

# TRAVEL IN THE BLACK GHETTO

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## ABRIDGMENT

•INNER-CITY areas of the United States present unique transportation problems for which few data exist. The data summarized here were obtained from a household survey performed in 1968 and contain characteristics of work trips and shopping trips for the black ghetto of Buffalo, New York (1).

A study of trends in the location of working places for black workers and changes in travel time resulting from expressway construction showed that the worker could reach more than 25 percent more jobs by a half-hour bus trip in 1952 than in 1968. This decrease in access over time was due mainly to the fact that many jobs have moved to suburban locations. (Employment in the inner city dropped by 36 percent, whereas total employment in the area increased by about 23 percent.) Construction of urban expressways enabled automobile commuters to increase their average speed during the 18-year interval so that the decrease in the number of jobs accessible by car in a half-hour journey was very small (about 4 percent). In 1962, the average journey to work from the inner city was 12 min by car and 30 min by bus. The number of jobs one could reach in these average travel times was 126,000 and 113,400 respectively. These data show that the average bus commuter was willing to travel  $2\frac{1}{2}$  times longer to have a job opportunity equivalent to that of his neighbor who owned a car.

The proportion of inner-city workers employed beyond the city line increased sharply since 1960. In 1960 about 17 percent went beyond the city line. In 1968, 30 percent did so. A detailed study of the characteristics of 102 workers who commuted beyond the city line to work in 1968 showed that generally these were older males who were in households with a car and who drove to jobs in the operative category in manufacturing industries.

Since the Watts riot, attempts were made to improve access to suburban jobs from the inner city (2). Generally, these busing-to-work programs were not successful, and costs per person trip were in some cases higher than \$2. Whether unwillingness to travel long distances to work was a factor that kept the ridership low in these experiments was examined by an analysis of answers given by workers and unemployed workers in the sample to the following question: If you could reach a good suburban job with a half-hour bus ride, would you go by bus? The responses for the entire combined sample of 278 workers and nonworkers with and without cars, and for 31 nonworkers under 60 years of age with no car, showed that there were among unemployed workers without cars significant factors that inhibit them from commuting by bus to a good suburban job. Only 25 percent of the combined sample were unwilling to travel a half hour by bus, whereas 42 percent of the unemployed without cars were unwilling to travel this long. This decrease in willingness might represent a low level of willingness to travel by bus in general, or an unwillingness to work in the white suburbs. More research is necessary to clarify the causes of this unwillingness.

Automobile ownership was shown to have an important effect on food shopping patterns. Sixty-six percent of those who shopped for food made 1 trip per week or less than 1 trip per week. Among those without automobiles, 20.4 percent shopped less than once per week, whereas among those with automobiles, only 7.5 percent shopped less

than once per week. The distribution of shopping trip frequencies was concentrated around once per week more for car-owning households than for non-car-owning households. This seems reasonable because the car was predominantly used for work trips and was available for shopping trips on the day off from work or on Saturdays.

This research has shown that detailed information on the travel patterns and access of inner-city residents who do not have automobiles is important for 2 reasons: Travel characteristics can change significantly in a period of several years, as can job locations and access times via bus and car; and there are important differences in the travel characteristics and willingness to travel of certain groups without automobiles.

#### REFERENCES

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2. Pignataro, L. D., Falcocchio, J. C., and Roess, R. P. Selected Bus Demonstration Projects. Transportation Eng. Jour., Proc. ASCE, Vol. 96, No. TE3, Aug. 1970, pp. 251-268.