Transport and Social Exclusion: from a UK Inner-city Neighbourhood to Europe and beyond?

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Mobility and Inequalities

• “I don’t like it in the morning because, […] I do feel like I’m dragging [my daughter] around on the buses and, pushing her everywhere in the pram just to get her to school or wherever on time. So I do feel rushed about like we’ve got to get a certain bus at a certain time because it’ll be packed if I miss that bus and I won’t be able to get on with the pram and things like that cos’ […] in the morning and the evening it’s all like a race against time”. (Sandy, low income single mother, late 20s, p. 208)
A Case Study from the UK: *Oldsville*

1. Road dominated urban environments

“Yeah, don’t, don’t like going up there, cos’ it’s just ‘[h]orrible with loads of traffic and that […]”. (George, early 20s, student, p. 11)
A Case Study from the UK

2. The city given over to the car

‘Swiftly or slowly, greater accessibility by car is inexorably accompanied both by less convenience and efficiency of public transport, and by [a] thinning-down and smearing-out of uses, and hence by more need for cars.’ (Jacobs, 1961: 365)
3. Service Deserts

“Oh! Don’t talk to me about post offices! Ah! [...] Ooh, absolutely, when they closed the one on, [...] On Old Meadow Road. Cos’ that was my nearest, I could do it on the way to get the kids or whatever, [...] Oh, it made me so angry [...]”. (Charlotte, retired teacher, p. 280)
4. Road-traffic accidents

“No that was the recent one, this was years ago, [...] There’s like a little grave thing there with all the balloons, you not seen it? [...] That’s mi, well sort of mi cousin, that’s mi uncle’s nephew, that died, [...] on mi birthday, [...] this is a good few years ago [...] Big Dave he was called! [...] He was a lovely lad though as well, [...] and then he died”. (Amelia, 25, single mother in part time employment, p. 176)
A Case Study from the UK

- Poor public transport a core concern
- “[…] As I’ve said, the only time I’ve, well when I do use public transport that’s the time I have problems, because buses just don’t turn up, or they don’t turn up at the right time, you know, you have to say, I have a timetable and you get to the bus stop and nothing happens”. (Janis, car-owning professional, p. 37)
Transport Deregulation

- **The Transport Act 1985**
  - Fares rising initially by 20-25% and ‘in the years after they continued to increase at a higher rate’ than they did before 1985’ (van Goeverden et al, 2006).
  - **Timetable co-ordination** between bus companies **stopped** and **bus integration** with rail was **converted into competition**.
  - **Supposed competition** between private operators **actually consists** of **local monopolies** (Knowles and Ametepe, 2007).

- “You’d have thought that would have made it a bit better wouldn’t you, when they privatised it?” (Margaret, low-income pensioner, p. 76)
The Great Decline of Intra-urban Public Transport

• The impact on public transport demand is negative: ‘In the metropolitan areas the reduction in bus patronage was 16% three years after deregulation, 25% five years after, 38% ten years after and 45% 16 years after’ (van Goeverden et al, 2006).

Route availability in Oldsville 1953-2009
The British Transport Malaise

• Cost of car travel falling relative to Public Transport
• New Labour’s abandonment of the fuel duty escalator (Glaister et al, 2006)
• Failure to win support for congestion charging outside of London
A European Comparison

- 36,000 communes in France without the provision of shops (Orfeuil, 2003).
- In Germany the children of those from lower social classes (and especially Turkish children) are disproportionately likely to be involved in road accidents as those from other groups (Lucas, 2004).
A Way Forward?

• Thinking ‘After the Car’ (Dennis and Urry, 2009)
• Transport as a distributive sphere
  (Martens, 2008; and Waltzer, 1983)
And A Radical Alternative…

- Free Public Transport experiments:
  - Hasselt, Belgium (est 1996)
    From 331,551 passenger journeys p.a. to 3.2 million
  - Sheffield’s low fares in the 1980s
    Led to decreasing levels of car ownership
  - Greater Manchester’s Metroshuttle
    Free city centre services which cut congestion
Free Public Transport (Advocacy groups)

- Brazil
- Canada
  - Supprimons les tarifs de transport à Montréal [http://sttm.ca/](http://sttm.ca/)
- France
  - Car Free France [http://carfree.free.fr](http://carfree.free.fr)
- Germany
  - Klimaplenum Bremen [http://klimaplenum-bremen.blogspot.com](http://klimaplenum-bremen.blogspot.com/
- Philippines
  - Clean Air and Transport [http://cai-asia.blogspot.com](http://cai-asia.blogspot.com/)
- Spain
  - Saltada Popular [http://saltadapopular.blogspot.com](http://saltadapopular.blogspot.com)
- Sweden
  - Planka.nu [www.planka.nu/eng](http://www.planka.nu/eng)
- United Kingdom
  - Campaign for Free Public Transport [www.freepublictransport.org.uk](http://www.freepublictransport.org.uk)
- United States
References: