MOBILITY POVERTY: DIFFERENT LEVELS OF RESTRICTED ACCESS TO PUBLIC TRANSPORT SERVICES IN EUROPEAN CONTEXT

András Ekés
ekes@mri.hu
+36-30-869-16-74
Mobility poverty

• Recent notion bringing together different factors concerning levels of accessibility to the public transport systems and services
• Hidden and barely known or underestimated phenomenon of urban (and regional) mobility
Mobility poverty

• Complex issue related to various mobility elements like pricing, accessibility or coverage
• Generated by a mixture of social, economic, network and service or operation factors
Appearance and forms of mobility poverty

• Primary and secondary forms
  ▪ Primary ones are direct phenomena or impacts having strong connection with the presence or lack of mobility services, infrastructures.
  ▪ Secondary ones are additional elements resulting from the impacts of the primary forms of mobility poverty.
The more service quality is poor (rare, incalculable, slow, overcrowded) the less travel conditions are satisfying.

When alternatives are missing "passengers become hostages" without any other choice.
• The farther away a given mobility area is from cities and the more we consider the off-peak hours or weekend time, services become generally less regulated or poor, connections are ad hoc or partial.

• Outer districts of cities, small towns, and rural areas often meet with the problem of time coverage gap causing unequal access to services.

• Rare or uncalculable services push those people from public modes who find alternatives.
European cities and rural areas often have the problem of the lack of network presence. Besides time coverage, territorial coverage can also generate symptoms of the mobility poverty.

Dense urban areas can also have poor network presence based on local network evolution reasons.
Primary forms - simultaneous time and territorial coverage gap

- There are regions where low time coverage meets weak network presence. The services provided guarantees some basic possibilities to reach the nearest city, but off-peak and weekend periods show long journeys in rural areas where one line serves one village after the other causes big detours and the journey time lengthening.
- This mixture creates difficult conditions and in case of lack of alternatives mobility poverty and dependence on the service are extremely strong.
Primary forms - Affordability (financial accessibility) gap

- If fare communities and transport associations are more developed, more affordability conditions may be met.
- Higher distances in rural areas mean more expensive mobility costs, and increasing prices mean the decreasing chance of affordability (financial accessibility) in case of daily commuting.
- The longer the daily distances are the less alternative transport means can appear, as cycling or walking.
- Affordability’s impacts are important when comparing the relation of incomes and transport costs of individuals or families.
Primary forms - Accessibility gap

- This factor is the most apparent from of mobility poverty.
- Direct exclusion from mobility or more difficult access to public transport can appear when complex accessibility conditions aren’t fulfilled due to non-barrier-free vehicles, platforms, sidewalks or other surfaces of transport systems and connections or other lack of capabilities of potential users.
Primary forms - Lack of information
(from operator to user)

- Information and info-communication are very important channels of the mobility process.
- When information is not provided, not accessible, not passenger friendly, overcomplicated, false or else physically missing, can provoke ad hoc or permanent inconvenience, exclusion.
Primary forms - Lack of capabilities
(from user to operator)

• Potential clients of urban and regional mobility can be excluded or their journey can be more complicated due to the lack of capabilities to get information on services
  ▪ Blind people
  ▪ Illiterates (people unable to read or write)
Secondary appearance

- Coverage in time, network presence and pricing of the mobility can affect directly and indirectly the working conditions.
- Secondary appearance of mobility poverty symptoms has a broader spectrum: due to the primary factors people may have to encounter problems in finding
  - a job
  - appropriate housing
- Growing household and mobility expenses may cause the exclusion from the labour market or may cause strong inequalities
- The stronger these primary factors are, or the more cumulated they are, the more secondary impacts are important.
Conclusions, recommendations

• Despite the fact that experts in the academic and planning sector are working on the improvement of the public transport’s inclusion factors, existing systems can be socially, financially or geographically exclusive.

• The two-level mobility poverty process and its disadvantages must be on the check-list when planning, operating and financing urban and regional transport systems.

• Mobility systems must not be separated from other area-based structures (e.g. housing, job market, and social-economic indicators) in order to improve the inclusion factors of urban mobility and decrease the probability of mobility poverty.
Thank you for your attention

András Ekés
managing director

Phone: + 36 (30) 869 1674
e-mail: ekes@mri.hu