to passengers if observed during their actual commutes. This is primarily achieved through the use of perspective. Most of the examined posters utilise a 'long shot' perspective that shows the complete body of the subjects portrayed and conveys their relationship to their surroundings. Commonly employed by filmmakers to show action or portray interaction between multiple visual elements, posters' use of a long shot can be understood as a design necessity as it facilitates the unequivocal communication of the given manner infraction and its consequences. However, it also facilitates a naturalistic perspective resembling that of an actual passenger observing fellow commuters on the platform or train, such as by placing the viewer on a bench directly in front of the unfolding situation. Other shot sizes are sometimes used to the same effect. For instance, Figure 11, a poster problematising earphone sound 'leakage', uses a medium shot size that positions the viewer in direct proximity to the 'deviant' passenger subject, i.e. at a distance at which the escaping sound would be particularly audible. In other words, the poster places the viewer in the shoes of a fellow passenger who is bothered by inconsiderate use of mobile devices. Similarly, perspective can be used to make raindrops from a wet umbrella appear to fly out of the frame and towards the viewer (Figure 10).

Horizontal and vertical angles are used to a similar effect. Posters in the sample employ a frontal horizontal angle that heightens viewer involvement by aligning interactive and represented participants. Through this, the viewer is implicitly led to identify with the depicted passengers (Kress and van Leeuwen, 2006, p. 136). Similarly, a vertical angle in many images frequently places viewers at eye level with the depicted passengers, thus suggesting a form of equality between viewer and passenger (Kress and van Leeuwen, 2006, p. 140). While the examined sample also includes posters that use a 'fictive' point of view that has no human counterpart in actual urban mobility situations, in the majority of the analysed cases the depicted scene looks similar to how it would appear to a fellow commuter (see Kress and van Leeuwen, 2006, p. 143). Atypical for 'offer' images, in manner posters there is therefore no significant 'barrier' between viewers and represented participants (Kress and van Leeuwen, 2006, p. 120). The represented participants – passengers on a Tokyo train – are aware that their behaviour is observable by the anonymous commuter collective that poster design implicitly makes viewers a part of. If there is a sense of disengagement between viewers and the depicted characters, it is similar to the (inter-)active effort of civil inattention that passengers engage in on public transport (Goffman, 1971). Accordingly, the employed 'offer' format is part of a persuasive strategy that asks viewers to contemplate the depicted case of commuter misbehaviour from the perspective of a fellow passenger on the same train.

A 'passenger perspective' is further amplified by posters' geosemiotic characteristics (see Section 2.5.3). Like other forms of signage, manner posters gain part of their meaning from their 'material placement' in the environment (Scollon and Scollon, 2003). As manner posters are commonly displayed in public transport spaces, posters' visual content overlaps with the physical context in which posters are placed and 'consumed'. Viewers primarily encounter manner posters while they traverse the urban rail network. In other words, posters' passenger perspective corresponds to audience positionality. Poster placement thus facilitates viewer immersion. 'Buying into' the passenger perspective adopted by poster design requires little imaginative effort from viewers as they *are* passengers at the moment of poster consumption. Viewer immersion is further advanced by integrating temporal references into poster design. Posters usually have clearly designated display periods and their visual content can include temporal cues signifying seasonal events (e.g. Halloween, Christmas). The choice of the behaviours taken

up by posters similarly reflects seasonal trends. For example, posters problematising the inconsiderate handling of umbrellas are often seen during the rainy season. Accordingly, there is a significant overlap between posters' visual content, geosemiotic qualities, and display period. Viewer immersion and the perceived salience of the poster message are heightened because the spatio-temporal location of the depicted scene is closely connected to the consumption context and viewers are likely to have encountered the depicted behaviour during their own journeys on public transport.

Viewer immersion is also heightened by the detail-reduced drawing style commonly employed by manner posters. The portrayed manner transgressions take place in 'generic' and 'decontextualised' public transport locations that do not specify station name or train line (see Aiello, 2019). At the same time, regardless of the overall detail-reduced 'cartooned' drawing style (McCloud, 1994, p. 30), a sense of realism is maintained as depicted infrastructural elements such as platform demarcations or carriage hand straps are closely modelled after their real life counterparts. In other words, posters combine visual elements with low and high modality (Kress and van Leeuwen, 2006, p. 155ff) to achieve a portrayal of transport settings that is generic yet also naturalistic. This makes it easy for poster audiences to regard the depicted scene as part of the actual spaces that they move through during their commute. A similar pattern can be observed in the posters' portrayal of passengers. Like transport environments, characters are frequently drawn in a detail-reduced style that can be described as 'iconic abstraction' which offers limited clues to their identity or purpose of their journey and instead focuses on their (mis)conduct (McCloud, 1994, pp. 41, 50). Posters' generic portrayal of misbehaving passengers facilitates the communication of universal behavioural expectations. The simplified or 'cartooned' portrayal of characters heightens audience involvement: the fewer lines a character is drawn with, 'the more people it could be said to describe' (McCloud, 1994, pp. 31, 42). Abstract cartoon characters present a 'vacuum' into which viewers can project their own identity – or the memory of fellow passengers they have encountered during their commute (see McCloud, 1994, p. 36). Together with a generic but naturalistic depiction of transport settings and passenger practices that are highly familiar to most Tokyo commuters, the cartoon depiction of passenger types and etiquette transgressions thus makes it easier for viewers to project their own memories of transit encounters onto the depicted characters and recognise the depicted manner message as relevant to them. Significantly, the indeterminate portrayal of passengers can also be understood as visually positioning them as 'strangers'. Just as Tokyo commuters usually know little about their fellow passengers on public transport, poster audiences know little about the portrayed commuters. Image-viewer relations thus mirror the social relations of actual passengers. In other words, posters' visual design quotes actual urban transport experiences as a frame of reference to heighten the salience of their manner message.

This section demonstrated that image-viewer relations are closely modelled after actual commuter practices. Viewer immersion and message salience are heightened by posters' adoption of the point of view of a fellow passenger, depicting transport environments as generic yet naturalistic, and aligning posters' spatio-temporal setting with the context of poster consumption. In other words, manner posters ask viewers to contemplate simulated scenes of commuter misconduct. The final section will analyse the persuasive strategies that poster designers employ to influence viewers' assessment of these visual imitations of transit etiquette breaches.

7.6 Visual problematisation of manner offenses

Manner posters problematise passenger misconduct by visually highlighting the targeted etiquette infraction, its consequences, and its framing. Common techniques employed to render the targeted conduct and its consequences salient include the purposive use of colour, size, position, and vectors. For example, Figure 10 asks viewers to consider the effects of bringing a wet umbrella onto the train by showing *gigantic bright-blue* water drops flying off a *red* umbrella and forming a *large* puddle of water on the ground. In addition, the gaze of onlooking passengers and the shape of the offending item create vectors that further draw attention to the transgression (e.g. the umbrella ‘points’ toward the puddle of water below it).

Visual exaggeration is another technique used to emphasise transgressions. Posters asking passengers not to attempt to board the train outside of the permitted time window might depict the offending passenger as jumping towards almost closed carriage doors with their hands outstretched and their clothes fluttering behind them. The bodily reactions of ‘victim’ and ‘onlooker’ passengers might be similarly overstated, with passengers portrayed as grimacing and covering their ears when exposed to headphone noise. Including a high number of ‘victim’ characters is another exaggeration strategy. For example, in case of a poster urging people not to block carriage exits, six commuters are depicted as unable to deboard because they are ‘stuck’ behind a single passenger who is engrossed in his phone. The quantitative dimension of the portrayed passenger figuration thus enables posters to visually argue that the targeted behaviour can affect the commuter collective as a whole.

Manner offenses might also be emphasised through the use of visual metaphors. For instance, a 2015 poster indicates the excessive amount of noise that is (supposedly) being produced by chatting passengers by depicting them as operating hand puppets with gaping mouths. This suggests that design workarounds are required to represent etiquette breaches and consequences that are tricky to depict in the single-frame format employed by most manner posters. Manner infractions that are usually imperceptible to the naked eye (e.g. sound, intrusive clouds of makeup powder) are visualised through conventional symbols such as musical notes. Similarly, processes of action (e.g. passengers bumping into each other) are often conveyed through visual shorthand such as the use of path lines indicating movement and colourful spikes symbolising impact. Notably, these difficult-to-depict offenses are frequently visualised in spatial terms: a boisterous conversation might be portrayed through multiple large speech bubbles that occupy a lot of carriage space or through thin black lines that emit from talking passengers and ‘pierce’ other commuters. Functioning as connecting vectors that act on victim passengers (Kress and van Leeuwen, 2006, p. 59), these sound lines highlight the vexation a noise disturbance might cause. Such portrayals of passenger offenses as spatially intrusive are significant because they point towards the allocation of space as a master code of transit etiquette: questions of space (e.g. where and how to position yourself and your belongings on the train) are central to understanding what constitutes (in)appropriate behaviour on public transport.

While the problematic nature of the targeted manner offenses is implicit in the visual emphasis of their consequences, posters also utilise additional visual strategies to clarify the framing of the addressed behaviours. For example, the way viewers are encouraged to think about the targeted behaviour is visually spelled out through the bodily comportment and facial expressions of the featured characters. ‘Victim’ and ‘onlooker’ characters’ facial expressions usually convey negative emotional reactions such as disapproval, concern, or shock. These can be further accentuated through conventional visual symbols for

particular moods or (affective) states. For example, multiple sweat beads next to a character's head can convey physical exertion. Moreover, abstract symbols that are employed to highlight the consequences of passenger misconduct can be equipped with an affective 'charge', such as through anthropomorphising musical notes with mischievous facial expressions to communicate the objectionable nature of the targeted behaviour (i.e. listening to loud music; see Figure 11). The framing of the addressed behaviour can be further expounded through the use of fictive characters. As made-up entities without real-life counterparts, fictive characters can be believably depicted as exhibiting a wider range of emotional and bodily reactions than regular passengers. Accordingly, the often exaggerated emotional reactions exhibited by fictive characters make the visual framing of targeted misbehaviour more explicit.

Another visual technique used to problematise passenger misconduct is that of juxtaposition. Building on Burgin (1982) and Lutz and Collins (1993), Aiello (2012, p. 66) defines juxtaposition as a 'more or less implicit comparison between different representational resources by means of a particular arrangement' to produce new meaning within a certain image or between adjacent ones. In the case of manner posters, we can observe two kinds of juxtaposition at work: *contrastive* and *amplifying juxtaposition*. In the former, visual elements signifying opposing meanings are arranged in proximity of each other to highlight a certain behaviour or effect. For example, victims' upset facial expressions can be amplified by juxtaposing them with a depiction of offenders as unaware of, or unperturbed by, the consequences of their behaviour (e.g. picturing offenders as closing their eyes, facing away from fellow passengers, or staring at their smartphone). In other words, a negative framing is emphasised by contrasting the victim's predicament with the offender's ignorance (Figure 11). Similarly, posters might juxtapose inappropriate and desirable passenger conduct. The inappropriate nature of the targeted misconduct is accentuated by depicting it in the context of exemplary passenger conduct.

In contrast, in the case of *amplifying juxtaposition*, misconduct is problematised through strategic arrangement of visual elements with analogous meanings or connotations. For instance, as posters frequently feature multiple 'victims', they often depict several characters who exhibit negative reactions to offending behaviour. This juxtaposition of victim reactions has an amplifying effect: it emphasises that the negative valuation of the targeted behaviour is not a matter of individual sensibilities but rooted in shared perceptions or 'common sense'. Similarly, poster designers might depict the targeted misconduct in the context of other etiquette breaches. For example, a poster problematising headphone sound leaks might portray the passenger listening to loud music as *also* taking up excessive bench space. Showing offenders as guilty of multiple offenses emphasises the inconsiderate or inappropriate nature of the problematised behaviour. Furthermore, it can also clarify the negative framing of the targeted behaviour in the case of 'ambiguous' offenses. For example, a 2020 poster problematising noisy conversations depicts the chatting passengers as *also* snacking out of a picnic basket they placed on the seat. Juxtaposing a behaviour that only becomes problematic when done to an 'excessive' degree (talking to other passengers) with a violation of basic transit etiquette (picnicking on the train) facilitates a clear-cut framing of the addressed behaviour as deviant.

Finally, the intended perception of the targeted behaviour can also be spelled out visually by framing a behaviour or character as out of place. For instance, a 2015 poster pictured a passenger boarding the train as the doors are closing while wearing a hybrid of a business suit and an American Football uniform. Accordingly, the 'deviant' quality of boarding the train outside of the designated time window is emphasised by comparing it to the behaviour of a quarterback bolting across a football field. In other words, posters may problematise behaviour through visual reference to spatial definitions of

(in)appropriate conduct and by portraying an offending actor as ‘out of place’ (see Section 3.1.1; Cresswell, 1996).

The above discussion has shown that posters problematise passenger misconduct through interconnected design techniques that highlight misconduct, stress its consequences, and clarify its framing. These strategies position the targeted etiquette transgression as a highly salient visual element that is suggested to audiences as starting point for decoding the posters’ manner message. In other words, posters’ semiotic and narrative structures are centred around the problematic behaviour that they address. This emphasis of passenger misconduct is further facilitated by the overall detail-reduced drawing style commonly employed by posters – the visual deemphasis of the setting or onlooking characters facilitates the emphasis of the manner infraction and underlying ideas of transit etiquette (see McCloud, 1994, pp. 30, 37). Similarly, the earlier discussed design strategies of unequivocal character figuration and visual citation of actual commuting experiences as a frame of reference also heighten the salience of posters’ visual manner message. This visual emphasis of manner offenses is a design response to the communication challenge posed by the geosemiotic context of poster consumption: posters need to be comprehensible to passengers hurrying through crowded and semiotically oversaturated public transport environments (Figure 12).

Notably, this visual emphasis of manner transgressions and passenger deviance does not remain unchecked. Designers are faced with a second communication challenge; this time posed by posters’ status as a medium of company-customer interaction. Japanese railway companies view instructing customers in desirable transit etiquette as a sensitive task that requires a carefully calibrated communicative approach (see Chapter 6; Schimkowsky, 2021b). Accordingly, posters employ various design techniques to soften the etiquette message of manner posters and make it more acceptable to passengers. The salience of visual elements implying regulation is often actively reduced. As discussed above, intervening agents are rarely used, and if they are, their salience is often decreased by reducing their size or placing them in a peripheral location (Figure 11). Similarly, misbehaviour is usually portrayed as caused by public transport users’ carelessness rather than malintent, thus reducing the blame that posters places on passengers (Figure 11). Finally, the ‘mangaesque’ drawing style itself can also be understood as a softening design technique that gives the visual language of manner posters a friendly tone and prevents them from being perceived as an official reprimand; thus pointing towards the informalisation of public discourse (Fairclough, 1994; Lazar, 2003; Wilde, 2018a). We thus need to understand public transport providers’ visual communication of behavioural expectations as a highly complex task: posters emphasise deviance while at the same time mitigating design elements which may offend audience sensitivities. Manner posters’ design conventions are shaped by considerations of the consumption context and the requirements of company-customer interaction.

