

Call for Abstracts for the VI International Seminar on
Contemporary Mobilities



INTALInC LAC | VI International Seminar on Contemporary Mobilities

Unpacking accessibility to urban employment: Contributions from the mobility turn and the accessibility shift to theory, methods, and policies

September 19, 2024

Hybrid format: Belo Horizonte, Chicago, Mexico City, Montevideo, and virtually
through Zoom

Understanding accessibility to urban employment is a gateway to examine broader issues of urban inequalities across urban regions (Cui et al., 2019; Niedzielski and Boschmann, 2014). Accessibility to various jobs reveals a spectrum of urban issues, such as unequal education, discrimination, segmented labor markets, gender-based job divisions, spatial imbalances, and transport-related social exclusion that translate into income gaps, housing disparities, curtailing the overall prospects for social mobility. Over the years literature on accessibility to urban employment has greatly contributed to our understanding of urban inequalities (Geurs & van Wee, 2004).

Today, scholarly debates focus on understanding if the ease of reaching the places that concentrate jobs translates into access to urban employment. However, we argue that it is also important to introduce debates about broader structural issues in urban societies, rendering real access to urban employment beyond proximity to jobs or the ease of reaching destinations. Two influential intellectual efforts in the social sciences have contributed to the development of the literature around accessibility to jobs: the mobility turn (Cresswell, & Merriman, 2011; Urry, 2007) and the accessibility shift (Duranton & Guerra, 2016; Levine et al, 2019). The distinctive focus in each of these intellectual efforts has important implications in terms of theory, methods, and policy implications in the literature of accessibility to urban employment.

In terms of theory, the “mobility turn” has significantly influenced researchers, prompting them to explore the intricate connections between mobility and urban employment. A strand of scholarship has explored if the ease of reaching the places that concentrate jobs through a



combination of transport modes also improves the possibilities of a person procuring a job (Hernández, 2018; Pereira, 2019). Others have argued that the practices and experiences of workers from diverse backgrounds during their travel time are crucial to understand the relationship between access and employment opportunities (Fleischer & Snabria, 2000; Jirón, 2010). In contrast, the accessibility shift has focused on theorizing the links between land-use planning and urban employment arguing that in addition to mobility, increased proximity between workers and jobs can also contribute to a person procuring access to employment (Duranton & Guerra, 2016; Levine et al, 2019). Yet an emerging strand of scholarship is theorizing the links between structural urban disadvantages in terms of gender, race, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status and the lack of access to urban employment (Hernández, 2012, 2018; Jirón & Mancilla, 2013; Oviedo et al, 2020).

In terms of methods, the mobility turn has steered scholars towards methods able to model and assess the movement of workers through space (Allen et al, 2022; Fleischer & Snabria, 2000; Jirón, 2010). In contrast, the accessibility shift has worked mainly through models of potential accessibility to jobs where elements like impedance functions and distance decay play an influential role in their modeling efforts (Ermagun & Tilahun, 2020; Pereira et al, 2019; Pereira & Herszenhut, 2023). Only until recently did a new wave of researchers started to use methods based on observed commuting patterns (López-García, 2024; López-García & Baker, 2023; Niedzielski & Boschmann, 2014) and the lived experience of workers in the production of their perceived accessibility (Borello et al, 2024; Coren et al, 2022).

These different theoretical and methodological foci could have important implications for policy and practice. The mobility turn has influenced the accessibility literature to prioritize approaches based on mobility and transport-related policies (Pereira et al, 2017; Tiznado-Aitken et al, 2023; Vecchio et al, 2020). Similarly, the accessibility shift has called to complement mobility and transport-related policies with economic development policy able to influence the spatial distribution of jobs, housing policy able to influence the residential location of workers, and policies able to reduce socioeconomic inequalities and discrimination in labor markets (Ihlanfeldt & Sjoquist, 1998; Levine et al, 2019; López-García, 2023).

The Latin American Chapter of the International Network for Transport and Accessibility in Low-Income Communities (INTALInC-LAC) will organize its VI International Seminar of Contemporary Mobilities with the topic of accessibility to urban employment. Over two days of activities, the seminar will bring together scholars and practitioners at the forefront of discussion around accessibility to jobs. This event seeks to elicit a discussion about the contributions of the mobility turn and the accessibility shift to the theory, methods, and policy implications of research around accessibility to urban employment.

The seminar will have a hybrid format on September 19, 2024. Presenters and attendees can join one of the simultaneous in-person sessions or they can participate virtually through Zoom. In-person sessions will be held simultaneously in 1) the Department of Urban Planning and Policy at



the University of Illinois, Chicago, 2) the Department of Sociology at the Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais, in Belo Horizonte, 3) the Department of Social Sciences of the Universidad Católica del Uruguay, in Montevideo, 4) the Institute of Economic Research of the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, in Mexico City, and 5) the Department of Civil Engineering and Agriculture of the Universidad Nacional de Colombia, Bogota.

The themes that we seek to address in the seminar include, but are not limited to:

- The tensions and complementarities between the mobility turn and the accessibility shift in the study of accessibility to urban employment.
- Advances in conceptualizations and analytical frameworks, as well as methodologies and assessment tools, for the study of accessibility to urban employment.
- Case studies of accessibility to jobs either through traditional metrics or through emerging research methodological innovations.
- Discussions around the policy implications derived from studies of accessibility to urban employment.

Should you be interested in presenting your work in the seminar, please send an abstract of no more than 250 words to intalinc.lac@gmail.com by **June 30, 2024**. The abstract must include a title of no more than 25 words, 3 to 5 keywords, name and affiliation of all contributing authors, and references. Please include a brief bio of each contributing author of no more than 100 words. Write "VI International Seminar on Contemporary Mobilities" in the subject of your email. The seminar will accept abstracts and presentations in English, Spanish, and Portuguese. Presenters will be notified of their acceptance on July 31st 2024, at the latest.

Editors

- **Dr. Ana Marcela Ardila Pinto**, Profesora, Departamento de Sociología, Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais. Directora de Incidencia de INTALInC-LAC.
- **Dr. Diego Hernández**, Profesor Titular, Departamento de Ciencias Sociales, Universidad Católica del Uruguay.
- **Dr. David López-García**, Assistant Professor, Department of Urban Planning and Policy, University of Illinois, Chicago. Academic Director of INTALInC-LAC.
- **Dr. César A. Ruiz Rojas**, Profesor Asociado, Departamento de Ingeniería Civil y Agrícola, Facultad de Ingeniería, Universidad Nacional de Colombia, Bogotá.
- **Dr. Armando Sánchez Vargas**, Profesor-Investigador, Director del Instituto de Investigaciones Económicas, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México.
- **Dr. Natalia Villamizar Duarte**, Lecturer, School of Architecture, Planning, and Landscape, Newcastle University. Director of INTALInC-LAC.

Co-Organizers



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