Global Warming: Greenhouse Gas Emissions And Private Vehicles

Global warming is a threat to the existence of humanity, partially due to the overuse of vehicles that emit greenhouse gases. Vehicles are responsible for several externalities and, undoubtedly, the rapid growth of private vehicles is contributing to increasing the level of greenhouse gas emissions in Toronto. However, as mentioned by Karjalainen and Juhola (2019), Cities have acknowledged sustainability agendas and policies to direct the transition from long-established private automobile usage towards the utilization of public transportation. In spite of that, many neglect public transportation because they consider it to be an inferior substitute for driving one's own vehicle. This paper will argue that, in order to reduce the emissions of greenhouse gases, the government should focus on lowering the use of private vehicles.

In order to cut back on the usage of private vehicles, it is important to understand why they are preferred over other means of transportation such as walking, cycling, or public transport. Not only does it present a symbol of freedom and independence, but it also has been established that owning your personal vehicle injects a strong feeling of status, excitement, and control. A car, therefore, is more attractive than public transport because of how convenient, reliable, and comfortable it is (Steg, 2014). So, with all these factors that come into play, why would anyone want to give up on having their own car? Simply put, they irreversibly damage the environment. Around a quarter of greenhouse gas emissions come from transport and driving your own car is only making that worse (Ali, Dissanayake, Bell, & Farrow, 2018). Studies have shown that the transport sector has been responsible for 14% of global greenhouse gas emissions and around 23% of energy-related emissions (Ali, Dissanayake, Bell, & Farrow, 2018). As the demand for travel continues to increase, so will the total emissions from transportation.

Getting people to switch to public transportation is a difficult task, but it can be achievable if the right measures are taken. If people took advantage of public transportation, the per capita greenhouse gas emissions would decrease significantly. The results from a 2003 survey showed that 31% have thought of switching to public transportation while 22% did not see any alternative ways of getting around (Poudenx, 2008). Public transportation can be seen as a nuisance to many due to how time-consuming it can be. Getting to your destination on a bus can be frustrating due to all the stops required to accommodate everyone. Yet it is a small price to pay because overall, having 50 people in one bus will be far more environmentally friendly than to have 50 people in 50 different cars.

In order to encourage people from using their cars less, the government must take the necessary steps to improve the accessibility of public transport. If those in authority consider improving the quality of public transportation by improving schedules, connections, and services, there is no doubt that the number of those who shift from private to public transportation will increase. Consider the European transit systems which have yielded high satisfaction rates, resulting in its success (Poudenx, 2008). Most people who are in preference of private vehicles do not know the extent to which it negatively impacts the environment, so a basic step that can be taken is to get citizens informed by displaying advertisements. In a study led by Trond, Lind, ?im?eko?lu, Jørgensen, Lund, and Rundmo (2019), respondents who knew

about the negative impacts a car had on the environment were more eager to switch over to public transportation. Local authorities should not aim at banning people from cars completely, rather they should encourage citizens to selectively use their cars and in doing so, make the use of public transportation an agreeable experience.

In conclusion, global warming is a frightful subject and steps need to be taken in order to resolve this matter. Cars are an essential mode of transportation, yet, they have a major impact on the surrounding environment. It is not an easy task, but with the proper assistance and guidance, this issue can be undertaken.