A people-centred approach to accessibility

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Transport planning as an institution
Institutions as rules of behavior
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“Formal and informal … constraints that structure political, economic and social interactions” (North 1991)
Institutions as rules of behavior

“Formal and informal … constraints that structure political, economic and social interactions” (North 1991)

“The prescriptions that humans use to organize all forms of repetitive and structured interactions including those within … governments at all scales” (Ostrom 2009)
Transport planning as an institution

The set of rules prescribing how decisions regarding interventions in the transport system are to be prepared.
Rules of transport planning

- Definition of transport problems
- Range of solutions
- Proper approach to assessment
- Role and type of models
- Scope of impacts

...
Traditional transport planning
Rules of traditional transport planning
Predict future demand for travel using travel demand model
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Identify links with lack of capacity
Predict future demand for travel using travel demand model

Identify links with lack of capacity

Define ‘longlist‘ of infrastructure projects to avoid lack of capacity
Predict future demand for travel using travel demand model

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Define ‘longlist‘ of infrastructure projects to avoid lack of capacity

Assess costs and benefits of proposed projects using CBA
Predict future demand for travel using travel demand model

Identify links with lack of capacity

Define ‘longlist’ of infrastructure projects to avoid lack of capacity

Assess costs and benefits of proposed projects using CBA

Create a ‘shortlist’ of projects that have past CBA test
Predict future demand for travel using travel demand model

Identify links with lack of capacity

Define ‘longlist’ of infrastructure projects to avoid lack of capacity

Assess costs and benefits of proposed projects using CBA

Create a ‘shortlist’ of projects that have past CBA test

Implement projects from ‘shortlist’
Predict future demand for travel using travel demand model

Identify links with lack of capacity

Define ‘longlist’ of infrastructure projects to avoid lack of capacity

Assess costs and benefits of proposed projects using CBA

Create a ‘shortlist’ of projects that have past CBA test

Implement projects from ‘shortlist’
The accessibility shift
Motivations for the shift

• Impact-driven critique

• Theoretical critique

→ Two possible shifts
The radical shift

- Broadening of goals of transport planning
- Broadening of the toolbox
Critique of the radical shift

- Transport planning becomes (urban) planning
- Role of transport planner?
- Accessibility unsuitable as performance indicator
The limited shift

• Replacement of mobility indicators by accessibility metrics

• Use of “accessibility gains”

• Different KPI, different planning outcomes
Problems of using accessibility gains

• Group size effect
• Geometry effect
• Valuation effect

→ Traditional solutions likely outperform sustainable solutions
People-centered approach
All but forgotten …
Transport Justice

Designing Fair Transportation Systems

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Thought experiment
Every person is entitled to a sufficient level of accessibility (under virtually all circumstances)
A fair transport system provides sufficient accessibility to all (under virtually all circumstances)
A transport problem occurs whenever the transport system fails to provide sufficient accessibility to all.
Transport planning:
The field of government intervention that seeks to guarantee sufficient accessibility for all through interventions in the transport system.
To conclude ...
Moving towards accessibility

• Replacement of KPI is not enough

• Redefinition of transport problem is necessary

• Transport planning should focus on people, not on transport system
Questions?

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