

IC - (20940) - DISENGAGEMENT AND REENGAGEMENT IN THE MOBILITY STRATEGIES OF OLDER ADULTS: WHAT LESSONS FOR SUSTAINABLE MOBILITY AND TRANSPORTATION

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Background and objectives

In the face of rapid population aging, there is a growing pressure on cities to make sure older adults can retain their autonomy regarding daily mobility, if possible, to minimize the financial, human and ecological costs of at-home services, deliveries and caregivers. To advance the ecological transition to sustainable mobility, it appears crucial to provide age-friendly solutions to facilitate mobility in various urban environments and help older adults to maintain their autonomy for as long as possible.

Older adults aren't passive in the aging process and are known to develop strategies to adapt to difficulties impacting their daily mobility. Inspired by ecological perspectives, we studied how daily activities of various profiles of individuals changes over the life course following patterns of "disengagement or reengagement"

Process and methods (for empirical research)

To this end, the research used data from 34 semi-directed interviews and 19 go-along with adults aged between 55 and 93 years living in a continuum of urban to suburban environments in Montréal metro area, as part of a doctoral thesis. Interviews and go-along focused on the place attachment and daily activities of respondents, as well as the change of their daily travels over the years.

Main results (or main arguments in the case of critical reviews)

The results of these interviews, which followed a previous questionnaire survey (n=153) and spatial analysis of residential environments as part of the doctoral thesis, show how mobility strategies vary according to residential aspirations and lifestyles for both age groups, and the large role played by social support system in adaptation strategies. However, results also show how life in different residential environments can provide options for "re-engagement" in daily activities following events of disengagement

Implications for research and practice/policy | Importance and originality of the contribution

In a perspective of advancing the ecological transition, the paper concludes that differential solutions appear necessary to provide sustainable mobility and transportation resources adapted to different lifestyles and urban environments, for older adults and everyone else.