Transport *is* social policy

Susan Kenyon
Overview

• Understanding social policy
  – Traditional social policy
  – ‘New’ social policy
  – Transport and social policy

• Case study: transport and widening participation to higher education
  – The social policy context
  – Primary research

• Conclusions: transport is social policy
Defining social policy

• ‘Social policies are government policies that respond to social need and which aim to improve human welfare. Social policies are deliberate government policy interventions to influence access to economic and other goods and resources, to meet welfare objectives.’
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Traditional social policy

• Definition of social need and human welfare?
  – Absolute poverty

• Beveridge 1942:
  – Disease → Health
  – Idleness → Employment
  – Ignorance → Education
  – Squalor → Housing
  – Want → Poverty

• UNDP HDI: health, education, income
‘New’ social policy

• Definition of social need and human welfare?
  – Changing understanding of inequality necessitates new responses and new social policies
  – Relative poverty

• Cahill 1994
  – Changing understanding of society and citizenship necessitates new responses and new social policies
    • Communicating
    • Viewing
    • Travelling
    • Shopping
    • Working
    • Playing
Transport as social policy

• A policy which responds to social need and which aims to improve human welfare?

Yes!

– The social need for transport to fulfil access to opportunities, goods, services, social networks
– Improving human welfare: the transport and social exclusion agenda
Transport as social policy

• Relationships between social policy and transport:
  
  1. Transport creates a need for social policies
     • Transport has social impacts
     • The ‘Too much mobility’ discourse
  
  2. Social policies create a need for transport
     • Transport influences success of social policies
     • The ‘Too little mobility’ discourse
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Transport creating need for SP

- Healthcare
  - Pollution, RTIs, physical activity and obesity
- Employment
  - Land use patterns pushing employment opportunities away
- Education
  - Childhood and loss of play, risk, fear
- Poverty
  - Deprivation by expenditure
- Environment
  - Climate change, land take, resource depletion, pollution...
Transport as social policy

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SP creating a need for transport

- Healthcare
  - Primary, secondary and tertiary services for patients; visitors
- Employment
  - Job; interview; training; rehabilitation initiatives
- Education
  - Primary, secondary, FE and HE
- Housing
  - Geographical isolation
- Poverty
  - Access to income support: benefits offices, assessment centres
New SP creating a need for transport

• Communicating
  – Effects of communications policies on transport? Eg expansion of broadband – ICTs and travel...
• Viewing
  – Influence of what we see on what we do? Eg TV as part of the mobilities culture
• Travelling
  – Too much mobility discourse, outlined above
• Shopping
  – Shopping policies eg planning decisions moving shops to out of town locations; shopping travel (or exclusion from)
• Playing
  – Leisure policy eg closure of kids clubs, playing fields; leisure travel (or exclusion from); obesity...
EDUCATION POLICY

CASE STUDY: TRANSPORT AND WIDENING PARTICIPATION TO HIGHER EDUCATION
Section overview

- Education as a social policy
- Social policy and Higher Education: widening participation
- Linking the transport and widening participation discourses
- Primary research: transport and widening participation at the University of Kent
Education as a social policy

• Education central to efforts to reduce social exclusion and poverty
  – One of Beveridge’s ‘five giants’

• Individual and societal benefits of education:
  – Individual benefits
    • Employability; income and related benefits; physical and mental health; social mobility; achievement of potential
  – Societal benefits
    • Social cohesion; economic growth (national competitiveness); children’s aspiration and achievement; health; participation in social networks; civic/political participation; social tolerance; anti-social behaviour...
Social policy and HE: the widening participation agenda

• WP: a short and simple definition:
  – Increasing numbers of ‘non-traditional’ students in HE and ensuring their success

• How?
  1. **Aspiration**: raising awareness from pre-school upwards; ‘normalising’ university through outreach
  2. **Access**: applications and admissions process; retention
  3. **Achievement**: learning styles; support for learning; employability
  4. **Employability**: transferable skills; careers events
Transport: potential effects on social policy aims in HE

- Transport could affect access to higher education
- Transport could affect achievement in higher education
- It could therefore affect employability post-HE
- Could transport therefore act to prevent WP?
**Linking WP and transport (1): who is affected?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Non-traditional students</th>
<th>Mobility-related exclusion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Lower socio-economic groups</td>
<td>• Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Non-traditional qualifications</td>
<td>• Unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Minority ethnic groups</td>
<td>• Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Disabled</td>
<td>• Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• No history of parental/familial attendance</td>
<td>• Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Low participation neighbourhoods</td>
<td>• Unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Low HE provision in locality</td>
<td>• Geographical concentration of mobility-related exclusion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Potential part-timers: those in work or with caring responsibilities</td>
<td>• Low provision of mobility and services in locality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Those travelling off peak or with dependants</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Linking WP and transport (2): evidence from other educational sectors

