Private car use as resistance to alternative transport

Presented by
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“It sometimes seems as if all the world is on the move”.

(Urry 2007, 3)
The car as a problem

- Climate Change
- Car collisions and injury
- Chronic Non Communicable Diseases
  - Obesity, diabetes, heart diseases
  - Respiratory diseases
  - Mental illness
- Equity and access
- Restructuring life: the ‘ideal’ that we are free to live, work and socialise wherever we want - almost.
And yet we continue to drive...

- 77% of Sydney’s households own one or more cars.
- 13.6% of Sydney households own three or more cars.
- The average Sydney resident makes 67.9% of their weekly trips in a private car.
- Private car based mobility accounts for 79.1% of total distance travelled.
- Private cars dominate mode share for all trip purposes.
- 70% of commute related trips are made using a car.
- 78% of trips between two and five kilometres are made in a private vehicle.

(source: NSW BTS HTS 2010/2011)
Despite the rumblings of change...

Comparison of select transport variables for ‘inner’ and ‘outer’ LGAs in Sydney

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<tr>
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<th>Inner suburban LGAs</th>
<th>Outer suburban LGAs</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Weekday VKT per person</td>
<td>11.3</td>
<td>20.3</td>
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<td>Car mode share (trip)</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>74%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Commute distance</td>
<td>8.5km</td>
<td>16.2km</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vehicles per household</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>1.7</td>
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(source: NSW BTS HTS 2010/2011)
Why are we mobile the way we are?
Ways of thinking about mobility practices

- **Utilitarian**
  
  Time, cost, comfort

- **Psycho-social**
  
  Empowerment, social norm, seclusion

- **Automobility as an ‘autopoietic’ (self sustaining) system**
  
  Culture, political economy, structures of provision
But what if it takes the same amount of time?

Locating people who could travel to work using alternative transport in the same amount of time as it currently takes them to drive...

- Data obtained for 856 journeys to work
- Trip substitution analysis
- Ground truthing
- 2 x 1 hour semi-structured interviews
Predictability
- Routine

_Diane_: Yeah, I put my lipstick on while I'm waiting at the Churchill lights every morning, it's a ritual.

_Frederick_: For me driving to work is just something I do. I don’t think about it...I like it, I don’t want to have to think about it every day, you know.

*All names have been changed to protect participant anonymity*
Predictability
- Predictability as normality

*Megan:* We were just moving to the next phase of life I guess, we had our little three bedroom house and we renovated it and did it up, that seems to be what you do when you first buy a house and we have sort of moved up and on.
Autonomy
- Autonomy as Freedom

Jennifer: Have you ever considered moving closer [to work]?

Larry: No, I live where I want to live and I work where the work is. I don't understand people that go "this is where I'll work [and] this is where I'll buy a house" because it might not be the area they want to live in.
**Autonomy**
- Freedom from

*Diane*: I could, in terms of viability, it [alternative transport] would get me to work. But I really prefer the car. I am being selfish because I am in my car and on my own.....but you know, in life, we have so many stressful situations. And it is not stressful for me to drive.
Acceptance
- Automobility as self acceptance and self nurture

*Frederick*: I remember, a long time ago, I used to catch the train to work. It was really busy, people always trying to find their way, and people trying to squeeze in, sometimes the door shuts too early. So then I think about taking my car, even if it's about 1 hour, 1 hour 15 minutes, even if it's longer, I don't care. I think, ‘ah, it's fine’, I have the air conditioning, I listen to a bit of music, best of the 80s, the news from the ABC.
Mobility and Ontological Security

- A sense of continuity in the world
- Necessary for human flourishing
- Under threat in modern life?
Some Policy Suggestions

- Alternative transport needs to be more than time competitive.

- “No car”? Less car.

- Deeper understandings of the ‘imposition’ of alternative transport.
A Research Agenda

Private car use has health problems

Defining that complexity

“Cars on Demand”
Car sharing
Ride sharing

“Beyond the Private Car: Personal Mobility Futures in Australia (the case of car sharing)”

Negotiating that complexity through policy

Better understanding that complexity

“The implications of relocation to higher density development on transport practices: A case study of TOD in Sydney”

“How does the built environment moderate the relationship between transport poverty and health?”

“The implications of urban growth on crime prevention: A Case Study of Camden”

“Caring for canines car-free: how does mobility moderate the health promoting aspects of companion animal ownership?”

“Health and the 2011-2013 Review of the New South Wales Land-Use Planning System”

“Assessing environmental impacts of major transport infrastructure projects: where does human health fit?”

“Health, equity and strategic planning in the NSW Planning System”

But car dependency is complex and transition away from it will be complex too....
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"Beyond the Private Car: Personal Mobility Futures in Australia (the case of car sharing)"
Thank you and Questions

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References:
