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PUBLIC TRANSPORT AND TRAVEL WITH DOGS

Jennifer L. Kent, Corinne Mulley, Laura Goh and Nick Stevens

Introduction

Public transport policies are not made in a cultural vacuum. Instead, they are shaped by a complex mix of socially constructed dimensions, ranging from a collective appreciation of personal space to historical legacies of habit and custom. This chapter aims to demonstrate the link between one particular aspect of public transport policy and cultural attributes. Using the public transport policies regulating the carriage of dogs on public transport as a case study, the chapter applies a commonly accepted framework of national cultural dimensions to reveal associations between public transport policy and culture. It is intended that this chapter will both provide policy makers with suggestions for how to tailor public transport policies to allow the carriage of dogs and transport researchers and professionals an appreciation of the requirement for the public transport offer to respond to the changing needs of their diverse user base.

The chapter first reviews existing research on companion animal ownership and travel, demonstrating the demand for travel with dogs. Public transport policies pertaining to dogs relating to cities in Europe, the United Kingdom and Australia are then examined. The analysis reveals substantial differences between countries and continents, ranging from policies that are entirely prohibitive to those that allow dogs on public transport under certain circumstances. Recognising that dog ownership is a culturally inculcated practice, the chapter then seeks to explore ways these differences are related to aspects of national culture as defined by the Hofstede model of cultural dimensions. The chapter concludes with discussion of future research requirements in this space, calling for transport research to place more emphasis on unusual, “messy” trips, as well as on cultural attributes.

Background

What is culture?

Social scientists studying practices such as travel generally prioritise the influence of either the pursuit of individual purposes, desires, intentions and motivations or the collective pursuit of a socially and structurally defined pattern (Steg, 2005; Scheiner & Holz-Rau, 2007; van Acker et al., 2010). A cultural outlook treads between these two views by seeking to articulate what
is desirable to the individual and what is normal to the collective. Culture, therefore, is an ‘implicit, tacit or unconscious layer of knowledge’ (Reckwitz, 2002, p. 246). It is the complex amalgam of attitudes, values and beliefs shared with those around us and exhibited in day-to-day practices such as working, eating, shopping and, of course, travelling.

Research has long recognised variations in transport practices exhibited from city to city are underpinned by variations in culture, the study of which is helpfully defined as mobility cultures (Klinger et al., 2013; Aldred & Jungnickel, 2014). Mobility cultures mean the milieu of travel patterns, the built environment and mobility-related discourses that characterise transport in a particular city or nation (Haustein & Nielsen, 2016). They are defined by both material and the socially constructed dimensions of the transport system. The complexity and contextual dependency of the concept mean there is no one set way to analyse mobility cultures. Researchers instead employ a diverse offering of methods and methodologies, ranging from, for example, quantification of time series data (Mattioli et al., 2016) and combinations of built form characteristics and subjective factors (Klinger et al., 2013; Klinger & Lanzendorf, 2015) to qualitative methods involving life histories (Sattlegger & Rau, 2016), interviews (Hopkins & Stephenson, 2016; Nello-Deakin & Nikolaeva, 2020), qualitative mapping and photo elicitation (Dahl Vikstrøm & Böcker, 2020). While culture is not necessarily defined by nationality, nor is it uniform across nations, indices of national culture can also provide interesting insights into the mobility culture of a city.

National culture is defined as ‘the collective programming of the mind that distinguishes the members of one national group from another’ (Hofstede et al., 2010, p. 6). The two most commonly used indices of national culture are those developed by Geert Hofstede (Hofstede, 1984, 2001; Hofstede et al., 2010) and Ronald Inglehart (Inglehart, 1990, 1997, 2018). Both are based on large-scale rolling surveys of the population of major OECD countries around the globe. Together, Hofstede and Inglehart have amassed over 200,000 academic citations, making them two of the world’s most frequently quoted social scientists (Beugelsdijk & Welzel, 2018). The concepts and tools associated with their frameworks, however, are rarely applied to the study of transport. Some preliminary conceptual work has recommended the inclusion of formal national cultural considerations to psychological aspects of individual transport decision making – particularly symbolism (Ashmore et al., 2017, 2020) and uncertainty avoidance (Syam, 2014). Scholars seeking to understand consumer behaviour have also used such indices to examine purchasing decisions, specifically for new alternative fuel vehicles (Oliver & Lee, 2010; Ashmore et al., 2018). More recently, the Hofstede indices have been used to analyse differences in actual travel patterns between nations (Dingil et al., 2019) and the travel behaviour and attitudes of people from different cultural backgrounds (Syam, 2014). Although it is widely recognised that the transport policies governing transport systems and influencing transport practices are also cultural constructs (Legacy et al., 2017), indices of national culture do not appear to have been applied to the analysis of differences in transport policy, including policies for public transport systems. While both the Hofstede and Inglehart indices have been critiqued widely – equally for their simplicity and overallocation of complexity – the breadth of data upon which they are based alone indicates some utility in efforts to understand transport policy decision making, particularly in preliminary considerations of the influence of national cultural attributes, as is the aspiration of this chapter.