7.7 Conclusion

This chapter analysed the visual structure of public transport etiquette posters in order to advance our understanding of the strategic use of visual communication for managing behaviour in public and maintaining the everyday urban order. Taking the example of Japanese railway manner posters, it explored design strategies employed to problematise passenger misconduct and solicit desirable mobility practices while simultaneously protecting customer sensibilities by mitigating sermonistic aspects of etiquette messaging. Building on a multimodal and quantitative content analysis of manner posters, I first examined posters’ use of characters to convey behavioural expectations and argued that posters employ

recurring and recognisable character roles to increase the salience of their manner message by simplifying the depicted narrative of etiquette transgression while also protecting customer sensibilities. I then turned to image-viewer relations and demonstrated that poster design maximises viewer engagement and message salience by replicating commuter experience through the use of perspective, drawing style, and geosemiotic characteristics. Audiences are invited to see the poster as relevant to them through visual citations of actual transit experiences as a frame of reference. Finally, I discussed the visual strategies employed to problematise manner offenses. I identified common design techniques used to convey etiquette expectations by highlighting misconduct, emphasising its consequences, and clarifying its framing (e.g. visual exaggeration, visual metaphor, juxtaposition). This chapter thus highlighted multiple visual strategies used to inscribe behavioural expectations into the urban environment while addressing the communication challenges posed by consumption context and the requirements of company-customer interaction.

While etiquette posters are a common sight in public transport systems globally, their semiotic structure has only received limited scholarly attention. This chapter addressed this oversight by examining the visual strategies employed by Tokyo railway companies to promote desirable passenger conduct. As an inquiry into corporate persuasive communication initiatives targeting a wide range of mundane misbehaviours, the chapter is situated at the intersection of research on visual communication and the management of urban space. In line with previous research that showed that persuasive poster campaigns use soft and playful textual strategies to appeal to peoples' behaviour (Lazar, 2003; Yeo and Tupas, 2018), this chapter demonstrated that mediated interventions in misbehaviour are often far more semiotically complex than the direct visual instruction found in common regulatory signage (e.g. a slashed-out red circle; see Hermer and Hunt, 1996). This semiotic complexity is tied to the perceived need to mitigate the face-threatening nature of a directive communication act as well as the challenge of securing people's attention in the dense semiotic landscape of contemporary cities (see Halonen and Laihonon, 2021; Schimkowsky, 2021b). Future scholarship could further inquire into use of semiotic resources to modulate behaviour in public by examining the strategic combination of verbal and visual elements, comparing persuasive communication campaigns in different socio-cultural contexts, or analysing the relationship between the severity of the targeted behaviours and the employed visual strategies. Studying public transport etiquette posters promises rich insights into the use of visual communication for the management of everyday behaviour and the production of public order in contemporary cities.

b Coda to Part II

The preceding three chapters provided insights into the production, design, and deployment of manner posters. Specifically, they inquired into posters' structure and history as media texts, explored the rationale of corporate interventions in everyday passenger behaviours, and examined the visual techniques employed to appeal to passenger etiquette while protecting customer sensibilities. In this brief postscript to the empirical section, I will discuss interrelations and interdependencies within my paper-based analysis.

b.1 Analytical interrelations

A key argument of this thesis is that poster-based manner improvement initiatives by Japanese railway providers are not driven by regulatory will, but rather considerations of customer service and satisfaction (see also Chapter 8). This argument is developed most explicitly in Chapter 6, but features as a theme throughout all three empirical chapters. For example, Chapter 5 highlighted that the proliferation and increasing popularity of advertising-like manner poster campaigns in Japan in the 1970s was facilitated by a shift in public transport provider initiatives from quantitative expansion to qualitative improvement. While the preceding decades were characterised by concentrated efforts to increase public transport capacities to meet the demands of rapid urbanisation and alleviate the 'commuting hell' that defined life in Japan's urban centres for much of the Shōwa era, the early 1970s' economic downturn and subsequent deceleration of urban growth enabled railway companies to commit more resources to advancing transit quality. The decade saw various efforts to enhance passengers' experience of urban public transport, such as by modernising station facilities and installing air conditioning equipment on trains. Accordingly, the proliferation of manner posters in the 1970s, as well as innovations in their textual format during this time, must be understood in the context of a general drive to improve the quality of public transport and passenger experience. A prime example of this is the introduction of priority seating for 'vulnerable' passenger groups (e.g. the elderly) in 1973 – just one year before the start of Eidan's influential annual manner poster series. Contemporary railway companies' framing of manner poster initiatives as an effort to increase passenger comfort and ensure customer satisfaction, discussed in Chapter 6, is in line with this shift to service quality improvement. In other words, the exploration of the historic development of manner posters as a genre of public communication in Chapter 5 provides further evidence of manner posters' function as a technology of customer service.

In addition, Chapter 5's discussion of posters' format as media texts and innovations in their development as a genre of public communication foreshadows Chapter 6's examination of design considerations. Chapter 6 argues that manner poster campaigns' challenging communication context (i.e. the need to convey what is ultimately an unattractive message to preoccupied passenger subjects in hectic transport environments that are semiotically oversaturated; addressing poor conduct by customers whom companies are required to show deference to) results in considerations of poster impact (to render the manner message salient in urban mass transit environments) and appropriateness (to avoid customer offense) as two overarching design principles guiding poster production. Chapter 5's discussion of posters' increasing adoption of advertising techniques (e.g. cultural references) in the 1970s is in line with these design principles as it is both a means of attracting viewer attention and a strategy to achieve playful and 'soft' forms of manner messaging to appeal to passenger etiquette without offending customers. Similarly, the design principle of appropriateness is also evident from early manner improvement campaigns' tendency to frame encouragements of good passenger conduct not as a top-down imposition by transport providers, but as an appeal from society to itself (e.g. through the use of *hyōgo* slogans; see Chapter 5).

The visual analysis of Chapter 7 explores in-depth how these principles translate into design practice. For example, the chapter observes how impact is achieved by identifying the visual strategies used to problematise misconduct and increase the salience of the manner message (e.g. visual exaggeration, metaphor, juxtaposition, and adoption of a passenger perspective, etc.). Building on Chapter 6's finding that railway companies see their ability to intervene in passenger conduct as inherently limited by the requirements of company-customer interaction, Chapter 7 further highlights the persuasive design techniques used to appeal to passenger etiquette while protecting customer sensibilities. Examples of this are poster designers' avoidance of a 'demand' image format, which could be perceived as patronising, as well as the employment of fictive characters to visually address passenger misbehaviours that companies are reluctant or unable to directly intervene in themselves. Accordingly, the interpretative thrust of the visual analysis is informed by findings from Chapter 6. The visual analysis asks how the considerations of customer satisfaction, sensibilities, and service shape the design format of manner posters. In doing so, Chapter 7 positions – in line with the discussion of design considerations in Chapter 6 – railway companies' visual communication of behavioural expectations as a complicated endeavour: posters need to emphasise deviance while simultaneously making sure not to offend their intended audience. In addition, poster creators' tendency to adopt a passenger perspective – depicting misconduct how it would appear to passengers during their actual transit experiences – not only increases the salience of posters' manner message by heightening audience immersion and involvement (see Chapter 7), but is also in line with the importance of passenger perceptions of misconduct in shaping manner poster content (see Chapter 6). In other words, posters' modelling of image-viewer relations after actual commuter practices (through design choices relating to shot type, horizontal and vertical angle, geosemiotic qualities, and drawing style) corresponds to poster campaigns' roots in customer complaints.

Building on the analytic distinction between posters targeting comfort, efficiency, and safety-related passenger offenses first developed in Chapter 5, Chapter 7 further highlights manner poster campaigns' connection to ideals of customer service and satisfaction by demonstrating that the majority of contemporary manner posters are concerned with comfort-related transgressions. This focus on matters of comfort can be explained through a customer service orientation, i.e. in form of corporate efforts to provide passenger-customers with a comfortable transit experience. However, posters addressing behaviours that could potentially threaten the efficiency or safety of the railway system can be similarly understood as connected to efforts to ensure customer satisfaction because passengers expect punctual and accident-free public transport operations. Accordingly, while Chapter 6 positions manner posters as a technology of customer service by highlighting that the behaviours addressed in posters are taken from customer complaints and surveys, the interrelated poster categories of comfort, efficiency, and safety that were first introduced in Chapter 5 and empirically examined in Chapter 7, provide additional evidence of the importance of considerations of customer experience and satisfaction in manner poster initiatives.

This coda has highlighted corporate considerations of customer sensibilities and experience as a common theme in Chapters 5-7. In doing so, it has spotlighted the logics of company-customer interaction as a variable that is key to understanding the manner poster phenomenon. The following chapter will reflect further on my argument of corporate etiquette improvement initiatives as a customer service effort by critically engaging with alternative readings of manner posters as a form of social control.

Part III.

Chapter 8 Critical reflection: manner posters as social control?

Part II examined the considerations and logics driving manner poster design and deployment, as well as the persuasive visual strategies employed to appeal to passenger etiquette. It has argued that manner posters primarily present a technology of customer service rather than a disciplinary device. This interpretation is admittedly counter-intuitive. Do railway company campaigns that address etiquette transgressions and encourage good passenger conduct not remind us of civilising offensives (Chapter 3)? At first glance, manner posters seem to present a form of moral regulation: a 'politics in which some agents act to problematise the conduct, values or culture of others and seek to act upon them through moralising discourses, practices, and regulation' (Hunt, 2003, p. 364). Accordingly, we are tempted to view manner poster-issuing transport providers as 'moral entrepreneurs' that work towards 'the creation of a new fragment of the moral constitution of society, its code of right and wrong' (Becker, 1973, p. 145; see also Chapter 2).

This chapter will engage more deeply with readings of manner posters as a disciplinary strategy. Drawing on previous accounts of 'soft control' and friendly authoritarianism in Japanese society (e.g. Negishi, 2016; Sugimoto, 2014), it will highlight multiple ways in which manner posters could, in fact, be understood as a regulatory device. Subsequently, it will qualify and defend my argument of manner posters as a customer service strategy through a critical discussion of these alternative interpretations. In doing so, the chapter will tease out an underlying key argument of the thesis: that not everything that appears like social control, or has a regulatory potential, is driven by regulatory will.

8.1 Hankins and disciplining modern passenger subjects

Hankins (2018) highlights the role urban railway networks played in shaping and disciplining modern subjects in Japan by placing their development in the context of larger societal transformations. He argues that the legal abolishment of the caste system in 1871 led to, on paper at least, greater social equality, and gradually enabled urban dwellers to primarily think of others they encountered in the city as strangers, rather than agents of a specific class (Hankins, 2018, p. 189). In addition, industrialisation and the accompanying increasing separation of the spheres of (economic) production and (familial) reproduction heightened urban mobility needs as workers required a reliable means of moving between home and work (Hankins, 2018, p. 190). The evolving employment practices also meant that labourers increasingly worked 'alongside' unknown others in anonymous large locales of production such as factories (Hankins, 2018, p. 190). The birth of modern Japan in the second half of the 19th century thus saw the emergence of 'stranger sociability and anonymity' as dominant mode of urban life (Hankins, 2018, p. 186).

The developing urban railway networks contributed to the rise of these new modes of urban subjectivity and shaped structures of 'civic belonging' (Hankins, 2018, p. 187). Not only did the burgeoning railway system offer a (partial) answer to growing mobility needs, but it also provided spaces in which urban dwellers could obtain the social skills and sensibilities necessitated by the new socio-economic system (Hankins, 2018, p. 190). Train stations and carriages presented key arenas in which citizens not only could, but had to, practice new habits of urban conduct, learning 'how to interact properly, inattentively, with others as strangers' (Hankins, 2018, p. 190). Railway environments allowed urban dwellers to rehearse new forms of engagement with the city and the wider citizenry (Fujii, 1999; Hankins, 2018, p. 191).

Hankins' (2018, p. 191) paper indicates that railway providers contributed to this process of cultivating citizens capable of navigate 'stranger sociability' as modern mode of urban life. He observes that, across

many decades, the state-run Japan National Railways ‘worked to provide smooth transit for an increasing numbers of riders, a smoothness that *required the capacity on the part of those riders to sit and stand in very crowded quarters with fellows of their city*’ (Hankins, 2018, p. 191; emphasis my own). While Hankins does not explicitly refer to JNR’s employment of manner improvement initiatives to achieve this goal, he points out that when JNR was privatised in 1987, its successor companies, the Japan Railways (JR) group, did not just inherit the transport infrastructure, but ‘also received from the state the *responsibility of cultivating and maintaining particular social orientations of the ridership*’, citing JR group manner improvement initiatives that encouraged commuters to show consideration for their fellow passengers as evidence of such an undertaking (Hankins, 2018, p. 191; emphasis my own). For Hankins (2018, p. 191), etiquette improvement campaigns are not just an expression of railway companies’ financial interests – if passengers are trained to minimise the space they occupy in the carriage, companies can sell more tickets – but also demonstrate a motivation to ‘[cultivate] subjects of a (neo)liberal socioeconomic order’. Railway companies have started to take responsibility for managing not just the operation of the transport network, but also the ‘affective orientations and civic duties’ of the commuter collective that uses their services (Hankins, 2018, p. 191). To Hankins (2018, p. 191), this is evidence that corporations have become increasingly involved in ‘disciplining [...] national subjects’.

8.2 Negishi and ‘soft control’ on Tokyo’s urban railway network

Negishi’s (2016) study of Tokyo’s urban railway system provides another reading of manner improvement initiatives as a governmental device employed to uphold the established socio-economic order. Negishi (2016, pp. 11, 15–16) argues that ‘soft’ modes of control, defined as efforts in which individuals ‘are not physically punished or urged but rather psychologically swayed’, are a principal means of control in urban railway spaces in contemporary Japan. He inquires into the processes in which passengers’ ‘thoughts, actions and movements become manipulated, circumscribed and re-shaped’, not through ‘discipline and punishment’ but rather ‘encouragement and promotion’ (Negishi, 2016, pp. 8, 13; see also Chapter 3). Highlighting strategies of technological, spatial, and temporal ‘containment’, he explores the diverse ways through which passengers are encouraged to change their behaviour to facilitate comfortable, convenient, swift, and effortless movement through railway spaces (Negishi, 2016, p. 8). An example of this can be found in railway companies’ efforts to enhance workers’ smiling techniques to maintain a positive affective atmosphere in urban mass transit environments. Negishi (2016, pp. 115–116) contends that, because of a deep-rooted human sensitivity to faces, passengers subconsciously capture the ‘affective signals’ encoded in frontline workers’ smiles, which can sway them to adopt similar desirable bodily comportments. Affective smiling techniques allow railway companies to modulate passengers’ behaviour and temperament while simultaneously upholding the ‘myth of customer sovereignty to resolve the contradiction between the image of customer orientation and the actuality of bureaucratic control over passenger mobilities’ (Negishi, 2016, pp. 21, 105, 110).

Another soft control mechanism at work in public transport spaces is the lateral surveillance of the passenger collective. Negishi (2016, p. 151) notes that Tokyo passengers are socialised to be alert to ‘irregularities’ in other passengers’ conduct, particularly if they could present a disruption ‘to the orderly flow’ of the transport environment. For example, he reports that commuters watched him ‘with suspicion’ when he sat down on a platform bench to observe the hustle and bustle of Tokyo’s rush hour (Negishi, 2016, p. 149). As an immobile subject in the busy passenger flow, he was perceived as an anomaly. Eventually, he felt a physical urge ‘to respond to the suggestive call and return to the flow’ (Negishi, 2016, p. 149). Accordingly, brief glances can convey a ‘sense of distrust’ and prompt deviant passenger subjects

to adjust their behaviour (Negishi, 2016, p. 149). This is particularly effective when passengers have themselves internalised the implicit rules and behavioural expectations governing the transport environment (Negishi, 2016, p. 150).

Manner posters, as corporate communiqués that ‘encourage rather than order’ desirable mobility practices, present a similar technology of soft control for Negishi (2016, p. 185). He argues that poster campaigns ‘cultivate’ viewers’ alertness to irregular passenger conduct and enrol them as ‘vigilant policing subjects’ (Negishi, 2016, pp. 184–185). Importantly, manner posters are not a *direct* attempt to shape passenger behaviour, but rather *implicitly* ask commuters to ‘turn their gaze’ on their fellow passengers, promoting lateral surveillance practices within the passenger collective (Negishi, 2016, p. 185). Manner posters are one of several subtle regulatory mechanisms that integrate passengers ‘into the network of control’ that governs Japanese public transport spaces, and make them ‘active participants in the operations of security’ (Negishi, 2016, p. 9).

8.3 Friendly authoritarianism and Japan as a ‘control society’

The above discussed readings of public transport manner improvement initiatives as a form of social control are embedded in a broader scholarly discourse that frequently portrays Japanese society as governed by strict social controls and affording limited individual freedom (Gill, 2001, p. 230). Foreign observers and domestic critics alike have frequently emphasised that everyday life in Japan is shaped by a ‘high degree of conformity in lifestyles, and a low degree of tolerance for those who deviate from social norms’ (Gill, 2001, p. 230). Japan, they posit, is a ‘highly standardized society that allows little room for alternative livelihoods or individual autonomy’ (Nishimoto, 2018, p. 1). This notion of everyday life in Japan as shaped by intense social pressures is perhaps best expressed by the oft-cited Japanese idiom that ‘the nail that sticks out gets hammered in’ (Gill, 2001, p. 230). Japan is seen as a ‘control society’ (*kanri shakai*) (Gill, 2001, p. 230).

The idea of Japan as a control society first became popular among Japanese social critics in the 1960s in form of a Marxist criticism that saw society as split between a small elite and the controlled masses (Gill, 2001, p. 231). While initial conceptualisations of Japan as a control society were in line with criticism of other capitalist societies, during the 1980s, influenced perhaps by the booming *nihonjinron*³⁵ discourse around that time (Dale, 2011 [1986]), Japanese theorists started to discuss Japan as a distinct case (Gill, 2001). For instance, Kurihara (1982) described Japanese society as defined by a distinct ‘mechanism of internalized [subservience]’ characterised by vague moral boundaries, concentration of values in the political centre, systematic division of speech and thought, and an inclination to draw social boundaries distinguishing between ‘us’ and ‘them’ (Gill, 2001, p. 231).

The workings of ‘soft’ regulatory mechanisms have emerged as a focus of scholarly accounts of Japan-specific manifestations of social control. A prominent example of this comes from Japanese sociologist Hidaka Rokurō who argued that Japanese society is not controlled through an Orwellian surveillance and police apparatus, but ‘subtler’ techniques (Gill, 2001, p. 231). According to Hidaka (1984, p. 90), ‘mass control is accomplished not by hard but by soft methods; it is not one-dimensional but many-sided and

³⁵ The term *nihonjinron*, literally meaning ‘theories of the Japanese’, refers to essentialist discourses of Japanese uniqueness that frame Japan and its people, culture, and society – usually conceived of in monolithic terms – as fundamentally different from those of other countries. *Nihonjinron* thought has been a popular book genre for decades, but also frequently features in other media as well as in political discourse. For more on the topic, see Befu (2001) and Sugimoto (1999).

many-shaped'. For Hidaka, Japanese patterns of soft control are characterised by 'a combination of cultural/educational brainwashing and material affluence'³⁶, with the regulation of society actualised through five mechanisms: an hegemonic orientation towards financial gain, a comfortable and 'ready-made' everyday life, refined patterns of discrimination and distinction, isolation and exclusion of unruly individuals, and nationalism (Gill, 2001, p. 231; Hidaka, 1984, pp. 91–93).

Pharr's (1992) study of social conflicts in Japanese society similarly observes the employment of subtle regulatory techniques. Pharr (1992, pp. 149, 153) argues that Japanese authorities tend to make use of 'soft, backstage methods' ranging from direct persuasion to 'far more subtle verbal and nonverbal approaches' that exert psychological pressure. An example of this is the response to what Pharr (1992, p. 59) calls the 'the revolt of the tea pourers' in the Kyoto city office in the autumn 1963. When female civil servants in the Housing Division of the municipal administration stopped serving tea to their male colleagues, senior male co-workers' response was noticeably absent: they neither said nor did 'anything' (Pharr, 1992, p. 154). In a kind of 'psychological warfare', the male civil servants nonverbally communicated their 'anger', 'pain', 'hurt', and 'sense of loss at being denied an expected service' to their female colleagues who soon resumed their daily tea-serving 'duties' (Pharr, 1992, pp. 59, 154). Pharr concludes that this subtle psychological approach to upholding the established discriminatory office order was more effective than a proactive response (e.g. demanding that women should resume their 'duties') would have been, as the latter could have escalated the conflict (Pharr, 1992, p. 154). Another example of this regulatory approach can be found in a negotiation session between student activists and university faculty members in the 1960s, in which the latter responded through pointedly polite language and 'expressions of hurt, passivity, and resignation', when the former addressed them in an 'overbearing' and 'arrogant' manner that mimicked their own way of interacting with the students (Pharr, 1992, p. 154). This approach not just allowed the faculty members to maintain their authority, but also to '[turn] the tables' on the defiant students by claiming the victim role, which was previously claimed by the activists, for themselves (Pharr, 1992, p. 154).

In contemporary English-language scholarship on Japanese society, the argument that Japan is governed through strategies of 'soft' modes of control is now an established theme and commonly finds expression in references to 'friendly authoritarianism' as dominant mode of governance in Japanese civil society. Developed by sociologist Sugimoto Yoshio (2014, p. 290 [1997]) in his influential *An Introduction to Japanese Society*, friendly authoritarianism describes a '[form] of regimentation' that 'encourages each member of society to internalise and share the value system which regards control and regimentation as natural, and to accept the instructions and orders of people in superordinate positions without question'. While Sugimoto acknowledges that similar standardising forces are present in all societies, he argues that they are particularly pervasive in Japan where friendly authoritarianism is employed to micro-manage diverse aspects of everyday life. To Sugimoto and his followers, the notion of friendly authoritarianism provides a key to understanding Japan's notorious 'intolerance' towards diverse lifestyles and individualism as achieved not through overt repression, but subtle behavioural modulation (Nishimoto,

³⁶ Whether this is really unique to Japan is of course questionable – it is likely that many observers of Western societies would echo such criticism. While Gill (2001, p. 231) argues that Hidaka positions Japan as a distinct case, the English translation (Hidaka, 1984) of the Japanese original cited by Gill appears to speak of capitalist societies in general.

2018). According to Sugimoto (2014, p. 291) friendly authoritarian efforts to micro-manage Japanese society are comprised of four regulatory mechanisms:

- '[Friendly authoritarianism] uses small groups as the basis of mutual surveillance and deterrence of deviant behaviour [...];
- institutes an extensive range of mechanisms in which power is made highly visible and tangible;
- legitimizes various codes in such a way that superordinates can use ambiguities to their advantage [...]; and
- inculcates various forms of moralistic ideology into the psyche of every individual with a particular stress on minute and trivial details [...]'

In addition, Sugimoto (2014, p. 291) identifies four elements which characterise this Japanese style of governance as 'friendly' or 'soft' mode of control:

- 'it resorts, wherever possible, to positive inducements rather than negative sanctions – "carrots" rather than "sticks" to encourage competition to conform;
- it portrays individuals and groups in power positions as congenial, cordial, and benevolent, and uses socialization channels for subordinates to pay voluntary respect to them;
- it propagates the ideology of equality and the notion of a unique national homogeneity, ensuring that images of class cleavage are as blurred as possible; and
- it relies upon joyful, amusing, and pleasant entertainments such as songs, visual arts, and festivals to make sure that authority infiltrates without obvious pains.'

The workings of friendly authoritarianism can be observed in diverse domains of Japanese society. For instance, Sugimoto (2014, p. 303) refers to the common practice of school teachers visiting their pupils' homes, and to company employees' long working hours and expected overtime as examples of the workings of power becoming a tangible presence in everyday life. Furthermore, he describes the custom of charging pupils with cleaning their own classrooms as example of a pervasive moralising ideology.

Perhaps the most commonly cited example of friendly authoritarianism, however, are neighbourhood associations. Counting ca. 90 per cent of Japanese households as their members due to a 'semi-compulsory' membership system, neighbourhood associations constitute the largest civil organisation in contemporary Japan (Haddad, 2007; Pekkanen, Tsujinaka and Yamamoto, 2014; Schimkowsky, 2021a; Sugimoto, 2014, pp. 293–294). The local associations organise a range of community activities ranging from the fun (e.g. local festivals and celebrations) to the dull (e.g. litter picking events and crime prevention patrols; Nishimoto, 2018, p. 16; Sugimoto, 2014, pp. 293–294). They thus are an example of friendly authoritarianism's 'joyful' and 'pleasant' orientation, while also demonstrating how it actualises governance in everyday life. Neighbourhood associations link citizens to state institutions such as the police or local government bodies, and are an important actor in public and private initiatives related to diverse aspects of urban governance ranging from disaster prevention and fire drills to public health and social welfare (e.g. by working as 'distribution networks' for official information; see Sugimoto, 2014, p. 294). Accordingly, they can be understood as an extension of the 'state apparatus' that blurs the boundaries between state and civil sectors (Nishimoto, 2018; Sugimoto, 2014, p. 295), as well as an example of a broader Japanese governmental tradition of 'enrolling citizens in the administration of society' (Schimkowsky, 2021a, p. 157). Neighbourhood associations further facilitate lateral surveillance

in small groups as they bring citizens together in one of 300,000 local organisations, which often consist of various sub-groups (e.g. for different purposes and age groups; see Nishimoto, 2018, p. 16). Facilitating the reproduction of behavioural and social norms in everyday life, neighbourhood associations thus have a disciplining effect.

Building on Sugimoto, Davidson (2013) positions the spatial environment of Japanese cities as another component of friendly authoritarianism that encourages adherence to behavioural norms and expectations in residential areas. For example, he sees narrow streets and mixed land use, two characteristics of suburban areas in Japan, as promoting self-discipline by increasing the likelihood that citizens will encounter fellow community members. Similarly, hilly and densely developed terrain, such as that of the town of Higashiyamato in Western Tokyo studied by Davidson (2013), can have a comparable disciplining effect. Large windows point 'in multiple directions from staggered heights on the sloping terrain', effectively creating a suburban panopticon in which passers-by are constantly aware that they might be watched, and their potential misbehaviour spotted by, local residents (Davidson, 2013, p. 203). Davidson (2013, p. 189) concludes that the spatial layout of suburban areas in Japan is 'structured to sharply inhibit individual expression if such expression does not accord with expected behaviours and standards of conduct'.

The above paragraphs highlighted the diverse ways in which subtle regulatory mechanisms potentially constrain the exercise of individual freedoms in Japanese cities. This limiting effect is felt especially keenly by marginalised urban subjects. For example, Coates' (2015) ethnographic research has shown that Chinese student migrants often feel uncomfortable and uneasy when moving through Tokyo streets: Japanese perceptions of China, Chinese students' 'deviant' status as migrant subjects, and the strict behavioural expectations and rules governing public behaviour in Japanese cities (e.g. regarding smoking, drinking, and eating on the street, or making noise) contributed to a sense of being watched suspiciously by authorities and fellow urban dwellers. For many of Coates' interlocutors, this gave rise to a desire to remain 'unseen' in the city, either by staying out of sight (i.e. inside), or by attempting to pass as Japanese in public to avoid annoyances such as being stopped by the police. While Coates (2017b, p. 36) provides a counter example of a group of young Chinese migrants who were unconcerned by the surveillance and behavioural expectations characterising Japanese cities, this example nonetheless highlights the potential detrimental effect friendly authoritarianism has on individuals' experience of urban space.

8.3.1 Friendly authoritarianism and manner posters

Of the eight components of friendly authoritarianism discussed by Sugimoto (see above), three are of particular relevance in the context of manner improvement initiatives on public transport, and suggest that manner posters can be understood as a friendly authoritarian regulatory strategy.

Power is rendered visible and tangible: Under friendly authoritarianism, moral order does not remain abstract but is actualised in everyday life. Sugimoto (2014, pp. 295–297) illustrates this through the example of law enforcement practices in Japan. Around 40 per cent of Japanese police officers are posted in small police 'boxes' (*kōban*) or substations (*chūzaisho*) that dot Japanese towns, turning the police into a tangible presence in Japanese communities (Sugimoto, 2014, p. 296). The stationed officers regularly visit local households and businesses to 'acquire information about them' and ask about potential suspicious occurrences in the area in a practice called *junkai renraku* (Sugimoto, 2014, p. 296). In addition, the links between civil society and police are strengthened by enrolling citizens in local crime prevention associations (Herber, 2018; Schimkowsky, 2021a), and designating households as crime prevention

contact points (Sugimoto, 2014, p. 296). Police and crime prevention practices thus reveal the Japanese state's penetration of civil society.

Manner posters can be understood as another governmental technology that actualises Japanese society's moral order. Sugimoto (2014, p. 297) himself positions 'a steady flow of verbal and visual instructions from authorities about expected behaviour' as manifestation of friendly authoritarian efforts to render power tangible in everyday life. He even specifically refers to transport providers' management of passenger conduct as an example; albeit in the form of announcements by conductors and station attendants asking passengers to 'make room for other people' and 'offer seats to senior citizens' rather than manner posters (Sugimoto, 2014, p. 297). While such announcements still exist today (albeit largely in automated form), my interview data suggests that transport providers nowadays favour posters over announcements. Posters are considered as less invasive, and thus less likely to cause customer vexation: passengers are not forced to look at them, whereas they often have no choice but to listen to repeat announcements unless they use earphones (see Section 6.2.2). Manner posters render behavioural expectations visible in the city by employing diverse attention-maximising design techniques to visually inscribe ideal passenger etiquette into public transport spaces. As ubiquitous reminders of desirable commuter conduct, manner posters form, together with various other signs, stickers, and notices in Japanese urban environments which outline behavioural norms or remind people that 'someone is watching' (e.g. Bayley, 1991; Coates, 2015), part of a semiotic landscape of regulation that actualises moral social order in everyday contexts.

Moralistic focus on minute details: Sugimoto (2014, p. 291) observes that friendly authoritarianism endeavours to impress a 'moralistic ideology' onto subjects' psyche, emphasising 'minute and trivial details' of public conduct and comportment to achieve 'mind correctness' (Sugimoto, 2014, p. 291). The importance that is placed on 'physical correctness' in Japanese society is an expressions of this: schools teach pupils the 'correct' way of bowing, sitting, and standing, and companies commonly instruct their new recruits in the 'appropriate' way of greeting customers and exchanging business cards. A similar focus on micro behaviours is evident from Davidson's (2013) study which identifies several offenses that might appear trivial to foreign observers, but are nonetheless perceived as detrimental to the urban order in Japan (e.g. eating while walking, riding one's bicycle while using an umbrella). In line with this, manner posters attempt to convey meticulous behavioural expectations: poster campaigns address a wide range of behaviours, down to fine details of urban mobility practices such as how to hold one's smartphone on a crowded train, or how to stand when riding the station escalator (see Chapter 5).

Another aspect of friendly authoritarian endeavours to achieve 'mind correctness' is what Sugimoto (2014, p. 300) refers to as emotive moralising: the effort to teach 'conformity through emotive means'. Examples of this include the singing of company and school songs extolling the virtues of hard work, dedication, and diligence on ceremonial occasions such as entrance or graduation ceremonies. Sugimoto argues that the act of collective singing not only strengthens group ties, but also instils desirable values through its nature as a participative sentimental practice. Manner posters can be understood as drawing on similar techniques of emotive moralising. Posters often appeal to passengers through means of affect (see Chapter 7). Posters frequently feature cute anthropomorphic characters with pleading facial expressions that the viewer is invited to sympathise with. Other affective design elements find use, too. Tokyo Metro's 2013-2014 manner poster series *Show Manners, Show Heart (manā ha kokoro)* depicts, for example, a passenger rushing onto the train at the last minute as accidentally dropping a pink heart, and a passenger snacking on the train as eating a large heart-shaped sweet, pieces of which fall to the ground to the dismay

of a nearby co-passenger (Figure 17). In these posters, manner transgressions are equated with the loss or consumption of a symbol of affection and care. In conclusion, manner posters often attempt to improve passenger etiquette by ‘appeal[ing] to peoples’ hearts’ (Asahi Shimbun, 2009).



Figure 17 Tokyo Metro manner poster asking people not to eat or drink on trains, issued September 2013. Source: © Tokyo Metro / Metro Cultural Foundation. [Figure redacted for copyright reasons.]

Infiltration without pain: Friendly authoritarianism often takes ‘pleasant’, ‘joyful’, or ‘entertaining’ forms to subtly shape peoples’ behaviour (Sugimoto, 2014, p. 291). For example, neighbourhood associations frequently organise ‘fun’ activities such as festivals and drinking parties to increase engagement (see above; Nishimoto, 2018, p. 16). Another manifestation of a subtle approach to behavioural modulation is the use of positively connotated symbols to reproduce cultural values and ideals. For instance, Japanese teachers often draw flower marks on flawless student assignments, and political rhetoric similarly regularly features references to flower-based symbolism (Occhi, 2009, p. 215). Manner posters fit well into this pattern. Transport providers’ poster campaigns usually do not admonish or caution passengers, but instead ‘take the soft route’ to manner improvement (Asahi Shimbun, 2009) by deploying cute, colourful, and humorous designs as persuasive strategies. My interview data indicates that the transport and design professionals involved in the production of manner posters consciously avoid verbal and visual elements that could be perceived as lecturing or moralising (see Chapters 6 and 7). Writing in the

advertising magazine *Brain*, Kawakita (1977, p. 50), the designer behind Eidan's first famous manner poster series, even goes as far as arguing that he chose humorous poster designs because of posters' inherently 'strict' subject matter of passenger etiquette: 'If posters' presentation would also be strict, this would only prompt disinclination (*teikō*) [to accept/heed the manner message] on part of audiences'. The clear effort to communicate behavioural expectations in a pleasant format thus appears to position manner posters as an expression of friendly authoritarian control efforts.

8.4 Manner posters as social control?

The above paragraphs make a strong case for manner posters as a form of social control. Am I then mistaken in my interpretation that manner posters present a technology of customer service rather than a disciplinary device? In the following, I critically engage with the preceding discussion of (soft) control efforts in Japanese cities to qualify and defend my argument that disciplining passengers is not the guiding motivation of manner poster design and deployment.

8.4.1 About manner posters as subtle manipulation or disciplinary effort

While Hankins provides an insightful account of the role of railway networks in the development of new modes of urban life that is in line with prior research on the topic (Freedman, 2011; Fujii, 1999), his interpretation of transport providers' role in this process is problematic. Hankins argues that Japanese railway companies have taken up a governmental responsibility for disciplining passenger subjects that was previously held by the state, and positions manner improvement campaigns as expression of a conscious project of 'cultivating subjects of a (neo)liberal order' (Hankins, 2018, p. 191). This reading implies a questionable degree of intentionality on part of the railway companies. During my empirical fieldwork, I found no evidence that contemporary Japanese railway companies actively seek to reshape passengers' subjectivity. This does not mean that railway companies are unconcerned with passenger conduct. As discussed in Chapter 6, transport providers are keenly aware that forms of customer deviance such as etiquette transgressions can negatively impact customer satisfaction, and view passengers as participants in their endeavour to create comfortable transit spaces. Railway companies also engage in efforts to actively influence passenger conduct that go beyond communication campaigns, such as by introducing cheaper fares or a point-based reward system for people who commute outside of the rush hour (Tokyo Metro, 2019). However, these efforts are not expressions of a moral project, but rather an attempt to alleviate practical problems caused by notoriously high levels of crowdedness on Japanese urban railway networks (e.g. passenger discomfort and dissatisfaction, infrastructure investments needed to meet demand). Train companies' primary interests do not lie in civilising initiatives or other disciplinary projects, but rather in safeguarding the smooth operation of the railway network, customer satisfaction, and overarching profit motives. Similarly, the transport professionals involved in manner improvements campaigns are, like the majority of corporate employees, chiefly concerned with fulfilling their day-to-day duties (e.g. addressing passenger complaints), navigating their work organisation and advancing within it, and securing a livelihood. There is, in other words, little leeway for moral projects in everyday corporate operations, particularly as 'moralising' is perceived as potentially detrimental to customer satisfaction, and, thus, business interests (see Chapter 6). If manner posters do shape passenger subjectivities, this is a by-product of their customer service function rather than expression of a deliberate civilising initiative (see Miller and Kanazawa, 2000).

In line with Hankins' argument that manner improvement projects help reproduce the neoliberal order, Negishi discusses Japanese urban railway providers' efforts to modify passenger behaviour as attempts to

incorporate passengers into systems of ‘economic governance’ (Negishi, 2016, pp. 20, 77). He argues that manner posters facilitate lateral surveillance by encouraging passengers to police the behaviour of fellow commuters. This reading is in line with his observation that commuters often give passengers exhibiting ‘irregular’ conduct suspicious or judgmental looks, thus prompting them to adjust their behaviour (Negishi, 2016, pp. 149–151). Other scholars have similarly observed that public transport users may glare at fellow passengers to sanction manner transgressions (Okabe and Ito, 2005; Steger, 2013). On the other hand, my fieldwork indicates that it is rare for Tokyo passengers to intervene in manner infractions (see also Fisch, 2018, p. 61 for a similar observation). In either case, the efficiency of any such grassroots control efforts is questionable. While some passengers might, like Negishi (2016, pp. 149–150) during his autoethnographic fieldwork, quickly adjust their conduct when reminded of behavioural norms through non-verbal communication, others might be less easily swayed, or even actively avoid sanctioning attempts by feigning sleep or averting their gaze (Steger, 2013). It is also doubtful whether railway providers can rely on commuters to understand posters as invitations to police other passengers’ behaviours. Media scholarship has long emphasised that media texts are always polysemous, open to numerous readings by audiences that might deviate from the meaning intended by their creators (Hall, 1980). Moreover, it is unclear how much attention passengers pay to posters when moving through transport spaces, their minds usually focused on their daily business and the mobility task at hand (see Augé, 2002, p. 18). Overall, it is thus doubtful whether manner posters constitute, as argued by Negishi, a working link in a system of lateral surveillance.

While Negishi (2016, p. 184) contends that manner posters ‘responsibilize [passengers] to inform authorities of any disturbing event they have observed’, I have rarely, if ever, encountered posters that ask public transport users to report manner offenses to station staff or other company representatives³⁷. Instead, manner posters’ function as a response to customer complaints invites us to think of manner posters not as enrolling passengers as agents of lateral surveillance, but rather as evidence of customers holding railway companies responsible for the manner infractions they encounter while in transit (see Chapter 6). Passengers and railway providers alike tend to understand manner improvement efforts as company ‘duty’ (see Chapter 5; Hosokawa, 1994, p. 2). This finding is in line with prior research on customer deviance which indicates that customers often blame businesses for disruptions other customers cause to service and consumption experiences, prompting companies to explore preventive strategies to avoid customer dissatisfaction (see Chapter 2; Fullerton and Punj, 1997; Gursoy, Cai and Anaya, 2017).

This is not to say that Negishi’s and my views of railway providers’ efforts to manage passenger conduct are completely at odds with each other. In fact, there are numerous parallels in our accounts, such as our emphasis of underlying financial interests, and public transport users’ dual status as passengers and customers. Notably, we both connect companies’ efforts to manage passenger behaviour to corporate ideas of customer service, but interpret this relationship differently. Although we both recognise customer service as important for maintaining the customers’ (supposedly) superior status vis-à-vis service providers, Negishi portrays its deployment as mere rhetoric: ‘Hidden behind the pristine image of customer service’, he argues, ‘is the mechanism of soft control’ (Negishi, 2016, p. 20). An example of this can be found in his discussion of frontline workers’ smiles: companies train customer-facing staff in affective smiling techniques to create the ‘guise of the caring image’ that is strategically employed to

³⁷ Perhaps with the exception of posters targeting sexual harassment on trains – however these are excluded from this study because sexual harassment is not an etiquette infraction, but rather a criminal offense (see Section 3.2).

‘regulate passengers’ movements and behaviours in railway spaces’ (Negishi, 2016, p. 84). In other words, the friendly appearance of company initiatives addressing passenger comportment and conduct are a cynical manipulation attempt. This thesis takes an antithetical stance. It argues that what appears to critical observers as social control *is intended* as customer service. It posits that service intentions are sincere because company profit – the overarching goal motivating business operations – is not just contingent on ‘efficiently and economically mobilizing as many passengers within the shortest possible time’ (Negishi, 2016, p. 84), but also customer comfort, satisfaction, and the company image. Negishi’s interpretation of urban railway providers’ efforts to shape passenger conduct as subtle manipulatory effort is, however, in line with analytical accounts of friendly authoritarianism as a soft social control strategy which will be examined below.

8.4.2 About manner posters as a manifestation of friendly authoritarianism

Earlier in this chapter we saw that it is possible to interpret manner posters as an expression of friendly authoritarianism: posters seek to ‘infiltrate without pain’ (Sugimoto, 2014, p. 291) through colourful and cute visual formats, make use of emotive moralising, turn governmental power into a tangible presence in everyday life by inscribing behavioural expectations into transport environments, and share friendly authoritarianism’s focus on minute behaviours. If we follow Negishi’s (2016, p. 184) interpretation of manner posters as enrolling passengers as ‘vigilant policing subjects’, they could further be understood as a tool of lateral surveillance, thus aligning it with friendly authoritarianism’s use of small groups for regulation.

However, most of these characteristics can also be understood without recourse to the friendly authoritarianism framework, or are subject to caveats. While manner posters frequently employ ‘emotive moralising’ (e.g. through use of anthropomorphic characters with pleading facial expression), this is not the only persuasive strategy at work in poster initiatives. For instance, posters also employ direct and descriptive appeals that seek to *reason* with passengers by explaining the negative effect a given behaviour can have on smooth and safe transport operations (see Chapter 5; see also the poster discussed by Fisch, 2018, p. 63).

Moreover, posters’ creative and fun design is not necessarily an attempt to subtly manipulate viewers, but can be explained by the requirements of efficient visual communication in mass transit environments: posters need to compete with a plethora of professionally designed advertisements to attract viewer attention, and convey their message to passengers who hurry through stations and might just glimpse at posters (see Chapters 6 and 7). Posters’ spatial location in public transport spaces as oversaturated semiotic landscapes full of stimuli also means that it is questionable whether posters actually render power ‘visible’ – even poster creators have doubts whether passengers actually notice manner posters (Chapter 6). Furthermore, the use of posters as go-to media for recent passenger manner improvement initiatives is related to the fact that railway companies view posters as less intrusive (i.e. as more easily disregarded) than other forms of communication such as audio announcements (see Chapter 6). ‘Tangibility’, then, is not the primary consideration driving poster deployment.

Even if we were to assume that poster campaigns render power tangible, it is questionable *whose* power it is that they inscribe in public transport environments. As discussed in Chapter 6, poster content is shaped by customer complaints received by railway companies. Rather than a top-down moral framework, it is passengers’ experiences of discomfort, and exasperation about the transgression of cultural norms and social values (e.g. consideration towards others), that help us understand the scope of the targeted

behaviours. This also explains posters' focus on minute behavioural details: posters address highly specific behaviours because they are inspired by specific customer complaints. Accordingly, poster campaigns are not a testament of corporate control over the commuter collective but rather the power complainants hold over corporate organisations pursuing values of customer satisfaction. When taken further, this argument becomes a surprising source of support for Hankin's (2018) interpretation of railway providers' manner improvement initiatives as a disciplining project, albeit with a major caveat: the manner offenders addressed by poster campaigns are not being disciplined in the name of the company, state, or an authoritative moral system, but rather fellow customer-passengers who subscribe to normative ideals of public conduct. Public transport users, then, are not mere 'recipients' of a unidirectional power relationship actualised through the governmental technology of manner posters, but play an active role as 'power relays'³⁸. As Foucault reminds us, power is not simply imposed as 'an obligation or a prohibition' on (supposedly) 'dominated' subjects, but it can be 'transmitted by them and through them' (Foucault, 1995, p. 27; Sheridan, 1980, p. 137).

Alternatively, it is possible to understand posters' responsiveness to customer feedback and complaints as the prioritisation of business interests within corporate procedures and company-customer interaction, rather than something that is actively managed by any one agent. This, too, leads us back to a Foucauldian conceptualisation of power as 'exercised rather than possessed' (Foucault, 1995, p. 26; see also Lynch, 1998, p. 67; Sheridan, 1980). Power is not owned, but is produced *in* and operates *through* diverse discourses and technologies, making the question of 'whose' power manner posters inscribe in public transport environments a moot point. Although Foucauldian thought sees power relations as 'permeat[ing] every aspect of social life' (Sheridan, 1980, p. 137), this does not mean that all roads of analysis lead back to power as the principal operating logic shaping social relationships or events. Instead, other concepts and phenomena, such as pleasure, care, or comfort, can be more important than power for understanding a given social situation (Lynch, 1998, p. 68). Accordingly, while manner posters can, in principle, be interpreted within a friendly authoritarianism framework, it would be misleading to describe their production as guided by friendly authoritarian logics and considerations.

8.4.3 About manner posters as moral enterprise and regulation

Moral enterprise and regulation, mentioned towards the beginning of this chapter, are two further concepts that intuitively seem to provide an apt understanding of manner posters, but are ill-fitted upon closer examination. Like civilising offensives (see Chapter 3), moral regulation usually targets weak, vulnerable, distant, or marginalised social groups (Hunt, 2003, p. 376). This is not the case with the manner improvement initiatives examined in this thesis. The addressed public transport users do not primarily belong to marginalised groups, but come from various socio-economic backgrounds. In fact, urban railway commutes are often associated with the white collar employment of salaryman businessmen – a subject position that has been central to imaginings of respectable middle-class existence and national identity in Japan³⁹ (Dasgupta, 2013, 2017). More fundamentally, regardless of individual passengers' social status, manner poster initiatives ultimately address customers: a group that companies depend on and feel obliged to pay deference to. Similar to other cases of customer deviance, the regulatory task faced by companies is complicated by dominant business paradigms of 'customer sovereignty' (Ang and Koslow,

³⁸ I am grateful to Dr. Matthias Benzer for pointing this out to me.

³⁹ Note that there are also counter-discourses that frame salarymen, particularly those who have reached middle-age, as miserable, lewd, unattractive, and even repelling (Bardsley, 2011; Horii and Burgess, 2012; Steger, 2013).

2012, p. 186; see Chapter 2). Accordingly, the management of passenger etiquette is shaped by complex power dynamics (which becomes evident, for example, in posters' visual design; see Chapters 6 and 7).

Manner posters also differ from the notion of moral enterprise (see Chapter 2, Becker, 1973). Becker (1973, p. 146) describes moral entrepreneurs as actors who take the 'initiative' to create or enforce rules. Current manner improvement campaigns, however, are not an independent push by railway companies to regulate passenger behaviour, but originate in customer complaints and surveys (Chapter 6). A binary model of regulator and regulated, as it is implicit in ideas of moral enterprise, cannot accurately explain the complex network of actors that drives manner poster production. If any actor fits the role of proactive moralising agent, it is not railway company staff, but rather complainant passengers who lament etiquette transgressions by fellow public transport users⁴⁰. This in line with the active role public transport users play in manner improvement initiatives, not just as addressees of etiquette reminders, but as power relays that shape and drive corporate campaigns (see above).

