What Affects Millennials’ Mobility

Takeaways from My NCST Summer Internship
During my summer internship, I worked on an NCST project on the mobility of Millennials in California.

In this project, we want to know how Millennials make their transportation choices so that we can inform policy making, and contribute to build better cities around their preferences.

We analyze the data collected with an online survey among 2400 Millennials and Gen Xers all over California.

The findings from this research project will affect city planning, transportation laws, and future research.
A “Millennial” is someone born roughly between 1981 and 1997 (“Generation Y”)

There are different types of Millennials with different preferences and travel behaviors

Over half of the data collected was from Millennials.

“Generation X” is the generation before Millennials
  • Born between 1965 and 1980

Participants were recruited with an online opinion panel
The data were collected from 2400 Californians between 18 and 50.

There are over 800 variables in the survey ranging from opinions about residential location to the typical commute behavior, car ownership, use of Facebook and other social media, etc.

The dataset was analyzed and carefully checked to exclude any cases deemed faulty and contradictory.

The survey data compared Millennials to Gen Xers in regards to age they received their license, vehicle miles traveled per week, number of long distance trips, and hundreds of other variables.
Most of my time was spent analyzing and cleaning the data.

Minor inconsistencies and contradictory responses were tolerated; large errors and blatant misuse of the survey meant that the respondent needed to be removed from the data set.

Many cases were reviewed multiple times because of problems in multiple sections of the survey.

Specific quality assurance questions were embedded in the survey to inform the analysts if the participant missed any of these questions.

Recodes were created to fix small errors in usable cases and to remove unusable cases from the data set.
The dataset allows a number of different analyses, for example:

- Millennials, on average, use cars less for commuting and leisure trips.
- Gen Xers use electronic devices less during their commute.
- 40% of Californian Millennials work full time while 50% of Californian Gen Xers work full time.
- More Generation X participants have children in their household (than Millennial participants).
- Despite these generational differences, most people still drive alone for their daily commutes in California!
- Most people have heard of on-demand ride services (Uber and Lyft), but few have used them (still, a much larger share of Millennials use them)!