POLICY SPHERES AND ELDERLY TRANSPORTATION NEEDS: A CASE STUDY OF ONTARIO, CANADA

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Research and Policy Discourses on Aging and Transportation

- **OLD:** Social Inclusion
  
  Elderly = Mobility Disability

- **NEW:** Social Inclusion + Active Aging
  
  Elderly
  
  - Disabled – Special Transport Needs
  - Able-bodied – Automobility
  - Mobility Choices
General Aging and Transportation Policy Frameworks

UN 2002/ WHO 2002

ACTIVE AGEING
Health
Participation
Security

UN 1987/ OECD 1996

SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORTATION
Environmental Quality
Economic Welfare
Individual and Societal Quality of Life

AGING AND TRANSPORTATION PERSPECTIVES
MOTIVATION

To what extent international commitments on population aging and transportation (i.e. UN / ECMT / OECD) have found translation in national and regional transport policy framework and plans of countries?
Policy Areas to Evaluate Mainstreaming of Aging and Transportation Perspectives in National/Regional Transport Policy

1. Overall Policy Framework
   - explicit consideration of demographic aging as a factor or consideration in transport policy and planning

2. Mode Preference
   - policy statements on alternative transport modes (i.e. bus, rail, walking, para-transit)

3. Public Investments
   - financial resources poured on various transport modes
Policy Areas (cont.)

4. Transportation, Housing, Land-Use Linkage
   - living environment facilitates elderly’s “everyday competence” (Schaie et al 2005)

5. Technology
   - improving the driver/passenger and the transport environment

6. Institutional and Legal Reforms
   - public/ private / public-private coordination
   - road safety policy (e.g. driver licensing)
   - accessibility laws
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The Province of Ontario, Canada

- Biggest population (39% of total pop.)
- Largest land size second to Quebec (415,000 sq. miles)
- Economic giant (40% of Canada’s GDP)
Elderly Travel
Characteristics in Ontario

- Newbold et al (2005)
  - Cohort analysis (1986-1998) showed
    - Increasing reliance on the private automobile as transport mode
    - Increasing number of trips

- Paez et al (2007)
  - Elderly make fewer trips but not homogeneous across different places
  - License ownership and transit pass positively affect trip-making

- Mercado and Paez (2007)
  - Elderly travel shorter distances
  - Gender divide – Men travel farther than women but this gap is minimized as one ages
  - License ownership and vehicle ownership increase distance traveled
  - High degree of commercial and residential density negatively affect distance traveled by car (driving)
General Aging and Transport Challenges

- Growing elderly segment of the population mostly living in urban and suburban areas; Aging in place
- Car dependent (65% of elderly are car drivers and growing)
  - implications on road safety, congestion, emissions
- Alternative modes of transport needs improvement
  - Public transit (rail and bus) – frequency/efficiency
  - Walking is not a popular mode
  - Specialized transport services very limited and fraught with problems of meeting demand and operational costs
Major Transport Policy Framework Documents

- Ministry of Transportation Ontario (2006) Results-based Plan Briefing Book
1. General Transport Policy Framework

- Disconnect between federal and provincial transport frameworks

- Federal transport plan consider population aging “as one of the forces that will shape economy and society influencing transportation needs and requirements”

- Demographic shifts in population, not identified in the Province’s Transport Plan and the Regional Growth and Development Plan (“Places to Grow”), that will guide decisions in transportation, infrastructure planning, land-use planning, urban form and housing, among others.
2. Preference for Transport Modes

- Neutral stance: “multi-modalism”

- But with strong emphasis on public transit investment and accessibility
3. Transport Infrastructure Stock and Investments

- In Ontario, historical spending for roads and bridges far exceeds that for transit system.
- Shows rebound in recent years with heightened focus on public transit but not even reach pre-devolution levels.
3. Transport Stock and Investments...

- **Urban Transit System**
  - 53 out of 55 systems analyzed
  - Service Coverage: 50% have full coverage
    4 systems below 50% coverage
  - Accessibility: Of the 6,311 transit vehicles
    - < 50% accessible
    - 9 transit systems have zero accessibility
  - Transit systems in big urban areas have low accessibility scores
    (Toronto-39%; Mississauga-45.5%; Ottawa-50.3%; Hamilton-59.7%; York-61.3; Waterloo-69.6)
  - AODA 2005 – goal is to be fully accessible by 2025
3. Transport Stock and Investments...

- Specialized Transport System
  - 80 paratransit services analyzed
- Registrants
  - Average: 2% of service population
  - Minimum = 0.16%
  - Maximum = 21%
- Registrants – Vehicle Ratio
  - Average = 188
  - Minimum = 19
  - Maximum = 813
- Need to look into service insufficiency
3. Transport Stock and Investments...

- Provincial Allocation
- Transit
  - Provincial assistance wavered starting in 1992 and cut off in 1998
  - 2002 showed resurgence but 75-80% funds went to GO Transit (inter-city/municipality transit) and TTC (subway system)
  - A great deal of catching up is needed
3. Transport Stock and Investments...

- Provincial Allocation...

- Specialized Transport Allocation

  - Meager funding support (0.2% of total transit investment) which were only provided to 8-12 specialized transit systems

  - ? Criteria?

  - Need to study the demand for services and financing demand

  - ? Subsidy? Full pricing for users?
Canada – transport as knowledge-based sector

Provincial funding for multi-modal/public transit centred improvements

$930,000 R&D on ITS to be completed in 2008 – partly for public transit improvement

Unclear how technology research will cater to older people’s needs and adaptation
5. Transport, Housing and Land-Use Linkages

- Places to Grow Act 2005 – curb sprawl, strengthen communities and protect the natural environment

- GRIDS (Growth Related Integrated Development Strategy 2006) Hamilton, ON
  - Encourage modal shift to more sustainable form of transport (walking, cycling and transit) through land use strategies
6. Institutional and Legal Reforms

- Gas tax allocation by Govt. of Ontario to municipalities for public transit improvement; review underway regarding fiscal-delivery mismatch
- Driver licensing and renewal – stricter licensing at age 80+. Issues on age as marker for licensing renewal
- AODA – targets for accessibility of transport infrastructures and facilities; inclusion of private sector in preparing accessibility plans and standards
Concluding Remarks

- Role of State in transport policy is becoming more crucial in view of environmental and social concerns.

- New Concerns of Population Aging: Active Aging and Sustainable Transportation.

- Need for regional governments to recognize population aging as an immediate and long-term issue in evaluating readiness of transport systems to address its significant implications and challenges.
Thank You.

Questions....