Critically, contemporary manner improvement initiatives by Japanese railways providers are not an attempt to impose rules (see Fisch, 2018, p. 61). Manner posters generally avoid textual expressions that could be understood as an official order or prohibition due to the expected status hierarchy between companies and customers and the difficulty of restricting mundane passenger behaviours (e.g. drinking or talking on trains) through clear-cut regulations (see Chapter 6). Railway providers also generally do not sanction transgressions of the behavioural expectations outlined in manner posters (see Fisch, 2018, p. 61). Rather than an undertaking to dictate new rules, manner posters merely present a reminder of the 'tacit understanding' (*anmoku no ryōkai*; interview with customer service officer, January 2020) of the behavioural norms at work in public transport spaces. They make explicit what passengers are expected to already know. Accordingly, the examined manner improvement initiatives cannot be easily incorporated into Becker's (1973, p. 134) three-step model of value, rule, and enforcement (see Chapter 2). Although connected to broader socio-cultural values (e.g. consideration for others), the manner messages outlined in posters do not become formalised as rules, thus indicating the need for an additional intermediary step in Becker's deviance model.

Perhaps the most fundamental difference between moral enterprise/regulation and the manner improvement initiatives examined in this thesis is that the former are largely assumed to be deeply invested in the ethics they champion (Becker, 1973, p. 146). The agents of moral regulation discussed by Becker and Hunt are believed to be primarily motivated by the pursuit of moral goals or 'commitments to what is right and what is wrong as an ethical judgement' rather than strategic political interests (Becker, 1973; Hunt, 2003, p. 364). Antithetical to this, Japanese railway companies' involvement in matters of passenger etiquette is not evidence of a moral crusade, but tied to mundane concerns of everyday business operations. They are not a passionate pursuit of 'correct' passenger behaviour, but need to be understood in the context of 'instrumental interests' (Hunt, 2003, p. 364) of ensuring the integrity of the railway system and demonstrating responsiveness to customer concerns (see Chapter 6).

8.5 Concluding thoughts

Critical social science accounts tend to portray Japan as an overregulated 'control society' (see Section 8.3). Gill (2001) objects to this interpretation. Drawing on his empirical research on marginalised groups in Japanese society, he argues that Japanese responses to deviance are not characterised by 'obsessional

⁴⁰ I am indebted to Dr. Barbara Pizziconi for helping me realise this.

social control' but rather 'an improvised morality, subtly mingling tolerance and containment in response to perceived social interests' (Gill, 2001, p. 230). 'Public morality' is not all-encompassing and imposed from above as suggested by the notion of the control society, but characterised by 'benign neglect and selective enforcement' (Gill, 2001, p. 233). Contrary to popular ideas, Japanese society does tolerate significant amounts of deviance: 'The nail that sticks out is not always hammered in' (Gill, 2001, pp. 232, 252). An examination of on-the-ground realities of Japanese society thus reveals that Japanese society 'is no more "controlled" than any other industry society' (Gill, 2001, p. 232).

Following Gill (2001), this chapter has sought to provide an empirically informed critical reflection on readings of manner improvement initiatives as disciplinary effort. The above discussed accounts of manner improvement initiatives are, to a degree, based on theoretical contemplation. Hankins' (2018) discussion of the historical development of railways and passenger subjectivity only makes use of light referencing and does not clarify the empirical basis of his interpretation that manner improvement initiatives are a disciplining mission privatised railway providers inherited from the state. Negishi's (2016) analysis of the workings of soft control mechanisms in Japanese urban railway spaces are primarily based on autoethnographic fieldwork as a passenger. Finally, Sugimoto's idea of friendly authoritarianism, although frequently quoted in Japanese studies literature (see for example Horne and Manzenreiter, 2008; Low, 2009; Occhi, 2009), usually takes the form of a background assumption that is seldomly empirically examined. Accordingly, it presents a theoretical lens, rather than a model that has been repeatedly empirically proven. In contrast to these theoretically-inflected interpretations, this thesis provides an emic account of the logics and considerations driving poster production and deployment that is rooted in in-depth empirical engagement with poster creators and industry documents.

Critical readers might challenge my account of public transport providers' manner improvement initiatives by arguing that my analysis is not sufficiently analytically detached from corporate presentation interests or the 'company line'. They might further suspect that I failed to recognise that the information I gained through interviews was just *tatemae* – the oft-cited Japanese cultural inclination to adhere to 'formally established' principles in (public-facing) statements, even when these are 'not necessarily accepted or practiced by the parties involved' – instead of expressions of 'authentic' (or *honne*) sentiments or opinions (Sugimoto, 2014, p. 32). I do not dismiss the possibility that my informants' responses were influenced by concerns for the company image. However, my ethnographic encounters provided little evidence to suggest that transport professionals were feeding me the company line to distract from a hidden moral mission to civilise passengers. Instead, the individuals I interviewed seemed to subscribe to official company objectives of increasing customer comfort and satisfaction, and appeared occupied with the challenges this posed in their everyday work contexts – for example, how to handle and address customer complaints. In addition, my analysis of manner poster production and deployment as driven by considerations of customer service is not exclusively based on interviews with one professional group (i.e. railway company employees) but has been corroborated by advertising professionals and freelance illustrators.

This penultimate chapter is not meant as an unequivocal dismissal of prior scholarly interpretations of manner improvement initiatives and other 'soft control' efforts in Japanese society. In fact, I would argue that there is no necessary opposition between my analysis and academic accounts that emphasise the friendly authoritarian or regulatory character of manner poster campaigns. It is perfectly possible that manner posters contribute to the reproduction of a neoliberal socio-economic order, and participate in the modulation of passenger conduct and subjectivities. It is also conceivable that manner posters are

potentially perceived as oppressive by some urban subjects who (want to) use public transport spaces in non-standard ways, or engage in alternative mobility practices (see for example Pendleton, 2018 for a discussion of past artist and activist interventions that disrupted the public order of Tokyo's urban railway spaces; see also Chapter 3). Manner posters' potential to reproduce regulatory discourses and be enrolled in disciplinary attempts is for example evident from the fact that the *Please do it at home* series' iconic design has been appropriated for a parody poster that portrays Halloween revelries aboard trains as something that is perhaps acceptable in America, but certainly not in Japan (Figure 18; Pendleton, 2018, pp. 265–266).



Figure 18 Parody manner poster by Akiyama Tomo. The poster depicts a Halloween party on a commuter train and imitates the visual style of Tokyo Metro's 'Please do it at home' series. Groups of revellers, comprised mostly of foreign residents, started to appropriate Tokyo's important Yamanote loop line for Halloween bashes in the early 1990s. The boisterous celebrations caused many fellow passengers great displeasure (Andrews, 1992; Anonymous, 1992) and eventually led to police intervention when the increasingly escalating parties became an annual event (The Japan Times, 1997, 1998). Halloween celebrations on Tokyo's railway network gained new popularity in the mid-2000s due to the influence of the internet (Pendleton, 2018, p. 264). Revelries escalated again in 2007, leading the Tokyo Metropolitan Police and JR East to take preventive measures at Halloween in the following years (AP, 2008) – the time during which Yorifuji Bunpei's 'Please do it at home' manner poster series, which started in 2008, attracted popular attention. Source: Akiyama Tomo / Twitter. [Figure redacted for copyright reasons.]

I cannot comment on the diverse ways different public transport users experience the presence of manner posters, decode corporate etiquette messaging, and how it might shape their mobility practices as I only conducted limited ethnographic fieldwork with passengers⁴¹ (see Chapter 4). Rather than seeking to deny that manner improvement initiatives possess a regulatory *potential*, I want to question assumptions that manner posters are an expression of moral intent. The key difference between my analysis and previous accounts of manner posters is that I do not attribute regulatory will to the organisations and individuals involved in manner improvement campaigns. In other words, the existence of regulatory desire is not a necessary condition for the production and deployment of manner posters. It is entirely possible for companies to target misconduct and encourage specific mobility practices without consciously seeking to control passengers. Accordingly, scholars studying manner improvement initiatives and other efforts targeting mundane incivilities need to take care not to conflate intention, implementation, interpretation, and influence. We should be wary of conspiratorial conceptualisations of power that are eager to diagnose deliberate manipulation. Not everything that looks like social control is designed as such. Managing behaviour in public does not require regulatory will. Order, in other words, can be an accidental outcome of wider sociocultural processes (see Miller and Kanazawa, 2000).

⁴¹ Unsurprisingly, initial findings indicate Japanese passengers tend to pay less attention to manner posters than I do.

Chapter 9 Conclusion

This thesis inquired into the management of mundane conduct in everyday urban life through an interdisciplinary deep dive into poster-based manner improvement initiatives by Japanese railway providers. Part I of the thesis, consisting of Chapters 1-4, laid the groundwork for my empirical inquiry into Japanese manner poster campaigns. The first chapter established the significance of the chosen case study as a particularly conspicuous example of mundane urban governance and introduced the overarching research questions. Subsequently, Chapter 2 familiarised readers with seven sets of key terms and concepts that underlie the thesis' reasoning, and Chapter 3 reviewed previous literature on issues related to the management of behaviour in public in contemporary cities, identifying research gaps. Finally, Chapter 4 outlined the employed research approach and discussed challenges that shaped the research process. With the stage thus set, the following three chapters, which collectively form Part II of the thesis, presented a paper-style analysis of poster-based manner improvement efforts by Japanese railway companies. Chapter 5, published in *Japanese Studies*, provided an introduction to the phenomenon of manner posters through an account of their textual structure and history as a genre of communication. Building on this, Chapter 6, published in *Mobilities*, explored the corporate considerations and concerns driving poster design and deployment. The following Chapter 7, under review by *Visual Communication*, examined the visual strategies poster designers employ to problematise passenger conduct while protecting customer sensibilities. A common analytical theme in these three empirical chapters is that manner poster production is not driven by regulatory will, but rather guided by corporate considerations of customer service, sensibilities, and satisfaction. Anticipating potential scepticism regarding this counter-intuitive interpretation of corporate manner improvement efforts, Chapter 8, in Part III of the thesis, qualified and defended my argument through critical engagement with alternative readings of manner posters as a social control mechanism. The present final chapter concludes the thesis by revisiting the research questions set out in Chapter 1, highlighting the thesis' contributions to the literature and expected impact, commenting on its limitations and identifying potential avenues for future research.

9.1 Revisiting the research questions

This thesis' inquiry into the logics of institutional interventions into everyday urban conduct was guided by two overarching research questions (see Chapter 1):

- 1) Why has mundane passenger (mis)behaviour become the target of company-led regulatory initiatives?
- 2) What does the textual-visual style of regulatory signage reveal about the governance of conduct in urban public space?

The preceding chapters suggest that the answers to these questions lie in manner posters' ties to railway companies' customer service thoughts and practices. Japanese railway companies address passenger misbehaviour because they subscribe to an ideology of customer service which positions them as responsible for customer comfort, and establishes customer satisfaction as a measure of good business practice. Manner improvement initiatives are an extension of efforts to improve the experience of urban mass transit through service quality innovations such as priority seating and air conditioning. More than an independent pursuit of passenger comfort, manner posters are companies' response to customer complaints. Railway companies believe they need to be seen as doing everything they can to respond to complaints about poor passenger conduct in order to ensure customer satisfaction. Accordingly, the majority of the mundane passenger conducts targeted by poster-based manner improvement campaigns

trace back to customer complaints and surveys of passenger opinion. This helps explain the wide range of misbehaviours that posters take up (see Chapters 5, 6, 8). Even in the few cases in which manner posters' content appears to primarily reflect company priorities of ensuring the safe and efficient operation of the railway network rather than prominent customer complaints (e.g. boarding the train at the last minute), these can be tied back to societal expectations of the provision of punctual and accident-free transport as responsibility of public transport authorities. In a nutshell, mundane passenger misconduct becomes the target of corporate manner improvement initiatives due to business imperatives of customer service and satisfaction.

Manner poster campaigns' textual style and format is indicative of the demands of the circumstances in which they are employed (see Chapters 6 and 7). The challenging communication context of corporate manner improvement initiatives is characterised by the two conflicting design principles of impact and appropriateness. Posters need to attract audiences' attention to an undesirable manner message in hectic and semiotically oversaturated public transport environments, and must be designed in a way that is both eye-catching and successfully conveys their manner message in the few moments passengers usually look at them. At the same time, the textual form corporate manner messaging can take is constrained by considerations of customer sensibilities. Expressions that could be understood as offensive are usually avoided or used with extreme caution. For example, poster producers generally stay clear of verbal and visual elements that could be perceived as a direct order or prohibition (e.g. imperative mood, slashed-out red circle) as they would overturn the expected status hierarchy between company and customer. This means that poster producers frequently forgo visual and verbal elements that could communicate behavioural expectations with greater urgency than the indirect and discreet appeals commonly found in contemporary manner posters. In other words, manner poster design must balance considerations of impact and appropriateness. This is achieved through the employment of advanced creative techniques that recall commercial advertising. The cute, colourful, and often comic textual format that sets manner posters apart from other forms of regulatory signage (see Chapter 1) thus presents a response to the requirements of corporate communication campaigns in public transport spaces. Rather than a subtle attempt to manipulate passenger audiences, manner posters' textual-visual style thus highlights the complexities of governing conduct in contemporary urban spaces as an undertaking during which effective regulation might not be the only, or even the primary, consideration.

In conclusion, the inquiry into the two above research questions revealed the importance of factors other than disciplinary intent and effectiveness in the design and deployment of passenger manner improvement campaigns. It emphasised corporate considerations of customer service, satisfaction, and sensibilities as guiding principles that are prioritised during manner poster production. The principal argument of this thesis is thus that references to regulatory intent *alone* do not sufficiently explain the diverse ways in which urban stakeholders intervene in everyday behaviour in public (see Chapter 8).

9.2 Situating the study and its scholarly contributions

This study took an explorative, interdisciplinary approach to studying corporate manner improvement initiatives due to a lack of prior in-depth research on the subject. As outlined in Chapters 2 and 3, the thesis is located at the intersection of four loosely defined bodies of literature: routine incivilities and their regulation, urban mobilities, urban signage, and urban railways in Japan. As such, its connections and contributions to prior scholarship are multiple and complex. They will be discussed in turn below.

9.2.1 In regards to scholarship on routine incivilities and their management

As an inquiry into transport providers' efforts to manage mundane passenger conduct and the rationales that drive them, this thesis contributes to research on urban incivilities. While the sociology of deviance has traditionally focused on the transgressive acts and subjects involved in rule-breaking (Becker, 1973, p. 163), this thesis zooms in on the propagation of behavioural expectations governing urban life. In doing so, it follows the call of Smith and his colleagues (Phillips and Smith, 2003, 2006; Smith, Phillips and King, 2010) to redirect the focus of sociological deviance and incivilities research from (semi-)criminal conduct and other harmful activities to 'minor deviant acts that are simply inconsiderate or rude' (Phillips and Smith, 2003, p. 85). Japanese railway providers' etiquette improvement initiatives provided an apt case study for this due to the broad range of micro-behaviours and sensory transgressions targeted in them, as well as campaign posters' prolific presence in Japanese cities.

