‘How the transport system ought to be’: revisiting transport & social exclusion research in light of energy justice concerns

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Mobility growth 1950-2005

Figure 2.5

Source: Schaefer et al., 2009

Source: Sustainable Development Commission, 2011
Unjust consequences

1. **Inter-generational justice**
   environment, energy, climate change, resource depletion, etc. (Vanderheiden, 2008)

2. **Intra-generational justice**
   the ability to cover greater distances and the access to motorised means of transport becomes a crucial factor for social inclusion, quality of life and social status

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**Tension** between the two?

Generally *addressed separately*

Possible to *reconcile them in a single integrated framework*?
Transport & Social Exclusion Research

• World-leading activity for **British research** (Lucas, 2004; 2012; SEU, 2003). Increasing interest worldwide (Currie 2011)

• Early studies (also) motivated by **concerns for the social impacts of sustainable transport agenda** (Cass et al., 2003; Dobbs, 2005; Gray et al., 2001; Huby & Burkitt, 2000; Lucas et al., 2001; Lucas & Pangbourne, 2014; Rajé, 2004)

• However, **attempts to integrate** the unjust consequences of environmental externalities in the framework **are rare** (Sustainable Development Commission, 2011) and **theoretically underdeveloped**
Goals of the presentation

1. **Critical examination of the performance of T&SER in integrating** environmental, inter-generational justice & intra-generational justice concerns

2. Demonstrate the value of introducing concepts drawn from (other) justice theories
   - Fundamental human needs & needs satisfiers
   - Expensive tastes
   - Adaptive preferences

3. Highlight the complexities involved in putting forward an integrated framework for transport
T&SER – features

1. ‘Relative deprivation’ approach (Townsend, 1979)
   • participation in the *mainstream activities of specific society* at a given moment in time
   • ...but “what if these are essentially unsustainable”? (Simcock, 2013)
   • implications of satisfying increasing mobility needs in terms of increasing *energy demand* and environmental externalities are *generally outside the scope*

2. ‘Limited claim making’ (Walker, 2012)
   • (traditionally) descriptive claims about how things are (inequality) *rather than normative claims about ‘how things ought to be’* (injustice), implicitly assuming equivalence between the two
3. **Empirical methods**

- **Qualitative** (e.g. Cass et al., 2003; Fol, 2009; Hine and Mitchell, 2001; Owen, 2012; SEU, 2003)

- **Quantitative ‘anecdotal evidence’** (e.g. Hine & Mitchell, 2003; SEU, 2003; Clifton & Lucas, 2004),
  - comparing travel behaviour (e.g. trip rates, travel time, distance, car access) and accessibility indicators across socio-demographic groups
  - problematic (Currie, 2011; Farrington & Farrington, 2005; Lucas, 2012)

- (more recently) **quantitative multivariate analysis of impacts on well-being** (Currie, 2011)
Basic human needs & need satisfiers
(Doyal & Gough, 1991; Gough, 2014; Max-Neef, 1992)

**Basic needs**  
Objective, universal, finite, few, non-substitutable, satiable

**Need satisfiers**  
Contextual, historical, cultural, variable

“Cultural change is, among other things, the consequence of dropping traditional satisfiers for the purpose of adopting new ones”  
(Max-Neef, 1992, p.200)

**Limited resources constrain basic need-satisfaction to “the highest level (...) which is generalisable** over the relevant population” (i.e. the population of the whole world)  
(Doyal & Gough, 1991)
Basic human needs & need satisfiers
(Doyal & Gough, 1991; Gough, 2014; Max-Neef, 1992)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Basic needs</th>
<th>Subsistence, Protection, Affection, Understanding, Participation, Creation, Leisure, Freedom</th>
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<td>Need satisfiers</td>
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Human needs and transport

Basic needs: Subsistence, Protection, Affection, Understanding, Participation, Creation, Leisure, Freedom

Need satisfiers:
- Paid employment (1st order)
- Travel (2nd order)
- Automobility / car (3rd order)
Car dependence: a need-based definition

Basic needs: Subsistence, Protection, Affection, Understanding, Participation, Creation, Leisure, Freedom

Need satisfiers: Food shopping, Travel, Automobility / car

A situation where car use (3rd) is essential to:
- be able to travel (2nd)
- to services and opportunities (1st)
- that are essential for the satisfaction of fundamental human needs

- lack of car access results in ‘serious harm’ and injustice
- strong trade-offs between different types of justice
Travel as a derived demand

Basic needs

Subsistence, Protection, Affection, Understanding, Participation, Creation, Leisure, Freedom

Need satisfiers

Automobility / car
Accessibility to services and opportunities

• Higher ranking need satisfier, reduced potential for trade-offs

• however: **normative / arbitrary dimension of the accessibility** concept (Farrington & Farrington, 2005) – which services and opportunities should people be able to reach?

“analyses of transport-related social exclusion are **tipically based upon a model that views inclusion in terms of people being able to ‘get at’ pre-defined ‘public goods’ and services located within pre-determined ‘formal’ locations / destinations. This model rests on a definition of what excluded people should want or need and **obscures the role that social networks play** in maintaining a ‘good life’” (Cass et al., 2005, p.551)
Great Britain 2002-2010:
Travel difficulties by Income Quintile (%, individuals)

- Travelling to the doctors / hospital
- Visiting friends / relatives at their home
- Travelling to other social activities
- Travelling for any other reason
Great Britain 2002-2010, members of HH without cars: Travel difficulties by Income Quintile (%, individuals)

- