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Les défis de développement pour les villes et les régions dans une Europe en mutation

THE EFFECTS OF FINANCIAL RECESSION ON THE TRANSPORT SECTOR: THE CASE OF GREECE

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Référence à la session / reference to the session

T1 - Crise économique et régions en Europe

Résumé / Summary

The financial crisis is a complex phenomenon which influences all areas of human life and activity. Every town and city is affected by trends of transformation and by processes of economic structural change (Muller, B., 2010). The economic crisis that hit Greece in 2009, resulted in a number of socio-spatial changes in urban areas. Furthermore, the financial crisis has had a severe impact on the Greek economy; the unemployment rose by 30%, income reduced by 38%, GDP dropped by more than 20%, fuel price increased by 50%. As a result, commercial and social activities have been severely affected and this in turn has had severe effects both on the volume and the shares of each travel mode.

Without doubt, in years of financial crisis, mobility patterns and user behavior are expected to change. In this context, transport systems need to be reliable and sustainable to support economic recovery. Nevertheless, there is little understanding of the factors governing the dynamics of urban transformation and mobility patterns' change in times of economic recession. In this study, we analyze the scientific and economic impact of the financial crisis on Greek roads, on public transport and on urban transport sector. This is done by critically reviewing scientific studies and methodological approaches. Hence, the crucial questions are "How many people will switch to cars or carpool or even bike to work on a transit strike day?", "How many people will use their car, if petrol prices increase by 20% due to the economic recession?", "How are the trip rates affected when GDP drops by more than 20%, and unemployment reaches 35%?". The effect of parameters like unemployment, petrol price, GDP on transport demand is explored in this paper by reviewing related research that began by the authors in 2014.

The purpose of this paper is to investigate the long-term impacts of economic recession on the transport sector by reviewing basic sectors that are related to urban travelling.

Firstly, the impact of the economic crisis on Athens Central Business District with regard to the change in mobility behavior will be presented. Secondly, the current impact of the economic crisis in terms of public transport market demand is analyzed by comparing macroeconomic data before and during the crisis. Moreover, travel (mobility) changes of metro users following a public transit strike of operational employees protesting against the austerity measures are analyzed. Thirdly, effects of the crisis on transport economy including gasoline consumption and car sales are investigated.

The understanding of the role of user behavior in modal choice and mobility patterns and of their complex interactions with major societal trends such as economic recession, is essential to several points: to underpin policy geared towards sustainable mobility and to cater for future mobility needs.

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