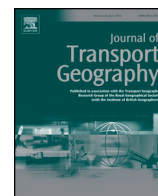




Contents lists available at ScienceDirect

## Journal of Transport Geography

journal homepage: [www.elsevier.com/locate/jtrangeo](http://www.elsevier.com/locate/jtrangeo)

# Mobilities of the periphery: Informality, access and social exclusion in the urban fringe in Colombia

Daniel Oviedo Hernandez<sup>a,b,\*</sup>, Helena Titheridge<sup>c,d,e,f</sup><sup>a</sup> Development Planning Unit, University College London, UK<sup>b</sup> Universidad de los Andes, Bogotá, Colombia<sup>c</sup> Department of Civil, Environmental and Geomatic Engineering, University College London, UK<sup>d</sup> Energy Systems and the Environment, Open University, UK<sup>e</sup> Energy Conservation and Management, Middlesex University, UK<sup>f</sup> University of Leeds, UK

## ARTICLE INFO

## Article history:

Received 29 January 2015

Received in revised form 10 December 2015

Accepted 10 December 2015

Available online xxxx

## Keywords:

Transport

Social exclusion

Urban periphery

Developing countries

Colombia

## ABSTRACT

The relationship between transport, poverty and social exclusion has increasingly held an important place in both research and policy agendas, particularly in industrialised countries. While this has helped consolidate an emerging body of theory concerned with the social consequences of mobility, our understanding of these dynamics in the context of high vulnerability and poverty in the Global South is still relatively undeveloped. Through the case of Soacha, a municipality adjacent to Colombia's capital, Bogotá, this paper explores travel strategies in a context of scarce provision of transport which, when combined with acute conditions of low-income and segregation, limit vulnerable populations' access to the city. The travel practices, perceptions and priorities of low-income populations in deprived areas of the Global South are analysed, using a framework of transport-related social exclusion, to critically examine the elements that play a role in gaining access to the city. The emergence of adaptable methods, relations and transactions between demand and supply that allows deprived populations to reduce their risk of becoming socially excluded show potential for conceptual and practical development in addressing and analysing transport-related social exclusion.

© 2015 Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

## 1. Introduction

Awareness of the social implications of mobility has fostered a growing number of works exploring links between transport, poverty, wellbeing and sustainability in the research agendas of human geography, transport studies and urban sociology (Hine, 2009, Jones and Lucas, 2012). This paper is aligned with international research exploring links between transport and social exclusion in low-income neighbourhoods and areas, where high deprivation and vulnerability have resulted in the disconnection of certain social groups from the opportunities of modern society (Hine, 2009). In this research, we explore the travel strategies of low-income populations in informal settlements in Soacha, a municipality at the periphery of Colombia's capital city – Bogotá. In the context of this research, travel strategies are understood as the combination of physical, economic and social resources for accessing different opportunities for raising income, education, social interactions and leisure. Soacha, as with other cases analysed from the social exclusion perspective, presents acute conditions of low-income and segregation that limit vulnerable populations' access to the city.

Specifically, we examine how different mechanisms to secure various types of mobility emerge in contexts of severe transport disadvantage, where poor infrastructure and service provision accentuates social and economic dislocation. Emphasis is placed on the role of community-led informal transport initiatives—exploring their role as means to overcome social exclusion and reflecting on the conceptual and practical implications for transport provision in segregated communities.

## 2. Peripheries, transport-related social exclusion and informality

Large cities in Latin America have experienced accelerated urban growth, particularly during the 1960s and 1970s, with tendencies to employment concentration and spatial segregation of low-income and unskilled in-migrants (Cohen, 2004). The uncontrolled and unplanned growth of, in many cases, ad-hoc metropolitan areas, led to serious problems of social exclusion, degradation and lack of basic infrastructure in emerging settlements of low-cost housing (Gilbert, 1997). Such dynamics restricted accessibility from peripheral, and often informal, settlements affecting disproportionately under-privileged groups.

Lack of adequate connectivity imposes high financial loads on poor households, especially in areas where integrated transport systems are not available, increasing transfer costs to reach the core city (Cervero, 1998, 2000). These conditions challenge institutionally weak

\* Corresponding author at: The Bartlett Development Planning Unit, 34 Tavistock Square, London WC1H 9EZ, UK.

E-mail address: [d.oviedo.11@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:d.oviedo.11@ucl.ac.uk) (D. Oviedo Hernandez).

governments with limited fiscal resources to provide formal transport services that meet the requirements of poor neighbourhoods (Oviedo Hernandez and Davila, 2013). In most cases the demand in these areas is not fully covered by the formal system, opening gaps for the operation of small-scale informal operators and leading to a complex interplay of formal and informal transport alternatives in the definition of travel choices (Cervero and Golub, 2007). However, informal mechanisms have limited effect in giving poor families access to opportunities within large cities and generally entail higher externalities than the formal supply (Avellaneda, 2008; Cebollada and Avellaneda, 2008; Cervero, 2013).

A relevant perspective identified in the literature in relation to the interactions between land use patterns, the transport system and individual characteristics and circumstances is transport disadvantage (Currie and Delbosc, 2010). Transport disadvantage is a multi-dimensional construct which mainly focuses on the effects of lack of transport and other external factors on individuals (Murray and Davis, 2001; Hurni, 2007). From this perspective, factors such as choice of residential location, spatial distribution of opportunities and inadequate transport can lead to certain individuals becoming transport disadvantaged, which ultimately can be related to social inequalities and exclusion (Murray and Davis, 2001; Currie and Delbosc, 2010). As argued by Lucas (2012), the combination of poor transport provision and social disadvantage can lead to 'transport poverty', which in turn exacerbates the problems of (in)accessibility to opportunities, services and interactions that increase the risk of becoming socially excluded. While mechanisms of transport exclusion can be secondary to non-transport mechanisms, the former can exacerbate the latter (Hine and Mitchell, 2003).