Understanding everyday misconduct is important not only because it is encountered more frequently in everyday life than crime, but also because it facilitates analytical insights into governmental endeavours to produce and maintain order. Miller and Rose (2013, pp. 6, 10–11) argue that examining interventions targeting mundane and supposedly minor events allows scholars to 'anatomize [the] activity of governing' and understand governmental intervention as a practice. It enables us to break down the ambiguous concept of governmentality into 'rationalities' (i.e. styles of thinking that underlie interventions), and concrete 'technologies' that allow authorities to 'imagine and act upon the conduct of persons' (Miller and Rose, 2013, pp. 10–11, 15–16). In addition, a narrowly defined empirical focus is analytically conducive because modern forms of government do not target 'universal subjects', but instead rely on conceptualisations of specific kinds of persons that become the target of intervention (Miller and Rose, 2013, pp. 7–8). Put differently, a narrow focus on specific mundane practices and problems facilitates insights into 'the conditions for intervening at a distance' (Miller and Rose, 2013, pp. 10–11).

In line with the research rationale outlined by Miller and Rose (2013), the thesis examined the conditions of the management of passenger-customer etiquette as one specific configuration of contemporary governance practices. By zooming in on manner improvement initiatives by public transport providers, it highlighted the involvement of private sector actors in the management of everyday urban life. Accordingly, it contributes to studies that investigate the operations of power 'beyond the state' (Miller and Rose, 2013, p. 10; Rose and Miller, 2010). In particular, the thesis focused on the strategies employed in railway companies' engagement with passenger transgressions of transit etiquette through manner poster campaigns, and the logics that drive them. Through this, the study also contributes to an emerging body of scholarship on the uses of signage, posters, and other semiotic inscriptions in the urban environment as mundane governmental technologies (see Section 9.2.3, see also Chapter 2), as well as literature on education-based approaches to modulating human conduct and civilising initiatives (Smith, Phillips and King, 2010; see also Chapter 2).

The thesis identified notions of customer service and satisfaction as key rationalities that underlie the employment of manner posters as a governmental intervention, and corporate concerns for customer sensibilities as shaping their design and deployment. It demonstrated that addressing passenger misconduct is not a straightforward task, but a highly complex endeavour due to the dominant discourses and expectations governing company-customer interaction. These findings are in line with prior research that highlighted the challenges addressing consumer misconduct presents for companies (Ang and Koslow,

2012; Dootson *et al.*, 2017). The thesis thus bridges scholarship on customer deviance, so far largely relegated to business and marketing research (see Chapter 2), and sociological studies of incivility.

Academic commentary on the management of behaviour is sceptical about the suitability and effectiveness of interventional or educational strategies which could be perceived as overly didactic or 'preaching' by their audiences (Smith, Phillips and King, 2010, p. 174). This thesis' finding that companies avoid forms of manner messaging that could offend customer-audiences' sensibilities, and instead embrace a semiotically complex format (e.g. through use of humorous and cute visual design rich in cultural references), is in line with this. It is thus possible to tie my inquiry to urban governance scholarship that has diagnosed a turn to gentle and 'soft' forms of regulation (see Chapter 3). It evidences that the management of undesirable conduct not only takes the form of forceful and punitive interventions, but also non-assertive and subtle strategies.

That said, the preceding chapters cautioned against interpretations of manner posters as a pure attempt to impose obligations or prohibitions. For example, Chapter 6 emphasised that customer complaints play a fundamental role in the production of manner poster campaigns – such as by shaping the diverse list of addressed behaviours, and providing an impetus for intervention. This analysis is in line with Foucauldian understandings of the workings of power as not a dichotomous top-down relationship between those that 'have' power and those that are controlled by it, but as diffuse and complex (see Chapter 8). In other words, there is no clear-cut distinction between regulators and regulated in manner poster initiatives. Moreover, the emphasis that is placed on passenger involvement can be tied back to Miller and Rose's (2013, p. 14) observation that the conduct of conduct starts with the problematisation of specific behaviours: behaviour becomes the target of governance when it appears problematic to someone. In the case of contemporary Japanese manner poster campaigns, this initial problematisation takes the form of customer complaints and customer satisfaction surveys that prompt a corporate response.

Overall, the thesis argued that regulatory intent, on its own, does not sufficiently explain the diverse ways in which urban stakeholders intervene in public conduct (Chapter 8). It demonstrated that the management of conduct is not necessarily a fervent moral mission similar to endeavours of moral enterprise described by Becker (1973), but can be a hesitant and cautious undertaking. The thesis rejects readings of manner posters as an effort to discipline public transport users or enlist them in a system of lateral surveillance and instead underlines posters' incorporation into corporate pursuits of customer service and satisfaction. Put simply, the manner improvement initiatives examined in this thesis are more concerned with comfort than with control. This emphasis on motivations external to moral manner education resembles my argument in *Contemporary Japan* that the prominence of crime prevention initiatives in Japanese cities can be partially explained by the fact that they serve as a channel for urban actors to address problems and pursue goals *unrelated* to crime (Schimkowsky, 2021a). More significantly, it brings the thesis in line with recent scholarship on urban socialities that has emphasised that 'urban management is no longer simply a matter of either disciplinary training or governmental subjection, but more precisely a matter of engineering safe, comforting and entertaining atmospheres (Mubi Brighenti and Pavoni, 2019, p. 146). By positioning the management of passenger conduct as a side-effect of a corporate quest for customer service and satisfaction, it evidences that 'order' can be produced 'by accident' (Miller and Kanazawa, 2000).

9.2.2 In regards to scholarship on urban mobilities

This thesis contributes to urban mobilities research through an in-depth examination of the management of transit etiquette. The discussion of the diverse passenger behaviours targeted in manner improvement campaigns (Chapters 5 and 7) not only showcases the complexity of passenger practices (i.e. opposed to notions of passengering as a passive act compared to driving; see Dant, 2014; see also Chapter 2), but it is also line with prior scholarship that has portrayed public transport environments as spaces of potential friction. Transport environments have been framed as one of the principal locations in which individuals experience incivility in everyday life (see Chapters 1-3). While passenger conduct has been described as 'scripted' and 'rule-governed' (Symes, 2007, p. 458), the behavioural expectations in place in transport environments are often characterised by ambiguity due to these spaces' liminal location between private and public realms, and an absence of rule-enforcers (Berry and Hamilton, 2010; Smith, Phillips and King, 2010, p. 28). Public transport usage comes with a built-in potential of vexation due to some of its inherent characteristics such as forced proximity to fellow passengers from diverse backgrounds and with diverse mobility goals (Moore, 2012; Smith and Clarke, 2000; Symes, 2007; see Sections 1.3 and 3.2.1). Several scholars have observed that this exposure to strangers requires public transport users to manage their co-presence with fellow passengers, such as by exercising civil inattention (see Clayton, Jain and Parkhurst, 2017; Goffman, 1971; Hirsch and Thompson, 2011). The present research shifts the focus from transport users to transport providers to highlight how passenger conduct and interaction become the subject of railway company intervention (e.g. through a discussion of considerations of passenger comfort and transit safety and efficiency in Chapters 5 and 7).

Prior mobilities research has observed that mobility practices are governed by both formal regulatory frameworks and 'informal and situational norms' (see Jensen, 2013, p. 153). The poster initiatives I examined in this thesis are positioned between these two: they take (usually unspoken) mobility norms and inscribe them into the physical transport environment. The thesis thus highlights visual communication campaigns as one of the channels through which mobility skills are conveyed and passenger practices are shaped. It provides insights into the 'staging' of mobilities as the 'process of creating lived mobility practices and the material preconditions to these' (Jensen, 2013, p. 5). While prior mobilities research has observed the use of posters and other forms of media to address passenger misbehaviour in urban transport systems around the world (Bissell, 2018; Butcher, 2011; Moore, 2011; Symes, 2015; Ureta, 2012), there are few dedicated accounts of the phenomenon. This study fills this gap by inquiring into transit etiquette poster campaigns from the perspective of the transport and design professionals involved in creating them. Pointing to posters' role as a technology of customer service, it questions previous understandings of media-based interventions in passenger conduct as disciplinary devices (see Symes, 2015; Ureta, 2012), and highlights the importance of considerations external to disciplinary intent and regulatory effectiveness in shaping poster design and deployment (see Section 9.1). Notably, the careful and hesitant nature of transport providers' engagement with passenger misconduct this indicates can be tied back to earlier findings by mobilities researchers who observed that the behavioural norms governing public transport passenger conduct are primarily based on unspoken agreements rather than regulated by transport providers (Wilson, 2011, p. 639). While my inquiry focuses on urban mass transit, there is ample analytic potential to connect it to scholarly discussions of other modes of transport, such as efforts to manage motorist behaviour (Lumsden, 2015; Merriman, 2005a, 2006; Roth, 2012; see also Chapter 3), as well as emerging topics in aeromobilities research such as safety guidance messaging (Bissell, Hynes and Sharpe, 2012) and passenger incivilities (Lin, 2020a).

Finally, the thesis also contributes to mobilities research by responding to repeated calls to move it 'beyond the West' (Cresswell, 2014; Lin, 2016; Steele and Lin, 2014). As discussed earlier in this thesis, urban railways are key for the operation of socio-economic life in Japanese cities (Negishi and Bissell, 2020), with daily ridership numbers that are among the highest in the world, and Japan described as one of the 'most railway-dependent societies in the world' (Switzerland Global Enterprise, 2019, p. 1). Ignoring Japan would be a major oversight on the part of mobilities researchers (see also Section 9.2.4 and Chapters 1 and 3 for more in-depth discussion of the importance of railways for Japanese society).

9.2.3 In regards to scholarship on signage and semiotics

This study adds to an emerging body of scholarship that highlights the employment of signage, posters, and other media devices in the management of conduct in public, namely literature on signage as a key actant in managing public spaces (Augé, 1995; Denis and Pontille, 2015; Fuller, 2002; Jensen, 2014) and communication campaigns as an important channel of educating people about behavioural expectations (Gorsky *et al.*, 2010; Landsberger, 2001, 2009, 2010; Lazar, 2003, 2010; Nguyen, 2012; Rice and Atkin, 2013). It highlighted the immense scope of what has been coined 'regulatory signage' (Hermer and Hunt, 1996) as not only targeting formally prohibited behaviours, but a much broader range of conduct and (often ambiguous) micro-transgressions of norms. Furthermore, building on prior research that has highlighted the use of 'semiotic play' in poster and signage targeting behaviour in public (Lazar, 2003, p. 212), it has demonstrated that the semiotic strategies regulatory signage employs to shape behaviour go beyond 'official' or 'authoritative' visual formats (e.g., slashed-out red circles), and instead include playful and humorous modes of expression (cf. Hermer and Hunt, 1996).

So far, research on the use of semiotic devices for managing conduct has focused on the employed multimodal texts themselves, as well as their presence in cities. In other words, it has focused on what Rose (2016, p. 32) refers to as 'the site of the image'. Building on this, this thesis provided an in-depth visual analysis of the design strategies employed to problematise passenger misconduct while protecting customer sensibilities (Chapter 7). In addition, the study goes beyond the site of the image by examining the logics of poster creation, highlighting the importance of corporate imaginings of customer audiences and the design principles of impact and appropriateness. Drawing on expert interviews and document analysis, the thesis presents a social semiotic exploration of how social circumstances shape design conventions within the communication genre (Aiello, 2016). Inquiring into the intentions and considerations of image producers, the thesis contributes to research exploring 'the site of production' (Rose, 2016, p. 27), an avenue of inquiry that is often neglected in visual research (Rose, 2016, p. 32).

9.2.4 In regards to scholarship on Japanese cities and society

Japanese urban life is defined by railway mobilities (see Chapters 1 and 3). Railways have played an essential role in the historical formation of modern Japanese city life and culture, such as by facilitating the development of commuter and citizen subjectivities (Freedman 2011; Fujii 1999). In contemporary Japan, railway networks remain an important pillar of socio-economic life and continue to shape the spatio-temporal organisation of urban space (Coates, 2018; Dimmer, Solomon and Morris, 2017). It is unsurprising, then, that images of Tokyo's crowded yet efficient intra-city railway network are central to domestic and international imaginings of Japanese (urban) modernity. As a study of Japanese railway mobilities, the thesis thus advances our understanding of a central component of everyday life in Japan that has been described as an apt analytical vantage point for scholars to 'think from' about Japanese cities and society more broadly (Pendleton and Coates, 2018).

The manner posters encountered during urban railway commutes are a common component of the semiotic landscape of Japanese cities. Manner posters have been a frequent sight in Japanese urban transport environments for decades, and have, as a prolific presence in Japanese cities, recurrently attracted media attention, both in Japan and overseas (see Chapter 5). While manner posters have previously been the subject of scholarly commentary (see Section 3.4.1), most prior academic writing on the topic has taken the form of brief excurses (Fisch, 2018; Miller, 2011a; Negishi, 2016), or working papers and dissertations (Bayne, 2018; Eberhardinger, 2012, 2019; Mizuta, 2013; but see Padoan, 2014). This thesis presents the first comprehensive account of manner posters (in English or Japanese) that I am aware of. As an introduction to the structure and history of manner posters as an established genre of communication in Japanese public transport spaces, and as a peek behind the curtain of manner poster production, the thesis is likely to be of interest to scholars of Japanese cities, society, and visual cultures.

There are notable parallels between the present study and prior academic commentary on Japanese manner posters. For example, my argument that posters incorporate humour and elements of ‘semiotic play’ into their appeals to passenger etiquette is in line with earlier observations (e.g. Eberhardinger, 2019; Mizuta, 2013; Padoan, 2014). Similarly, my finding that posters’ fun design is purposefully used to navigate the sensitive communicative task of conveying behavioural expectations to passenger-customers is prefigured by Mizuta’s (2013) observation that poster design aims to mitigate the face-threatening nature of manner communication. However, the thesis goes beyond the scope of earlier work on the subject as it does not, like most prior commentary (Eberhardinger, 2012, 2019; Mizuta, 2013; Padoan, 2014), focus on a specific popular poster series, but examines railway company-issued etiquette posters as a wider socio-cultural phenomenon (see Chapter 5). More significantly, the thesis provides a novel interpretation of manner posters that refrains from the attribution of regulatory will that featured in earlier accounts of the subject (e.g. by framing of manner posters as a pursuit of harmonious social order or a strategy of lateral surveillance, see for example Eberhardinger, 2012; Padoan, 2014; see also Chapter 3). By extension, the thesis also offers critical commentary on the idea of friendly authoritarianism as the default interpretative framework deployed to understand the workings of power in Japanese society. While manner posters seem to match several common characteristics of friendly authoritarianism (e.g. an inclination to focus on minute behavioural details and ‘infiltrate without pain’; Sugimoto, 2014, p. 291), Chapter 8 has demonstrated that these can be explained by other factors such as company ideals of customer service. Accordingly, the thesis demonstrated that friendly authoritarianism, as an analytical tool, needs to be wielded with caution.

9.3 Impact

I began to disseminate thesis findings in the second half of the data-gathering phase. During fieldwork, I was interviewed by *Illustration*, a print magazine that is widely read among illustrators and designers in Japan, which ran a two-page article about my research on manner posters in their June 2020 issue (Illustration, 2020). I also collaborated with one of my research participants, an illustrator involved in making manner posters, to create a four-page research manga about the experience of taking trains in Tokyo during the COVID-19 pandemic which was selected for the *Illustrating Anthropology* exhibition by the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland, and features in related teaching materials (Illustrating Anthropology, 2020; Schimkowsky and Amaebi, 2021). More recently, I was invited to give a guest lecture about Japanese manner posters at the University of Vienna as part of the *u:japan* lecture series (Schimkowsky, 2021d), and was interviewed about my research on the *Beyond Japan* podcast hosted by the Centre for Japanese Studies at the University of East Anglia and the Sainsbury Institute for

the Study of Japanese Arts and Cultures (Moxham, 2021). However, the impact of the thesis goes beyond such public outreach and knowledge dissemination activities.

Conveying codes of desirable passenger conduct in urban environments, manner posters are a sub-genre of public communication and public service advertisement. The focus this thesis places on communication initiatives is timely. While public service advertising and regulatory signage addressing mundane behaviours (e.g. alcohol or tobacco consumption) are a longstanding component of the semiotic landscape of global cities, the COVID-19 pandemic has given rise to a surge of new persuasive communication initiatives related to public health. Posters, notices, and stickers promoting preventive habits such as mask-wearing or social distancing have, as part of the pandemic response toolkit of state and private sector actors alike, become an inescapable presence in public locales around the world. Accordingly, the pandemic has called attention to the importance of public communication campaigns and persuading individuals to adhere to desirable codes of conduct for the governance of contemporary societies. The increasing ubiquity of texts appealing to everyday behaviours in public spaces makes studying their production, the logics that guide them, and the strategies through which they operate, an important task for social science research.

Persuasive communication is also an important topic for transport providers. As discussed in Chapters 1 and 3, public transport companies around the globe utilise posters and other textual devices to address matters of passenger conduct. The insights into Japanese manner poster campaigns provided by this thesis are of interest to industry stakeholders not only because of the century-long experience Japanese transport providers have in publishing manners posters (see Chapter 5), but also because of Japanese railway companies' leading position in the transport sector (Sese and Nishioka, 2019; van de Velde, 2013). Accordingly, public transport providers outside of Japan might be interested to learn how Japanese railway companies handle common problems of passenger misconduct and navigate the challenging task of telling customers how to behave, as well as in the holistic conceptualisation of customer service that motivates manner improvement initiatives. In particular, manner posters' utilisation of humour and appealing visuals could inspire overseas transport providers how to address passenger misconduct – in fact, some European transport companies such as the *Berliner Verkehrsbetriebe* have already started to adopt an humorous approach to passenger communication in recent years. Moreover, the information the thesis unearthed about the history of manner posters and their production could also be of interest to Japanese public transport providers themselves. Like other major companies in Japan, Japanese public transport providers periodically publish books about their company history (called *shashi*), and discuss their business operations in specialist publications such as industry journals. The thesis' discussion of manner poster initiatives could be incorporated into company reflections in industry discourse as a rare academic outside perspective.

Finally, this study's impact potential is amplified by the high levels of public interest in the phenomenon of manner posters. Manner poster campaigns by Japanese railway companies have repeatedly been the subject of media (and social media) attention, both in Japan and internationally (see Chapter 5). Aware of the public interest in the subject, Japanese railway companies showcase their poster initiatives on their websites (e.g. Metro Cultural Foundation, 2022; Seibu Railway, 2022; Toei Transportation, 2022), or, in the case of Eidan and Kawakita's initial series, hardcover books (Eidan, 1983, 1991b; Kawakita, 2008). However, these company and media accounts are often fragmentary. They tend to reproduce the myth of Eidan's 1974 manner poster series as single origin point of the genre, or frame posters initiatives as companies' reaction to deteriorating public morals. The comprehensive empirical account of manner

posters as a genre of public communication provided by this thesis tackles such misconceptions. Accordingly, the knowledge dissemination endeavours that came out of this thesis such as journal publications (Schimkowsky, 2021b, 2021c, under review) and public outreach activities (i.e. the lecture and media appearances mentioned above) will hopefully inform future discussions of the phenomenon. To make my findings accessible to stakeholders in Japan, I am also currently preparing an brief Japanese language summary of my research findings which I will distribute to companies which participated in the research, as well as the libraries of the Advertising Museum and Railway Museum in Tokyo which provided guidance during the fieldwork process. Considering that manner posters have been exhibited in international museums (see Chapter 5), the information the thesis provides about the genre's history and production also presents a valuable reference point for curators: not only by providing an academic account of its historical development and the considerations that shape its design and deployment, but also by highlighting the diverse organisational actors involved in their production which could facilitate institutional acquisition procedures (i.e. by clarifying copyright conditions).

9.4 Limitations

Chapter 8 addressed potential doubts regarding my interpretation of manner posters as a technology of customer service through a critical reflection on alternative readings of manner posters as a social control strategy. Adding to this, this section will identify and discuss limitations of the thesis' methodological and analytical approach.

9.4.1 Posters' effectiveness, reception, and their relation to actual mobility practices

In terms of visual analysis, the thesis focused exclusively on what Rose (2016) refers to as the sites of *image production* and *the image itself* (see Section 9.2.3). It consciously bracketed out questions of posters' 'effectiveness' as instruments of mundane governance and their reception by audiences. This decision was made in the interest of project feasibility. Media effects have been the topic of controversial academic debate for decades (Felson, 1996; Valkenburg, Peter and Walther, 2016). Accurately capturing them is a methodologically highly complex task. Measuring Japanese manner posters' actual effects on commuters would have required either counting the occurrence of manner transgressions in public transport spaces before and after the introduction of manner posters through structured observations, or through a large scale survey of public transport users' experiences of transit transgressions (similar to the telephone survey that provided the empirical basis for the incivilities research by Smith and his colleagues (2010)). The former approach would have been an arduous undertaking due to the ephemeral and ambiguous nature of etiquette transgressions, as well as the immense volume and density of railway traffic in Japanese cities. While the latter approach would have been easier to implement, it too would have been mired in methodological challenges. Like the former approach, it would have required comparing the occurrence of manner transgressions in Japanese public transport spaces with and without manner posters – in other words, identifying a control population. This would have presented a near-insurmountable task due to manner posters' ubiquity in mass transit settings.

Furthermore, it would have been difficult to account for the diverse range of other variables that could potentially affect passenger behaviour, including everything from ethics education at school to environmental factors such as the level of crowdedness. Put simply, confidently commenting on manner posters' effectiveness comes with methodological difficulties. This explains why railway companies, despite the significant resources at their disposal, and despite the practical benefits of evaluating the effectiveness of poster initiatives as a cost factor, have largely steered clear of the task. The few past

attempts to measure posters' effectiveness that I came across during my research further underlined the precarious nature of this undertaking. For example, one survey sought to evaluate the impact of a government-led manner poster initiative encouraging commuters to offer aid to passengers in need by determining how many people remembered *seeing* the campaign posters, how interested they were in it, and how they might offer to help the next time such a situation occurs (Railway Bureau, 2012). While common in commercial advertising research, such an approach does not permit us to draw conclusions about the likelihood of audience adherence to codes of transit etiquette as outlined in posters, particularly since there are various reasons why people might remember posters (e.g. being offended by it).

A more manageable line of inquiry for me as an individual researcher would have been to interview passengers about their interpretations of, and attitude towards, manner improvement campaigns. Indeed, this was part of the original research proposal I submitted for confirmation review. However, this plan was scrapped during fieldwork due to two practical constraints: the time-consuming nature of the key methods of expert interviews and archival research, as well as the COVID-19 crisis. As discussed in Chapter 4, negotiating access to actors involved in manner poster production was a laborious process due to bureaucratic hurdles, the required level of formality, and the language barrier. Archival research too took longer than expected due to the fragmentary nature of documentary evidence, and the idiosyncratic way in which it was organised (Chapter 4). This significantly limited the time available for recruiting participants for passenger interviews. The restrictions brought by the COVID-19 pandemic, which hit several months into my fieldwork, posed a further challenge. For example, while I planned to, inspired by 'walk-along' interview methods (Brown and Durrheim, 2009), conduct 'ride-along' interviews with passengers, this became impossible as the pandemic unfolded. Accordingly, the thesis only provides limited insights into audience' perceptions and interpretations of manner posters, or what Rose (2016, p. 38) refers to as the 'site of audiencing'.

The thesis also cannot comment on the relationship between the discourses and ideas of transit etiquette manner posters inscribe into public transport environments and passengers' actual mobility practices and lived experiences of these spaces. With the exception of the brief discussion of my observation that passengers often hesitate to intervene in fellow transport users' misconduct (see Chapter 7), transit ethnography served exclusively to inform the general analytic thrust of the thesis, ensuring that it did not become detached from on-the-ground conditions (see Chapter 4). Ethnographic observations and reflections related to passenger conduct have largely been relegated to a research manga (Illustrating Anthropology, 2020; see Appendix A, B) and a related visual essay (Schimkowsky, forthcoming) that emerged out of fieldwork. This facilitated an analytic focus on the logics and considerations driving manner poster design and deployment from the perspective of actors involved in poster production.

9.4.2 Manner posters' fragmented history

A second limitation of this thesis is that my exploration of the history of manner posters as a genre of communication retains a somewhat preliminary character. I deliberately argued in Chapter 5 that the phenomenon of manner posters traces back to *at least* the 1920s as I cannot rule out the existence of earlier predecessors closer to the introduction of railway technology to Japan in the 19th century. The discussion of *hyōgo*, too, is cursory in nature, leaving the possibility of ties to earlier modes of communication that I did not uncover in my research. Similarly, the thesis has not explored manner improvement initiatives' potential connections to other print media such as manga or educational booklets. Most of these shortcomings are due to a precarious and disorganised data base. As discussed in

Chapter 4, there exists no comprehensive archive or account of railway companies' manner poster campaigns that would have allowed me to systematically trace their historic development. Accordingly, I had to sift through copious amounts of (often tangential) industry documents to manually piece together the history of the genre. Due to the precarious nature of this process and the fragmentary nature of the available material, it is possible that there are aspects of manner posters' history that still wait to be uncovered.

The archival record of manner posters is scattered and incomplete because of posters' perceived status as mundane media, and the internal business practices of organisations involved in their production. A key obstacle is that the issuing organisations tend to see manner posters as generally unnoteworthy. Public transport environments in Japanese cities are overflowing with posters and notices, and manner posters are just one more entry in this oversaturated semiotic landscape. Interviews with industry actors made clear that manner posters are perceived as banal texts that – with the exception of posters that attracted especially high levels of public attention or won design awards – do not necessarily merit documentation, archival, or mention in industry publications. In addition, any potential endeavour to archive manner posters would have been complicated by practical factors such as posters' size (a turn to digital production processes has now alleviated such problems). Overall, the issue is that although manner posters can provide rich insights into changing societal values governing interaction in public transport spaces, they are usually not considered 'special' enough by the actors involved in making them to warrant the hassle of conservation. For example, a senior employee of a large transport company in Tokyo admitted that corporate moves (i.e. between different buildings or floors) have previously prompted departments to dispose of paper records that were considered inessential or lacking historical value. Even accessing relatively recent poster series can be difficult. While railway providers now frequently publish their current posters online, past series often become inaccessible after some time for banal reasons such as website overhauls or copyright considerations (railway companies usually only have permission to use the commissioned posters for a limited amount of time). Finally, the common Japanese business practice of regularly rotating employees between departments and corporate subsidiaries makes tracing institutional memory of manner poster production through oral history methods difficult.

The precarity of historical data on manner posters presents a caveat to the history of the medium I laid out in this thesis. For example, it is possible that a shift towards semiotically complex manner appeals already took place before 1974, but that evidence of this has been largely lost. Acknowledging such limitations, the present thesis presents a not a definitive account of manner posters, but a preliminary introduction to the genre that I hope future research will build on.

9.4.3 Visual analysis and positionality

Visual analysis is a highly complex method due to the many layers of meaning that images can convey. While I have, at the time of writing, spent five years in Japan, to a degree I still retain the position of a cultural 'outsider'. This means that it is possible that I failed to recognise latent meanings or implications of specific posters (e.g. obscure cultural references) or misread visual metaphors. In fact, awareness of this risk was one reason why I decided against a traditional semiotic analysis – which sets out to uncover hidden meaning – as method of visual analysis, and instead opted for a social semiotic approach that highlights how the socio-cultural conditions of poster production shape design decisions and creative conventions (see Chapter 4). That said, I do not regard my positionality as a factor that invalidates my visual analysis. Years of Japanese language study and living in Japan have familiarised me enough with

Japanese culture to enable me to recognise many common cultural references and tropes. Moreover, my expert interviews revealed that poster producers, aware of the diverse public transport ridership demographics in cities such as Tokyo, often endeavour to make manner posters universally understandable (e.g. through multilingual textual components). More fundamentally, the notion that a given culture can only be understood by a cultural native is problematic due to its essentialist presumptions. It is ignorant of the insights that can be gained through anthropological processes of cultural learning and an outsider perspective: both can enable researchers to notice things that cultural insiders might overlook because they are too accustomed to their sight. Indeed, that I narrowed in on manner posters as a research topic itself might be partially an outcome of this: several Japanese people I spoke to about my research mentioned that they had grown so used to the sight of manner posters, that they hardly noticed them anymore.

A more significant analytical hindrance than my supposed cultural outsider positionality was the artificial reception setting in which I examined manner posters. Rose (2016, p. 39) points out that images are 'looked at differently in different contexts'. The same visual text might be interpreted differently depending on the audienceing context. For example, viewer engagement with art work can vary depending on whether it is viewed on a tablet at home or while standing across from it in an art gallery. In line with this, my perception of manner posters when inspecting them on an office computer screen likely diverged from that of passengers glimpsing them during a busy morning commute, or when returning home feeling tired, stuck on a crowded train between other passengers. This analytic removal from the intended consumption context comes with a risk of overinterpretation as it invites an in-depth examination of posters that is not usually practised by their intended audiences. My research design sought to offset such risks through the use of transit ethnography: I did not only engage with posters as jpg files on my computer screen, but also in their usual consumption setting of railway stations and subway carriages. More importantly, it is questionable whether overinterpretation ever was a real risk during my social semiotic analysis of design strategies, considering that, as expert interviews have shown, the actors involved in poster production *do* pay close attention to minor design details because of manner posters' challenging consumption context (see Chapters 6 and 7).

9.4.4 Narrow geographic and spatial focus

A final limitation of the current research is its narrow geographic and spatial focus. The thesis exclusively looked at Japan. Accordingly, although transport provider-led manner improvement communication initiatives can be found in cities worldwide (see Chapter 3), it is possible that the production and deployment in different socio-cultural contexts is guided by different concerns and priorities than the ones identified in this study. Even within Japan, the thesis' geographic focus is narrowly defined, with most of the examined empirical data relating to efforts by railway companies in the Greater Tokyo area. Although I sought to offset this through an analysis of industry documents from other prefectures and a few interviews with Kansai-based companies, and although this broader empirical base does indicate that the concerns and considerations driving manner poster production in Osaka, Nagoya, and Sapporo are similar to those in the Japanese capital, overall the thesis reproduces the Tokyo-centric focus common in contemporary research on Japanese cities and society. This goes hand in hand with an exclusive focus on *urban* mobilities: the thesis does not consider potential manner improvement initiatives on rural railways.

On top of these geographical delimitations, there is need for one more spatial caveat. Examining poster campaigns by railway companies, the present study solely looked at the site of urban mass transit

environments. Yet these are not the only spaces in which we find texts appealing to citizen conduct in the dense semiotic landscapes of Japanese cities. Prior research has observed that Japanese urban space is home to a plethora of signage that problematises a diverse array of behaviours ranging from trash disposal to shoplifting which can be found in diverse urban locales such as residential areas or entertainment districts (Bayley, 1991; Coates, 2015; Schimkowsky, 2021a; Sugimoto, 2014; Wetzel, 2010). As these forms of regulatory signage lie outside of the empirical remit of the thesis, we need to be careful when seeking to extrapolate from railway company manner posters to the logics that drive the production and deployment of seemingly similar texts in the city. It is possible that regulatory intent – the role of which I have questioned in the context of manner poster production – plays a more significant role in communication initiatives by public sector actors. In fact, the anthropologist Jamie Coates (personal communication) has observed that signage and notices by municipal authorities in Japan tend to adopt a more didactic tone than manner posters, which could indicate a greater disciplinary desire or perceived regulatory licence. Accordingly, it is possible that the concerns of customer service, sensibilities, and satisfaction that featured so prominently in the design and deployment of manner poster initiatives are unique to initiatives by private companies⁴². This caveat highlights the importance of the production context of mundane governmental interventions. The admittedly narrow focus on the management of passenger behaviour by companies, however, does not diminish the analytical value of this thesis. As we saw at the outset of this chapter, there are no ‘universal subjects’ of government, but only specific kinds of people, such as passenger-customers, that are targeted by regulatory attempts (Miller and Rose, 2013, pp. 7–8; see Section 9.2.1). Accordingly, a narrow empirical focus is necessary for a nuanced analysis of the mundane machinations of power (Miller and Rose, 2013).