The chapter employs the Hofstede framework. While Inglehart’s work has an explicit focus on economic and political environments, it is most often applied in the study of politics and sociology and is particularly useful in examining shifts over time (Beugelsdijk & Welzel, 2018). The Hofstede framework, however, is more multidimensional in its consideration of psychological imprints on cultural phenomenon and is less adept at examination of shifts yet effective
at explorations of the status quo. The complexity implied by Hofstede’s multidimensional approach also suggests it provides a more useful base from which to analyse practices of mobility in national contexts.

The Hofstede dimensions of national culture are based on an ongoing survey of value systems of residents in 100 countries. It was first conducted between 1967 and 1973 with IBM employees selected using a matched sampling procedure from 50 countries. The results of the survey are subject to factor analysis, resulting in scores from 0–100 allocated to each nation across six cultural dimensions. These dimensions are described as follows, making reference where appropriate to European countries and Australia, which are the focus of this chapter (adapted from Hofstede Insights, n.d.):

**Power distance:** All societies suffer from inequalities, and this dimension expresses the national attitude towards this inequality. The power distance score reflects how the less powerful members of institutions and organisations within a country both expect and accept inequalities in the distribution of power and how social inequality is endorsed by society’s leaders. Low scores suggest a culture in which there is a desire or drive to equalise the distribution of power, while high values are exhibited in a culture where hierarchical order is accepted. In the sample of countries included in the analysis in this chapter, Austria has a particularly low score against the power distance dimension (11), indicating that hierarchy in Austria is for convenience only, with equal rights respected and unjustified control disliked. Slovakia, conversely, scores a maximum of 100 points on this dimension, suggesting that in Slovakia, it is accepted that some people have more power than others and that these people will use this power to create clarity and structure.

**Individualism versus collectivism:** This dimension describes the extent to which individuals are willing to subvert their desires for maintenance of the wellbeing of the collective. Nations scoring highly on this dimension are individualistic cultures, where individuals look after themselves and are motivated by self-preservation rather than collective approval. Low scores on this dimension indicate a nation where people are bound by strong relationships into groups, which take care of individuals in return for loyalty. In the sample of countries included here, Australia scores highly on this dimension (90), translating to a loosely knit society in which the expectation is that people look after themselves and their immediate families. Portugal, however, scores 27 on this dimension, which is particularly low even in the context of other European countries. This suggests this culture is collectivist, valuing long-term commitment and loyalty to a “group”, be that extended family, relationships forged in a workplace or other collective such as a church or sporting team. The society fosters strong relationships where everyone takes responsibility for fellow members of their group.

**Masculinity:** A high score on this dimension reflects a masculine culture, where competition is accepted and valued, and achievement, assertiveness and material rewards are highly prized. A low score – suggesting the feminine end of the dimension – identifies a culture where the dominant value is collective caring and quality of life. With a score of just 5 on this dimension, Sweden is a feminine culture, indicating an appreciation of balance and an appreciation of consensus over competition. Hungary, however, scores 88, which is relatively high and indicates a culture that resolves difference through competition and values decisiveness.

**Uncertainty avoidance:** This dimension quantifies the way in which individuals feel comfortable or uncomfortable with uncertainty and ambiguity. High scores on this dimension suggest a culture intolerant of unorthodox ideas and ways of doing things and anxious
to control the future. A low score indicates a culture that is more comfortable with new and different ways of thinking and living and happier to let the future develop unfettered. Greece scores a maximum of 100 on this dimension, indicating a culture that is not comfortable with ambiguity and appreciates laws and rules that are clear and enforced. Denmark scores just 23, however, suggesting the Danes are more comfortable with a lack of structure and some unpredictability.

**Long-term orientation:** This dimension describes the way a culture reflects on the past rather than looking to the future as a way to define itself. Low scores on this dimension suggest a society that is rooted in the past, with strong traditions and resistance to change. High scores, in contrast, suggest a pragmatic culture which seeks to prepare for the future in a more holistic and embracing way. Cultures with low scores on this dimension are not accustomed to the pursuit of results that take a long time to achieve. By sticking with what is known, they are habituated to the achievement of quick results and as such pursue the fast fix over investment in solutions that take time. With a score of 83, Germany is highly positioned on this dimension, signifying a culture that is practical and able to adapt tradition to accommodate the current situation, as well as being accustomed to the deployment of perseverance to achieve an outcome. Australia, conversely, scores just 21 on this dimension, suggesting Australians are less flexible when it comes to modifying habits and customs to accommodate change, as well as less interested in saving for the future.

**Indulgence:** This dimension defines the extent to which a culture controls basic and natural human drives. An indulgent culture is comfortable enjoying life, with an overall tendency towards optimism and prioritisation of leisure time. In contrast, in a restrained culture, people try to control their desires and impulses, and such control is respected. With a relatively high score of 65, Ireland is a country where the culture accepts a willingness to realise individual impulses and desires, enjoy life and have fun. Latvia, however, scores just 13 on this dimension, indicating a society that does not value leisure time and has a tendency towards pessimism.

The Hofstede scores are one way to show just how conspicuous variations between national cultures can be. Each dimension interacts with the other dimensions in different ways for different nations. While some are often correlated with others (for example, a high score in indulgence usually indicates a low score in long-term orientation), they are generally viewed as a set of complementary variables that together paint a colourful picture of the nuances that delineate one culture from another.

This chapter seeks to examine expressions of national cultural constructs in transport with a particular focus on transport policy. Such an examination requires a case study, and for the purposes of this chapter, the case is the carriage of dogs on public transport.

**Companion animal ownership – prevalence and benefits**

An underacknowledged accessory to the global trend towards urbanisation and ongoing economic growth (United Nations, 2018) has been an increase in pet ownership (Kestenbaum, 2018). Dogs are the world’s most popular pet, with over a third of the global population estimated to live with at least one dog (GfK, 2016).

While the motivation to own a dog will vary between cultures, households and individuals, a compelling body of empirical research demonstrates objectively that dogs are good for human health (Wood et al., 2005) (see also Chapter 20). Dog ownership is associated with decreased
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blood pressure (Wheeler & Faulkner, 2015), reduced risk of heart attacks (Arhant-Sudhir et al., 2011), improved survival rates (Friedmann & Thomas, 1995), increased physical activity (Cutt et al., 2008) and an increased sense of physical and psychological wellbeing (Wells, 2009). This work on the health benefits of dogs to their individual owners and human acquaintances is complemented by some research that suggests dogs also generate broader social sustainability (for example, social interactions, perceptions of neighbourhood friendliness and sense of community), which has benefits not only for individual dog owners but also extends to the wider community (Wood et al., 2007).

Demonstration of the community-building benefits of dogs suggests that they are, increasingly, out and about with their owners in the public realm (see also Chapter 26). This propensity has also been well researched, with several studies exploring the way dogs inhabit and are accommodated within communities (Tissot, 2011; Urbanik & Morgan, 2013; Graham & Glover, 2014; Instone & Sweeney, 2014). Even conventionally, including a pet dog in one’s daily life involves the need to leave home with the dog from time to time, both for basic care (such as trips to the vet), for companionship (such as trips to a favourite dog park) and for exercise for the dog. If these trips cannot be accommodated on foot or by public transport modes, they will likely be accomplished by private car.

Pets travelling sustainably

Despite the increasing popularity of dog ownership, and the emerging propensity for dogs to accompany their owners on trips outside of the home, very little research has been done on the way people travel with their dogs. Most research to date on the mobility practices of dogs has its focus on dog walking as a health-promoting activity for humans. Christian et al. (2013) for example, identified 29 peer-reviewed studies examining the relationship between dog ownership and physical activity through walking. This and similar reviews and empirical studies informed a scientific statement from the American Heart Association (Levine et al., 2013). This concludes that dog ownership is associated with reduced risk of cardiovascular disease. While most studies conclude that dog ownership does increase walking, very little attention is paid to the geography of dog walking beyond the home neighbourhood environment, including whether it is incorporated into the daily transport task or whether it becomes a trip-generating activity, for example, when the dog is taken to a favourite walking route or park.