Access presents itself as the overarching concept governing the interactions between transport and social exclusion. Access becomes an instrument to operationalise travel strategies aimed at reaching essential opportunities. It also helps understanding of the influence of intrinsic and external conditions on different social groups (Urry, 2007). People in poverty often face difficult conditions beyond the economic realm, such as adverse topography, violence, crime and other elements, that hinder movement and accessibility (Brand and Dávila, 2011). In Colombia, the three largest cities concentrate many of their poorest citizens in hilly areas with poor access, mostly disconnected from urban infrastructure and marked by complex social dynamics of violence, crime and segregation (Dávila, 2013). By and large, the majority of location patterns of the urban poor in the Global South lead to a limited capacity for travel and to an increase of social, spatial and economic inequalities (Ferrarazzo and Arauz, 2000; Kaltheier, 2002; Vasconcellos, 2001; Salon and Gulyani, 2010; Bocarejo and Oviedo, 2012).

Lack of sufficient access can shorten the path that leads to social exclusion (Burchardt et al., 1999; Church et al., 2000; Lucas et al., 2001; Social Exclusion Unit, 2003; Grieco, 2006; Currie et al., 2007). Lucas (2011) argues that social exclusion relates to the social consequences of lack of adequate access to transport and thus opportunities; this allows us to differentiate between constraints related to the individual and those related to the supply.

A number of articles have attempted to develop frameworks or categorise the different ways in which transport relates to social exclusion (see for example, Currie and Delbosc, 2010; Wixey et al., 2005; Lucas, 2004; Hine and Mitchell, 2003; and Church et al., 2000). Church et al. (2000) is one of the most widely cited of these. Church et al. (2000) identify seven dimensions in which social exclusion relates to transport. These were selected as the key definitions for the development of the analysis described in Section 3. These dimensions are Physical, Geographical, Economic, Time-based, Fear-based, and Spatial exclusion, and Exclusion from facilities. The first dimension, physical exclusion, refers to conditions where physical barriers inhibit accessibility of services; geographical exclusion relates to poor transport provision and inconvenient locations in relation to centres of opportunities like the urban fringe; economic exclusion takes place when high monetary or temporal costs of travel limit access to facilities or jobs; time-based

exclusion is related to demands on time that restrict time availability for travel; fear-based exclusion takes place when worry and fear limit the use of public spaces and transport, particularly by vulnerable groups; space exclusion speaks of security and space management strategies that can deprive people from using transport and public spaces; and exclusion from facilities, refers to distance from facilities in relation to people's homes (Church et al., 2000).

These categories are useful for framing conditions that lead to limited access to opportunities and thus shorten the path to social exclusion of vulnerable populations. While some categories can overlap, particularly under severe circumstances of deprivation, they provide initial criteria to deconstruct how travel strategies respond to conditions of transport and social disadvantage in cases like Soacha. In addition, they allow us to examine the role of non-conventional strategies in gaining access and reducing the risk of becoming socially excluded. In this context, informal transport, with analogous networks serving different types of demand to formal systems, can be considered as an active part of the relationship between lack of assets and poor transport provision. In this regard, informal transport may be a potential mechanism for overcoming some of the barriers to accessing opportunities faced by low-income populations.

### 3. Overview of the case study

Soacha is a municipality on the periphery of Bogotá, Colombia. As Bogotá has grown, Soacha has shifted rapidly from industrial centre to a primarily residential area with comparatively lower prices for land and housing than Bogotá. Internal migration to large cities in the past three decades, exacerbated by conflict and violence in rural Colombia and saturation of land for low-cost housing in the outskirts of Bogotá, have made Soacha an attractive destination for informal housing and land invasion due to its strategic location. By 2011, Soacha housed 466,938 inhabitants of which nearly 70,000 live in informal settlements and 82% had in-migrated from rural areas (United Nations Development Programme –UNDP–, 2013). The speed of urbanisation, much of it disorganised and uncontrolled, together with the low political development of the municipality, have constrained provision of public services and urban facilities (CCB, 2005; Government of Soacha., 2011; United Nations Development Programme –UNDP–, 2013).

Historically, the development of the city of Bogotá has involved conurbation processes, with surrounding smaller towns eventually coming to be, administratively, politically and otherwise, part of the city. However, this trend of constant expansion and 'catching up' with the demographic, social and economic dynamics has led to urban expansion beyond the administrative limits of the city, a weak regional vision and a decentralised structure of governance.

On the northern hills of Soacha rise a set of informal neighbourhoods known locally as *Altos de Cazucá*, the main case study for this research. These neighbourhoods are separated from Bogotá by a virtual boundary comprising the political and administrative division between the city and the municipality of Soacha. The peripheral condition of Altos de Cazucá in relation to Bogotá and Soacha has led to situations of vulnerability in Altos de Cazucá, such as lack of access to safe drinking water, health services, high risk of landslides and uncertainty in housing tenancy. Fig. 1 shows the location of Soacha, and the area of Altos de Cazucá, in relation to the city-region.

In Soacha, most recent migrants are not employed by the local economy, giving rise to subsistence and informal markets (CCB, 2005). Unemployment rate in the municipality was 45% in 2005, with a limited portion of the economically active population employed in industrial activities (23%), and about 32% occupied in informal employment (DANE population census, 2005). Although data on unemployment in the municipality was obtained from the most recent national census, it is likely to underestimate sub-employment and informal work. More recent exploratory and qualitative data obtained by the local government does not suggest a positive evolution of employment

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/7485294>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/7485294>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)