• School level:
  – Link between geography and attainment
  – Link between commute time and achievement
  – Reduced extra-curricular participation

• Further education:
  – Travel costs leading to attrition and denied opportunities
  – Travel vital component of widening participation

• What about HE?
TRANSPORT AND WIDENING PARTICIPATION – THE STUDY
Methodology and sample: key facts

- 4 x focus groups
- Current Kent undergraduate students
- 2 x Canterbury, 2 x Medway

- Campus-wide email to all undergraduates
  - Canterbury n=11,317, r=424 (4%)
  - Medway n=c. 2,000, r=39 (2%)
- Short screening questionnaire
- £20 incentive payment

- On campus location, private, accessible
- Recorded, transcribed, content-focused analysis
Sample (cont.)

- Theoretical, maximum variation sample
- Characteristics identified as important in the WP and mobility-related exclusion literatures
  - Gender
  - Residence
  - Mode
  - Part time / full time
  - Year of study
  - Age
  - Dependent children
  - Disability
  - Ethnicity
Headline results

• *Direct influence of inadequate mobility on access to and achievement in HE*

Therefore:

• *Direct influence of transport upon the success of social policy*
Effects of MREE – academic effects

• Exclusion from...
  – Formal teaching delivery
  – Informal teaching delivery
  – Peer learning and support
  – Placements / case visits
  – Extra-curricular academic activities
  – On-site individual learning activities
  – Printing and submitting assignments
  – Future careers activities

• ... because of inadequate transport
Effects of MREE – academic effects

‘Fridays are my worst day I have 9-10 lecture and that’s it. So if I have to get the train £15 just for an hour lecture which I’m sometimes late for, is it worth it?...’

‘I had 6 delays in the half year I’ve been getting the train... I leave my house 2 hours in advance if I have a 9 o clock lecture. I get up at 6, leave my house at 7, walk to the train station, get the train at 20 past 7 and then if there’s delays I’m obviously going to miss the lecture.’
Effects of MREE – academic effects

‘Michael Mansfield did a speech in Canterbury Wednesday... there was no inter-university bus and I could have arranged childcare but there was no way I could have driven down there and driven back and arranged for all that to happen at the same time... there was lots of people... that wanted to go to that from here but couldn’t because there was no inter-uni bus.’
Effects of MREE – restricted choices

• Restriction of academic choices
  – Institution
  – Course
  – Module
Effects of MREE – restricted choices

‘I didn’t really have an option to look anywhere else not that I would have anyway as I said my disabled brother lives with me and really I don’t drive so it’s perfect location... I always wanted to do psychology but that’s not offered at... Medway, it is at Canterbury but I can’t get to Canterbury... so I’m just getting some monkey degree they call it.’

‘[With module choices] it does come down to sitting there right can I afford to go in four days a week... with the modules, the times, everything is to do with the fact I can’t afford to come in four days a week, not with petrol prices and even not with train prices.’
Effects of MREE – social

• The social side of learning
  – Key in preventing attrition
  – Emotional, informational and material support (Cohen and Pressman, 2004)

‘It’s quite difficult generally living off-campus because... if you live off-campus you can’t go to a society because the trains and buses are too late...

‘My friends keep arranging things but then the last train at the weekend is 9 o’clock so I can’t go with them.’
Effects of MREE – attrition

‘I nearly jacked in uni, no I’m not coming back, it’s getting here and getting into class is such an effort when it shouldn’t be, it should be easy, you should be starting your day relaxed, not fired up because it is a nightmare travelling down here... you get here and think, I just don’t want to come here anymore.’
Concluding remarks

• Case study highlights direct impact of transport upon social policy
  – Need to be mobile to access and achieve
  – But greater mobility has social consequences!
  – Conundrum can only be resolved by joining up policy

• Without consideration of transport, social policy cannot succeed

• Isn’t it time to see that transport is social policy?
Credits, publications and contact details

- Thanks to the Faculty of Social Sciences for providing funding for the primary research, which was undertaken whilst I was employed within CHSS at the University of Kent.


- Images: www.bbc.co.uk; www.bristol.ac.uk; www.hesa.ac.uk; www.oxfordlight.co.uk; www.tfl.gov.uk.

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Solutions?

- Off campus, inter-campus and intra-campus mobility provision
  - Addressing acceptability, accessibility, affordability and availability
- Information, advice, guidance
- Understanding needs
  - Postcode plotting
- Virtual mobility?
Further research into transport and WP

- Verifying and quantifying findings
  - Sample
    - Size
    - Demographics
    - HEIs
- Expanding findings
  - Future students: transport and aspiration
- Examining effects of possible ‘solutions’
  - Increasing awareness
  - Reducing barriers