Dogs and public transport: research to date

Recognising this research gap, in 2015, the lead authors conducted a study of over 1,200 dog owners in Sydney, Australia. Over 95% of respondents reported travelling with their dogs at least once a week, generating over 9,500 trips per week. Almost half of these trips started in a private car, with each household surveyed making, on average 3.8 dog-related trips by private car per week (Kent & Mulley, 2017). This is reflective both of the dispersed geography and long distances which characterise travel in Sydney; however, it also reflects the fact that in Sydney, dogs are generally prohibited from accompanying their owners on public transport (Kent et al., 2020). Sydney’s public transport network consists primarily of heavy rail and bus services. Dogs, with the exception of service dogs, are entirely prohibited from travelling on the rail system. Dogs are permitted to use bus services if they are in a dog carrier; however, this is at the discretion of the bus driver, who can legally refuse access to a passenger with a dog. The need for a carrier and ability for the driver to refuse access ensures the restrictions of dogs on buses become a prohibition. It prevents transport of dogs too large for a dog carrier and erodes the certainty of
travel required for the service to be considered reliable from the perspective of the user. Complementing bus and heavy rail services in the Sydney network are ferry and light rail services: these allow dogs to ride on restricted routes and in certain areas. These services are restricted to very inner-Sydney travel and tend to require bus access to complete a journey. Thus, it is difficult for dog owners to plan and execute journeys which depend on public transport in Sydney.

This chapter was motivated by the idea that something as (seemingly) obscure as the prohibition of dogs on public transport both represents and fuels the car dependency in Sydney and led to a review of dogs on public transport policy around the world being conducted. This review revealed a diverse array of policy approaches – some cities appear relatively open to the idea of dogs accompanying their minders on public transport, while others are entirely prohibitive. The variations in policy approaches are summarised to develop a dog-friendliness scoring system which is applied to each city, enabling analysis of the origins and geographical distribution of variation. Like most aspects of public transport policy, this variation is inevitably shaped by a complex amalgam of social, political, economic and built contexts, both past and present. This chapter recognises that the keeping of companion animals is a particularly culturally infused practice and concentrates on one specific aspect of context that, to date, has received very little attention in research on public transport policy: national culture.

Method

As identified previously, this chapter aims to explore associations between one particular aspect of public transport policy – the carriage of dogs – and national cultural attributes. The review of dogs on public transport policies from a selection of cities was used to develop a scoring system to categorise the different policy approaches. This score was then supplemented by data on cultural attributes using the Hofstede model. Associations between these two variables were then analysed, the results of which are reported in the ‘Discussion’ section.

Public transport policy analysis

For this study, data on policies governing the carriage of dogs on public transport came from the review of policies around the world first collected using a qualitative content analysis of posts from the website Travelnuity (Cleaver, n.d.). This site, maintained by an avid traveller and dog lover, has the aim of providing advice on international travel with a dog. The advice is primarily informed by the personal experiences of the site’s author, who has travelled extensively with her pet dachshund, Schnitzel. The information has a particular focus on Europe, Australia and the United States. For specific major cities within each country, the site provides advice on accommodation with dogs and dog-friendly outings and extends to the use of public transport systems with a dog. In January 2019, the lead author met with the author of the site to clarify its authenticity and confirm the processes used to collect the data contained on the site.

Each post on Travelnuity was analysed for information on the use of public transport with dogs such as general rules, animal location, time restrictions and ticket rules. This information was then verified by direct examination of each public transport system’s website. Several cities not reviewed on Travelnuity were added, sourcing data from public transport websites in order to provide a more comprehensive dataset. To enable a deep policy analysis, however, the breadth of data analysed has been narrowed to travel within a contrasting set of European and Australian cities.1

In total, 130 public transport services operating in 48 different cities and 24 countries were reviewed. Of these, 81.5% of services reviewed operate in countries in Europe and the United
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Kingdom, with the remaining 24% servicing Australian cities. Most operated in individual cities, and fewer than 20% were regional. Most services were either heavy (38%) or light rail (24%) services; however, bus (32%) and ferry (6%) services were also included. Cities ranged in population size from 149,000 (Darwin, Australia) to 8.2 million (London, UK), with an average population of 1.6 million.