9.5 Avenues for future research

The above discussion of the present thesis’ limitations allows us to identify avenues for subsequent research.

9.5.1 Passenger perceptions and practices

This thesis examined poster-based transit etiquette improvement initiatives from the perspective of the transport and design companies involved in creating them. Of the above discussed limitations, the lack of consideration of passengers’ understandings of these initiatives, along with their relation to embodied mobility practices (see Section 9.4.1), are perhaps those that most urgently require further research. After all, as we saw in Chapter 6, those in charge of manner poster initiatives explicitly refer to customer opinions and feedback as impetus of poster initiatives and factor that determines their content. Accordingly, future studies should explore the varied ways public transport users make sense of posters, as well as the relationship between the code of transit etiquette promoted by manner posters, passengers’ definitions of what constitutes (in)appropriate transit etiquette, and their actual mobility practices.

Redirecting the analytical focus onto public transport users (e.g. through ethnographic methods) also promises insights into manner posters’ influence on passengers’ lived experiences of mass transit environments. As discussed in Chapter 8, it is possible that manner posters are perceived as restrictive by individuals who engage in, or want to engage in, alternative mobility practices. Atmospheres of friendly authoritarianism in Japanese cities can potentially negatively affect marginalised subjects’ urban

⁴² Note, however, that the factor of posters’ appropriateness was already a consideration significantly before Japan National Railways was privatised in the mid-1980s (see Chapter 5).

experience (Coates, 2015). For example, Coates' (2015) interlocutors, Chinese student migrants in Tokyo, often felt uncomfortable and uneasy when moving through the city due to a sense of pervasive lateral surveillance and awareness of sinophobic discourses in Japanese society, both giving rise to desires to remain 'unseen'. Delving into diverse definitions of appropriate passenger behaviour and varying perceptions of manner improvement initiatives among different groups of public transport users would allow us to understand *whose* concerns are represented in corporate manner poster campaigns, how they relate to societal value systems, and who, if anyone, is marginalised by them.

9.5.2 History-oriented studies of manner posters

As I outlined in Section 9.4.2, the account of the history of manner posters as a genre of communication this thesis provided is still unfinished. Future research should seek to supplement the present account by focusing on aspects it overlooked. For example, scholars could ask how the development of the genre of manner posters relates to that of other forms of communication and media besides *hyōgo* and public service advertising (e.g. manga). Similarly, subsequent studies could examine potential links between the evolution of manner posters' common cute and colourful visual appearance and the emergence of cute *kawai* aesthetics as a dominant mode of visual expression in Japan (see for example Allison, 2004; McVeigh, 2000; Miller, 2011b; Occhi, 2012). In addition, by linking the varying behaviours problematised by manner posters to changes in passenger practices and underlying socio-cultural and technological transformations, follow-up research may inquire into the shifting regulatory priorities guiding poster campaigns (e.g. highlighting the socio-cultural conditions that led to the disappearance of smoking etiquette from manner posters), as well as the historical development of the behavioural expectations governing mass transit themselves. Finally, future research on the history of manner posters could zoom in on post-1974 transformations of the genre, such as a trend towards elaborate, multi-panel *direct visual appeals* (see Section 5.1.2), or a recent emergence of animated versions of manner posters which has been facilitated by the proliferation of digital screens in railway stations and train carriages.

9.5.3 Analysis of manner posters as multimodal texts

Another potential avenue of inquiry for future research is to continue the analysis of manner posters as multimodal texts begun in Chapters 5 and 7 of this thesis. With the exception of the discussion of posters' textual structure in Chapter 5, this thesis has largely focused on posters' visual elements. Accordingly, the next logical step would be to conduct more in-depth linguistic analyses of manner posters along the lines of Mizuta's (2013) study of Tokyo Metro's popular *Please do it at home series*, and, as a subsequent step, explore the interrelations between posters' verbal and visual components. In addition, the sheer volume of past and present manner posters, along with the genre's semiotic complexity, means that there is ample room for further visual analyses of manner posters. For example, future research could draw on the different poster categories identified in Chapter 5 to explore whether the persuasive visual strategies posters employ to appeal to passenger etiquette vary depending on the targeted transgressions (e.g. comfort-related offenses vs. safety-related offenses). In other words, scholars could attempt to analytically tie posters' varying visual styles to divergent regulatory styles (e.g. formal and informal approaches to intervening in behaviour in public) and priorities (e.g. which transgressions are seen as most severe). Accordingly, socio-semiotic analyses of manner posters as a genre of public communication have the potential to contribute to scholarship on mundane governance by highlighting the management of conduct as a nuanced and differentiated practice. Notably, this exploration of different visual styles can also be fruitfully combined with the above mentioned continued historical inquiry (see Section 9.5.2) to study changes in regulatory approaches over time. Finally, future research could link visual analyses of

manner posters' cute and colourful appearance to recent theory-focused accounts of signage in Japanese cities, such as discussions of the 'mangaisation of Japanese everyday life' (Wilde, 2018a, 2018b, 2016), and socio-linguistic studies of the use of *kawai* in Japanese urban semiotic landscape (Hiramoto and Wee, 2019; Wee and Goh, 2019).

9.5.4 Comparative research

As a case study of railway company provider-led manner improvement initiatives in urban Japan, this thesis is an invitation to comparative research on the phenomenon of semiotic interventions in behaviour in public. For example, scholars could compare the manner posters examined in this study to similar communication efforts addressing passenger behaviour on other modes of transport (e.g. bus, airplane), or in different geographic settings (e.g. in rural Japan or other countries). In particular, it would be interesting to contrast Japanese manner poster campaigns with humorous communication initiatives by public transport providers in different socio-cultural contexts (e.g. Berlin, Sydney). Are they driven by similar concerns of customer service and comfort and thus allow us to speak to a broader shift in contemporary modes of governmentality? Or are there other factors at play? Similarly, researchers could juxtapose manner posters with multimodal texts appealing to behaviour in public in other urban locales, such as regulatory signage by municipal authorities in residential areas or entertainment districts (see Section 9.4.4). Following this line of inquiry, subsequent scholarship could compare the motivations and considerations that guide the production of media-based governmental interventions (e.g. the importance of regulatory will and/or customer service), which offenses are being targeted (e.g. semi-criminal conduct or comfort-related mundane incivilities), and how they are being addressed (e.g. differences in employed visual styles and strategies; see Section 9.5.3). Comparative studies along these lines could potentially highlight different regulatory priorities and strategies of addressing misconduct, as well as their relation to intervening stakeholders' positionality and broader socio-cultural and technological conditions. It is my hope that this thesis provides a starting point for future research in this vein, and paves the way for further accounts of the role of semiotic technologies in the management of behaviour in public. Social science research needs to do justice to the pervasive presence of such texts in contemporary cities.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Research manga 'Tokyo trains during COVID-19', English version

Tokyo trains during COVID-19

Tokyo. One of the largest urban developments on Earth.

Millions commute by train and subway daily. Public transport is essential for everyday urban and economic life.

"To live in Tokyo is to live on and by the commuter train network" – M. Fisch
Fisch, M. (2018) *An Anthropology of the Machine*, Chicago University Press.

Tokyo's train network is among the busiest in the world.

COVID-19 challenges these crowded spaces.

Please stand back as the doors are closing.

During the morning rush hour, major train lines reach congestion rates close to 200%.
In the past, this was even higher.

The virus has been a problem in Japan since February.

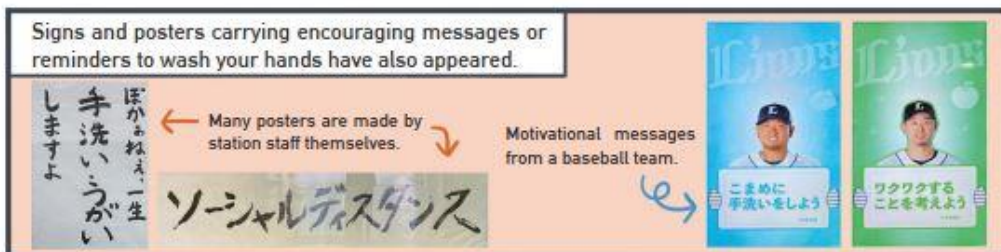
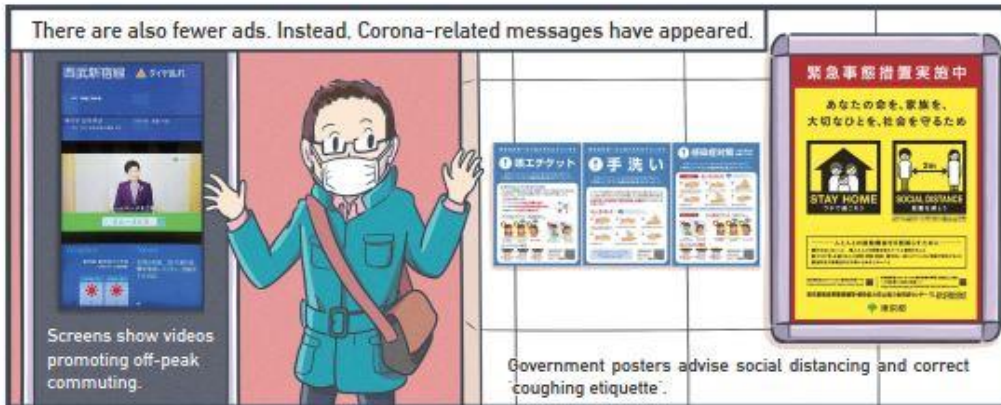
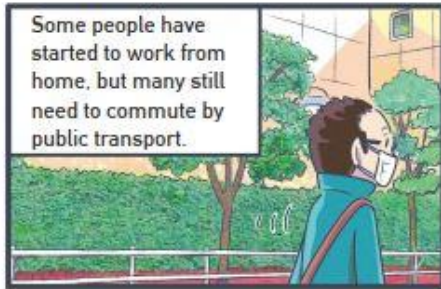
I'm taking the train for the first time in a long time today.

On April 7, Japan declared a state of emergency.

People are not ordered to stay inside, but just asked to refrain from going out for nonessential reasons.


1

This comic is primarily based on passenger experiences in April 2020-mid May 2020.



Poster asking passengers to open carriage windows.

When waiting for the train, many people try to stand further apart than usual.



But depending on how crowded it is, this is often not feasible.



Train windows are now open to improve air circulation inside the carriages.

People try to keep their distance from each other on trains.



Some passengers take the situation very seriously.



Two masks and goggles

Spare mask

No mask

gloves

Others don't.

But as the train fills up, this becomes difficult.



This is pretty empty by Tokyo standards.


Crowded trains like this were common in earlier stages of the outbreak.

Some passengers say that there are fewer problems with rude behaviour since there are less people now.



There are fewer people who bump into you on purpose when boarding.

However, commuting during COVID-19 times comes with its own annoyances and anxieties.



Signs of illness are sources of unease and judgemental looks.

Many passengers are worried about coughing or sneezing on trains.

I try my best not to. I'm worried how other people might react. Or that I could infect others if I'm sick.



Women report incidents of verbal abuse.



Commuter trains have become a cause for concern.



I avoid holding on to straps and handrails.



I get annoyed and anxious when I see people talking loudly without a mask.

My family is worried about me taking the train to work.



I try to avoid breathing too deeply.



Although there have been attempts to reduce crowding on Tokyo trains, city layout and working culture hindered change. Many hope that COVID-19 will lead to permanent improvement.

I hope this will lead to a greater adoption of remote working and flexible working times.



I'm fed up with taking super crowded trains to work every morning.

Appendix B: Research manga 'Tokyo trains during COVID-19', Japanese version

Tokyo trains during COVID-19 コロナ禍における東京の電車

東京は、世界で最も大きい都市の一つである

毎日数百万の人々が首都圏近郊から東京へ通勤しており公共交通は彼らの生活や経済活動にとって不可欠である

「東京に住んでいるということは、鉄道路線網に頼って生活をするということである」ーシカゴ大学 人類学者 Fisch氏
引用: Fisch, M (2018) An Anthropology of the Machine, Chicago University Press.

東京の鉄道路線網の利用頻度の高さと乗客数の多さは世界有数である

そんな東京の鉄道に新型コロナウイルスは大きな課題をもたらした

朝のラッシュ時 主要路線の乗車率は200%近くに達する
*昔はもっとひどかった

ドアが開まります 駆け込み乗車はお控えください

日本では新型コロナの問題が本格的に騒がれ始めたのは 2月下旬頃から

今日は久々に電車に乗ります!

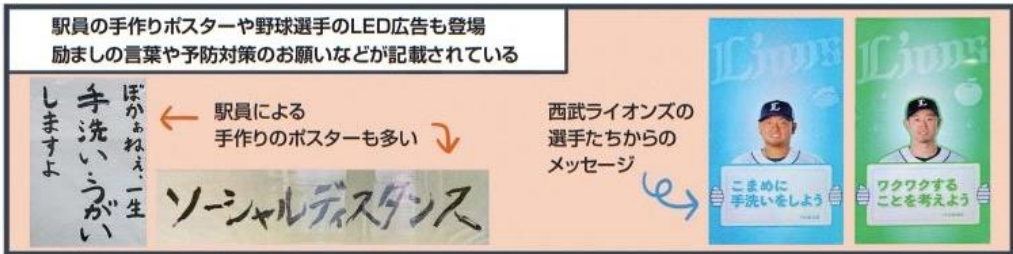
2020年4月7日には政府から緊急事態宣言が発出された

日本は諸外国と違い 外出は法律で禁止されていない 不要不急の外出の自粛が呼びかけられているだけである

★この漫画は主に2020年4月〜5月中旬の乗車体験に基づいたものです

*埼玉県、千葉県、東京都、神奈川県、大阪府、兵庫県及び福岡県の7都府県。同月16日に全都道府県へ拡大

1



2 ↑ なぜかJRは筆文字の手作りポスターが多い…



コロナ流行の初期はまだ通常通り混雑する路線も多かった



車内や駅構内で咳やくしゃみをしてしまうことを心配する人は多くいる

できるだけ咳やくしゃみをしないようにしている
周りの反応が心配だし
万が一陽性だったらうつしてしまうかも (女性・40代)

「他の乗客男性から理不尽に怒鳴られた」という女性たちの声もあった

「さっさと降りよ!!」

毎日普通に使っていた電車が一転不安の種になったことを語る人々

通勤電車に乗ることを家族が心配している (男性・50代)

車で深く呼吸をしないようにしている (女性・40代)

つり革や手すりに触らないようにしている (男性・50代)

マスクをずらして大声で喋っている人を見たときになんか嫌だなーと思ったと同時に自分が神経質になっているのかなとも感じました (女性・40代)

電車の混雑を緩和する試みはこれまでもあったが都市の構造と労働習慣がそれを妨げてきた
多くの人がコロナをきっかけに満員電車がなくなると期待している

時差通勤やテレワークの普及など働き方が多様化するきっかけにしてほしいと思っています(女性・40代)

本当はもう満員電車には乗りたくないですね (男性・40代)