

Acceptability Process of a Congestion Charge

Authors : Amira Mabrouk

Abstract : This paper deals with the acceptability of urban toll in Tunisia. The price-based regulation, i.e. urban toll, is the outcome of a political process hampered by three-fold objectives: effectiveness, equity and social acceptability. This produces both economic interest groups and functions that are of incongruent preferences. The plausibility of this speculation goes hand in hand with the fact that these economic interest groups are also taxpayers who undeniably perceive urban toll as an additional charge. This wariness is coupled with an inquiry about the conditions of usage, the redistribution of the collected tax revenue and the idea of the leviathan state completes the picture. In a nutshell, if researches related to road congestion proliferate, no de facto legitimacy can be pleaded. Nonetheless, the theory on urban tolls engenders economists' questioning of ways to reduce negative external effects linked to it. Only then does the urban toll appear to bear an answer to these issues. Undeniably, the urban toll suggests inherent conflicts due to the apparent no-payment principal of a public asset as well as to the social perception of the new measure as a mere additional charge. However, when the main concern is effectiveness is its broad sense and the social well-being, the main factors that determine the acceptability of such a tariff measure along with the type of incentives should be the object of a thorough, in-depth analysis. Before adopting this economic role, one has to recognize the factors that intervene in the acceptability of a congestion toll which brought about a copious number of articles and reports that lacked mostly solid theoretical content. It is noticeable that nowadays uncertainties float over the exact nature of the acceptability process. Accepting a congestion tariff could differ from one era to another, from one region to another and from one population to another, etc. Notably, this article, within a convenient time frame, attempts at bringing into focus a link between the social acceptability of the urban congestion toll and the value of time through a survey method barely employed in Tunisia, that of stated preference method. How can the urban toll, as a tax, be defined, justified and made acceptable? How can an equitable and effective tariff of congestion toll be reached? How can the costs of this urban toll be covered? In what way can we make the redistribution of the urban toll revenue visible and economically equitable? How can the redistribution of the revenue of urban toll compensate the disadvantaged while introducing such a tariff measure? This paper will offer answers to these research questions and it follows the line of contribution of JULES DUPUIT in 1844.

Keywords : congestion charge, social perception, acceptability, stated preferences

Conference Title : ICURPT 2016 : International Conference on Urban Regeneration and Public Transportation

Conference Location : Paris, France

Conference Dates : September 26-27, 2016