The policies analysed displayed several aspects of diversity which were surprisingly sophisticated, extending beyond simply prohibiting or permitting dogs to ride public transport. These degrees of difference are generally related to practical limits placed on dogs using public transport. The most extreme limit is the need to place the dog in an enclosed carrier. While this may not limit the carriage of very small dogs, it does restrict use of the service for dogs larger than can be physically carried. Less restrictive limits were those constraining the dog to one particular train carriage or area of the bus. Limits were also temporal, with dogs prohibited from riding public transport during peak hours. Finally, many policies also place financial limits by charging a fare for the dog.

A 3-point ‘dog friendliness scale’ was developed to capture these nuances (Table 27.1), and this was applied to the policy governing each service. The Hofstede scores for national culture were then sourced for the host nation of each city, and it is this combination of the dog-friendliness scale and the Hofstede scores that forms the basis of our analysis, which is presented in the ‘Results’ section subsequently.

Results

Almost two thirds of the transport services reviewed allowed dogs to travel with few restrictions (Level 3), as shown in Table 27.2. Only one of these services was in Australia, with the remainder located in the United Kingdom or Europe. All but three of the services entirely prohibiting dogs on public transport (Level 1) were in Australia. Of the 85 services permitting dogs on public transport, 57 enforced some kind of restriction while still allowing the dog to travel outside of a container. The most common limitation by far was the need to purchase a ticket for the dog, as shown by Table 27.3.

Correlations between the Hofstede dimensions and the dog friendliness scores (as an ordinal scale) were examined using Spearman’s correlation coefficient. Table 27.4 shows that some cultural dimensions are correlated with the nature of public transport policies governing the

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dog-friendliness scale</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Level 1: Prohibition</td>
<td>No pets allowed, or pets only allowed as checked luggage; includes pets not allowed on certain routes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 2: Restricted to container</td>
<td>Travel restricted to pets that can fit in a carrier/container</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 3: Few or no restrictions</td>
<td>Minor restrictions included are:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>– fare charged (a ticket is required for dog)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>– location restrictions (pets may only travel in certain areas, such as the vestibule)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>– dangerous dogs restricted (restricted to pets with a pet passport or certain breeds restricted)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>– time restrictions (pets may only travel during specified non-peak times)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 27.2 Distribution of dog friendliness scale

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dog friendliness (3-point scale)</th>
<th>Number of cases</th>
<th>% of total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Level 1: Prohibition</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>16.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 2: Restricted to container</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>18.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 3: Little or no restriction</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>65.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 27.3 Distribution of dog travel restrictions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dog travel restrictions</th>
<th>Number of cases</th>
<th>% of total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Time-based</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location-based</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No dangerous dogs</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pet fare charged</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>36.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 27.4 Correlations between pet friendliness scores and Hofstede dimensions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hofstede dimension</th>
<th>Spearman’s correlation coefficient</th>
<th>$P$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Power distance</td>
<td>.216</td>
<td>.015*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individualism</td>
<td>−.488</td>
<td>.000*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masculinity</td>
<td>−.139</td>
<td>.119</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uncertainty avoidance</td>
<td>.332</td>
<td>.000*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long-term orientation</td>
<td>.608</td>
<td>.000*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indulgence</td>
<td>−.444</td>
<td>.000*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$N = 127$. * significant $p \leq 0.05$

carriage of dogs, with five of the six dimensions having significantly strong correlations. Countries that currently welcome dogs on public transport are generally associated with higher scores on the power-distance, uncertainty avoidance and long-term orientation cultural dimensions. They have lower scores on the individualism and indulgence scales. The correlation statistic for the masculinity dimension was not significant.

**Discussion**

Recalling the details for each cultural dimension outlined previously:

- A high score for power distance indicates a society where hierarchal order is accepted.
- A high score for uncertainty avoidance suggests a culture intolerant of unorthodox ideas and ways of doing things and anxious to control the future.
- A high score for long-term orientation suggests a pragmatic culture which seeks to prepare for the future in a more holistic and embracing way.
- A low score for individualism indicates a nation where people are bound by strong relationships into groups, which take care of individuals in return for loyalty.
- A low score for indulgence indicates a restrained culture, in which people try to control their desires and impulses and such control is respected.
The results suggest that countries where dogs are permitted to ride on public transport are countries where hierarchies are accepted, and restraint and a long-term view of things are both respected. Uncertainty is avoided, and people are cared for in groups rather than considered as individuals.

