

AN ANALYSIS OF TRIP BEHAVIOUR PATTERNS OF WOMEN IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES: A CASE STUDY OF PUEBLA, MEXICO

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ABSTRACT

Women by virtue of their distinct and clearly defined roles in Latin American society have different transportation needs than men. Women are responsible for caring for the household, earning income and acting in the community to improve basic urban services. Understanding how these roles play a significant part in women's use and access to transportation resources is critical, especially in the developing world context which is characterized by rapid population growth, expanding urban areas, significant income disparities, high rates of inflation, poor infrastructure conditions and decreased government spending on urban services. These events have a significant effect on low-income communities and in particular low-income women who must negotiate time, costs and access to transportation while meeting their daily duties.

The purpose of this project is to interpret and assess the particular trip patterns of women in developing countries utilizing both literary sources and primary data, and to determine appropriate transportation policy responses to their defined needs. The first part of this study provides a general discussion of transportation and gender planning issues in developing countries, and of women's experiences with transportation in Mexico and Latin America. Puebla, Mexico serves as the case study area in the second part of the study. This case study utilizes information from a door-to-door transportation survey conducted in 1993-1994 by the Inter-University Group of Montréal, in association with the State Government of Puebla, the Autonomous University of Puebla, and the World Bank.

The first stage of this case study focuses on the key areas in which women's use of transportation differs from men's. Findings from the first stage support the existing literature and previous studies regarding women's experiences with transportation in Mexico and Latin America and indicate that age, work status, driver licence status and location are significant factors in women's trip patterns. It was found that when women in Puebla make trips, they make trips more often; for more reasons, and; depend on public transportation more than men. Contrary to the literature, women in Puebla spend less time travelling per day than men.

The second stage assesses how daily activities and associated trips patterns vary between women from three sample areas differentiated by location and socio-economic factors. The findings indicate that low-income women rarely demonstrate similarities with suburban women in their trip behaviour patterns. This stage raises key issues that have significant implications for future trip behaviour survey procedures and transportation planning in Puebla, Mexico. Emphasis needs to be placed on women's accessibility to transportation and the incorporation of women voices into planning processes, as well as a commitment to gaining more information on women's experience with transportation. In particular, transportation behaviour surveys need to incorporate questions recognizing gender roles and reflecting the reality of the employment market in developing countries.