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Long commutes to work in a car: Results from the 2016 Canadian Census

Presentation to UNECE-ILO Eurostat Expert Group on Measuring Quality of Employment
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Background

- Relates to the QoE indicator “Commuting Time”.
- Results on long commutes in a car, from the 2011 Canadian National Household Survey (NHS) data were presented to this Expert Group in September 2017.
- The research in this presentation is based on a published report from early 2019 (T. Yaropud, J. Gilmore and S. LaRoche-Côté) using results from the 2016 Canadian Census (and some from the 2011 NHS).



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Key findings from 2016

1. In 2016, 1.5 million Canadians spent at least 60 minutes commuting to work (referred to as “long commuters”). Of these, 57% spent at least 60 minutes commuting in a car.
2. The average one-way commuting time for long commutes in a car was 74 minutes in 2016, essentially unchanged from 2011. The average one-way commuting distance to a usual place of work for these commuters was 57 kilometres, also little changed from 2011.
3. For those long commuters in a car, 42% left the house between 5am and 7am, compared with 25% of car commuters travelling less than 60 minutes.
4. The probabilities of having a long commute by car were higher for: those with no fixed workplace; workers in natural resource occupations; and those with higher earnings.



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Relevant findings from related studies

- Studies show that longer commutes are associated with poorer physical and mental health outcomes, and that those with long commutes in private vehicles are more likely to be negatively impacted than those with long commutes using public transit.
- Long commutes may put a strain on family relationships and social capital.
- Commuters with a long commuting time and distance in a car are more at risk of a vehicle accident.



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Distribution of commuters

| 60 minutes or more | 2016 | 2011 |
|-----------------------|-------|-------|
| Car – alone | 45.0% | 45.6% |
| Car – with passengers | 12.1% | 14.0% |
| Public transit | 39.8% | 37.4% |
| Active modes | 0.9% | 1.0% |
| Other | 2.2% | 2.0% |

| Less than 60 minutes | 2016 | 2011 |
|-----------------------|-------|-------|
| Car – alone | 69.7% | 68.1% |
| Car – with passengers | 12.1% | 13.5% |
| Public transit | 9.5% | 9.6% |
| Active modes | 7.6% | 7.6% |
| Other | 1.1% | 1.2% |



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Detailed Findings

- From 2011 to 2016, the number of workers with a long commute in a car increased by nearly 5%, while the number of total car commuters increased by 3% over the same period.
- Workers with a long commute in a car represented nearly 7% of all car commuters in both 2011 and 2016



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Detailed Findings (continued)

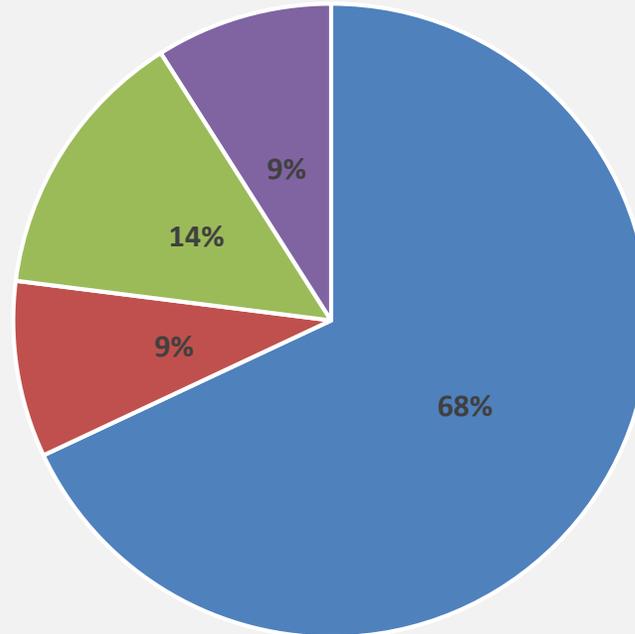
- In Canada, jobs tend to be concentrated in large metropolitan areas (mainly Toronto, Montreal and Vancouver). They attract thousands of workers who often live outside their boundaries. These workers likely face longer commutes.
- In 2016, 11% of car commuters who lived in the Toronto metropolitan area took 60 minutes or more to get to work.
- Respectively, 17% and 18% of car commuters who lived in Oshawa and Barrie – both of these communities have a strong commuting relationship with Toronto metropolitan area – had a commute that was 60 minutes or longer.

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Chart: Distribution of car commuters who spend at least 60 minutes getting to work, by length of commuting time, 2016



■ 60 to 74 minutes ■ 75 to 89 minutes ■ 90 to 119 minutes ■ 120 minutes or more ■



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Car commuting characteristics, 2016

| | Less than 60 min | 60+ minutes |
|--------------------------------|------------------|--------------|
| Usual place of work | 87.5% | 68.6% |
| No Fixed workplace | 13.8% | 31.4% |
| Drove alone | 85.2% | 78.8% |
| 2 people in the car | 12.6% | 15.0% |
| 3+ people in the car | 2.2% | 6.2% |
| Left home between 5 and 5:59am | 6.5% | 16.7% |
| Left between 6am and 6:59am | 18.0% | 25.6% |
| Left home between 7 and 7:59am | 29.2% | 26.0% |
| Left between 8am and 8:59am | 21.4% | 11.9% |
| Left between 9am and 11:59am | 10.5% | 5.5% |
| Left between 12pm and 4:59am | 14.4% | 14.2% |



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Logit regression results

- The likelihood of being a long commuter in a car in 2016 when other factors are taken into account are:
 - Men were more likely than women (7.4% probability vs. 5.7%)
 - Studies suggest that women are less likely to choose a long commute job due to household responsibilities
 - Older workers (across all 10-year age groups) are more likely than those aged 15-24 (6.4% to 7.2% vs. 5.5%)
 - Long commutes are likely less appealing to younger workers when it is part-time work and/or lower paying
 - Single parents with children under 5 were more likely than workers with other family status groups (7.7% vs 6.4%-6.9%)
 - Likely associated with affordability of living closer vs further from work; and extra time required to drop off young children with morning caregivers
 - Those with employment income of \$100,000+ were more likely than those with income of less than \$40,000 (10.1% vs 5.3%)
 - Studies suggest that people are more willing (or expected) to commute for long distances for a high paying job
 - Those working in natural resources were more likely than those in sales and service (8.9% vs 5.2%)
 - Those with a usual place of work were less likely than those with no fixed workplace address (5.5% vs 14.3%)



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Regional factors in long car commutes: The Toronto Effect

- 64% of long car commuters working in the Toronto metropolitan area also lived there.
 - Their median distance to work was 28km, their average commute time was 68 minutes, and 30% left home between 5am and 7am. In most cases, their long commute most likely resulted from city traffic congestion.
- For those living in other metropolitan areas outside the Toronto metropolitan area but working in Toronto, their median distance to work ranged from between 47km and 72km, with an average commute time of 81 minutes and between 43% and 52% having left home between 5am and 7am.
- For those living in small communities or rural areas outside Toronto but working in Toronto, their median distance to work was 70km with an 81 minute commute time and 49% having left home between 5am and 7am.



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Questions?