The common thread emergent from this analysis is a sense of conservation and safeguarding of both the status quo and the collective. In many ways, it describes quite an unadventurous culture. These are not countries that routinely throw caution to the wind in the pursuit of short-term gratification or an enshrined sense of the protection of the rights of the individual. At first consideration, these are characteristics that suggest a situation more readily associated with public transport systems that prohibit, rather than welcome, dogs. To travel with a dog involves some objective risk (for example, even a well-trained dog can act impulsively when afraid). It is also a prioritisation of the rights of one passenger type (dog supporter) over another (dog opponent) and an indication of a society where public transport is equally accessible to all. Yet countries that allow dogs on public transport are willing and able to accept this risk and prioritisation and the resultant opening up of a service to all, even though such acceptance and action is not necessarily congruent with their approach to other issues.

This finding has several implications; however, it first needs to be acknowledged that cultural dimensions provide the policy context rather than explaining it (as Hofstede notes, 'National Culture cannot be changed, but you should understand and respect it' [Hofstede Insights, n.d.]). The findings do not suggest that dogs are permitted on public transport because countries are conservative. The fact that countries are conservative yet still allow dogs on public transport, however, provides an insight into the way national culture shapes the environment in which public transport policy is made.

The first implication is of relevance to countries who currently prohibit dogs on public transport. Policy makers in these nations can be reassured that the cultural context in which a policy change might occur need not be overtly speculative or experimental. Related to this is the possibility that dogs on public transport in countries where it is permitted are a common and everyday occurrence – it is an insignificant occasion and a triviality that need not be received with fuss or undue ceremony. The public transport system accommodates it, just like it accommodates the rest of everyday life. This suggests that, for these countries, public transport is a normalised way to travel and to accomplish the day-to-day tasks of modern life. In countries where dogs are prohibited, however, the system is less open and available and perhaps only suited to trips that are predictable, such as the journey to work.

Conclusion

This chapter has used the case study of policies regulating dogs on public transport to explore the role of national culture in shaping public transport policy-making environments. It has found that allowing dogs on public transport is related to national cultures that are more conservative, with a long-term orientation and an acceptance of hierarchies. This finding has been used to suggest that dogs on public transport in these countries are a commonality – part of everyday life – just like the use of public transport is mainstream and uneventful.

These findings demonstrate context at play in public transport policy and practice. While dogs on public transport is the example used here, there are a myriad of other seemingly inconsequential trips that make up modern life and that need to be accommodated by public transport services if they are to become a mainstream mode for travel. Trips with young children or the frail elderly, those to pick up bulky goods or those chained together using a bicycle are all examples of travel that for many simply construe daily life yet require a public transport system
that accommodates degrees of temporal and spatial flexibility. Exploring these less common trip
generators, and seeking to understand the context in which they are regulated, can provide vital
clues as to how public transport systems can become more useful. Future research is needed to
reveal these less obvious mobility practices.

This study has obvious limitations. First, its focus is geographically limited to two continents.
Further research examining the public transport policy and national cultural contexts of other
areas would provide deeper insights into the influence of culture on policy and vice versa. Second,
understanding has been limited to using one index of culture and thereby has ignored
the influence of other structural and social determinants of the policy environment. Third, the
analyses do not take into account the historical political legacy of the policy-making process,
the influence of which can override any attempt to understand how and why policy decisions
are made. Finally, it should be noted that the analysis compares the policy environment for indi-
vidual cities against averaged national scores. Cities, particularly major capital cities, are likely to
have slightly different expressions of cultural indices when compared to the nation as a whole.

As a postscript, this chapter was written when the COVID-19 pandemic was at its height.
Public transport policy will need to adjust as societies transition to the “new normal”, coming
to terms with the seismic decline in patronage and a future where passengers will be uncertain
about the safety of public transport travel. For those cities where there are currently prohibi-
tions, these new circumstances provide an opportunity to make the step to creating a more
permissive policy environment for travel with dogs and allow such travel to become part of
everyday life, as those cities which have a more conservative outlook have already done.

Note

1 Countries included in the analysis: Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Denmark,
Estonia, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Netherlands, Poland,
Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, United Kingdom.

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