

Passenger Transport Connectivity Planning: USA vs The World



What is Passenger Transport Connectivity?

Connected transport, intermodalism or accessibility are terms used to describe public transport systems that allow easy movement of travellers across different network services. Easy movement of travellers is key to attracting them away from congested road and airport networks. With an emphasis on intercity travel, we examine the components of a very well connected system and compare the planning policies and practices of the USA and other advanced economies: France, Germany and Japan.

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The Core Issues of Connected Transport

Our 120+paper literature review, has revealed the most important factors to be the three highlighted in Figure 1 with details in Figure 2. **Connectivity of Services** is required at a physical, temporal, and informational level. Otherwise the effort exceeds the benefits to travellers. To provide these at an ample quality, there needs to be **Collaboration** among the operators of these services and with the Public Authorities to agree on standards, fairly manage competition while still allowing cooperation when in public interest. The Public benefits from better connections, but to make them happen, better understanding of how travellers make **Choices** is required, and these are affected by *perceptions of door-to-door travel, not station to station.*

FRANCE

In France's transport planning documentation, some of the core connectivity factors are explicitly referenced such as the importance of integrated tickets, various levels of institutional capacity for cooperation with others, the importance of access and promotion of alternative modes. Many of the enabling factors are also addressed like the plans integrate health and social policies with transport planning. No mention is made of improving connectivity in other ways however, neither were any related metrics explicitly included.

JAPAN

Japanese planning has a high focus on compactness of the city and transit-oriented development (TOD). Both of these concepts results in improved access and egress for travelers and likely better transfers. The provision of travel options (rail, bus) is important. The importance of institutional development and cross-institutional collaboration is discussed in their planning manual along with integrating transport policy with other areas, performing regional analysis and examining environmental impacts. They do not however explicitly discuss fare integration.

GERMANY

As there is a strong Federal-level planning approach in Germany, we evaluate the Government's transport planning policies. Here we see a heavy focus on integrated transport planning, creation of multiple travel alternatives and easing of the transfers by coordinated schedules and integrated tickets. They also specifically analyze transport from a regional perspective and examine connectivity between public transport and private transport. Recognizing the weaknesses of their institutions to carryout the demands of this type of planning, capacity building or institutional development is on Germany's agenda. We did not however identify any emphasis on good access/egress beyond encouraging cycling and walking.

USA

As many State DOTs still have primarily highway maintenance and operations responsibilities, they have strong institutional resistance to becoming intermodal. The USDOT Office of Intermodalism was created to manage intermodal projects, but the authority of this office has decreased considerably and it currently has no responsibility to coordinate DOT policy on passenger intermodalism. Nevertheless, MPOs are strongly encouraged to collaborate with others and build institutional capacity. The planning process appears to have greater focus on the enabling factors such as multimodal performance metrics, joint funding for highway and transit projects-Surface Transportation Program, regionally combined analyses - State-wide Transport Improvement Program and environmental evaluation of projects (particularly air quality).

Conclusions

In general the four countries have identified the importance of providing a well connected system for their citizens. Germany is the best example of those countries analysed of how complete the implementation must be. By many measures Germany's transport system is more sustainable than many other advanced countries including the USA. Japan and France have strong top-down planning systems with explicit requirements for connectivity although they lack in a few areas. The US system appears to be less explicit regarding connectivity. However committing to providing a wider range of travel options might be a first step for the US before strengthening connectivity between them.

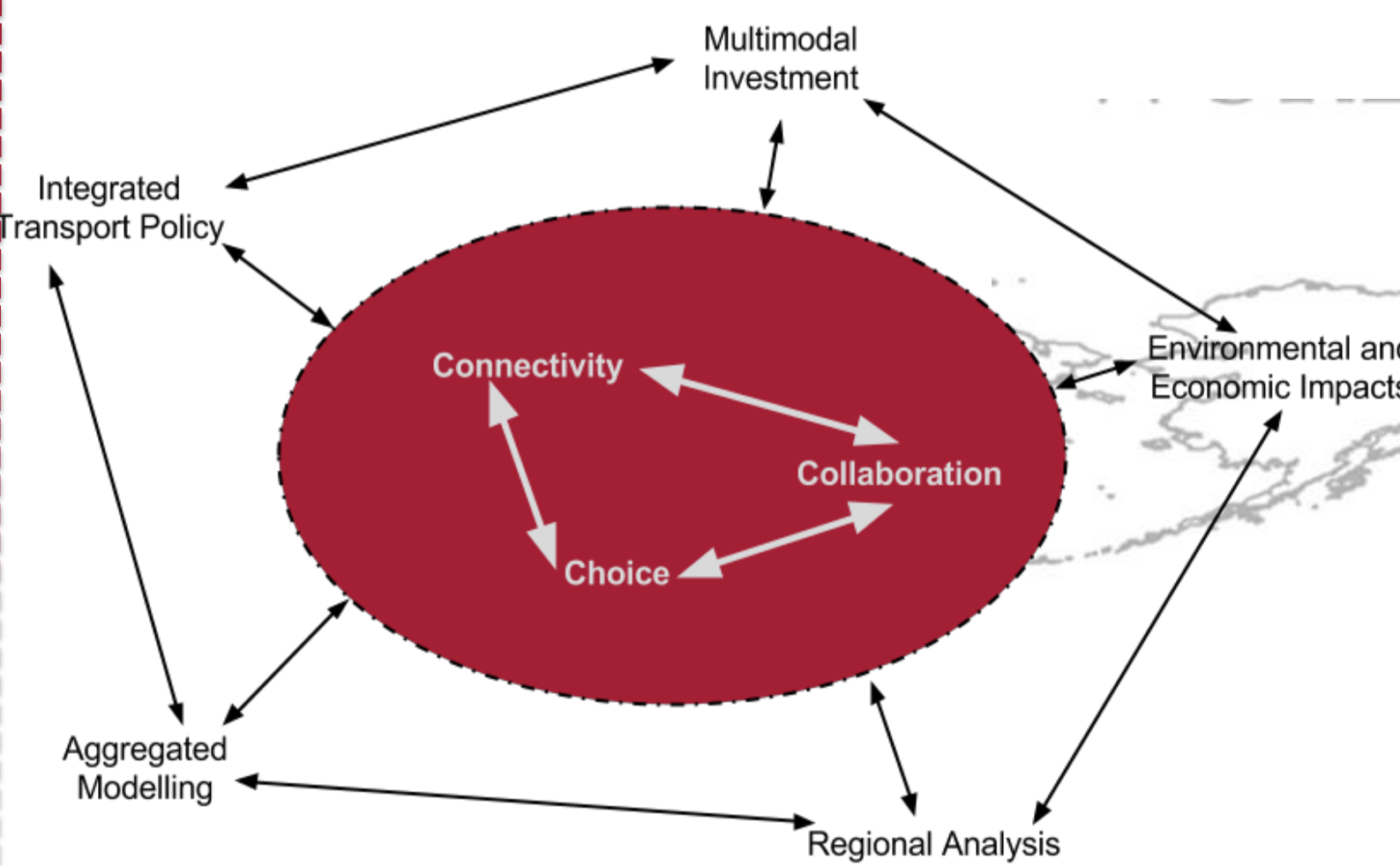


Figure 1: Core and Enabling Factors of Connected Transport

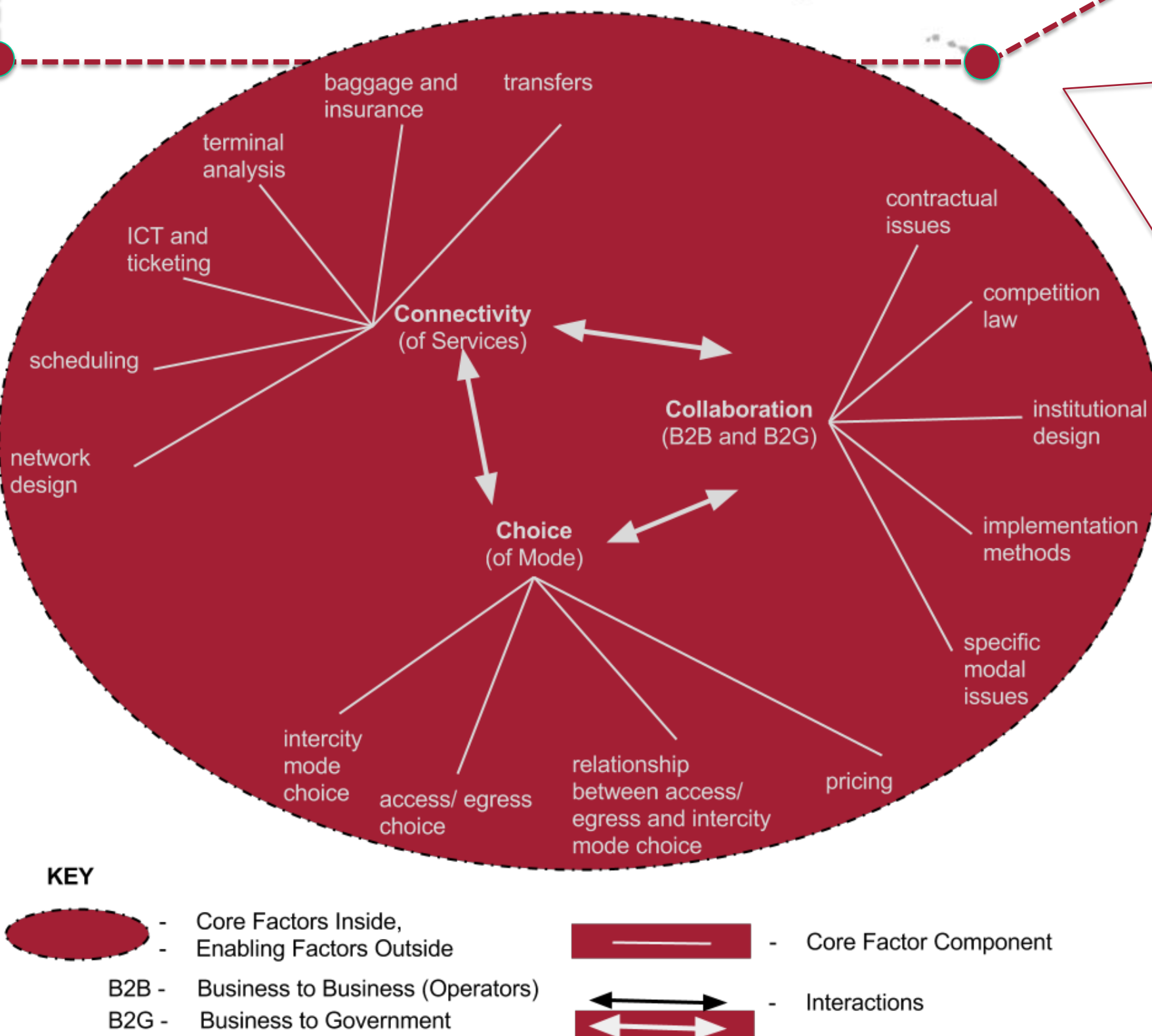


Figure 2: Components of the Core Factors of Connected Transport

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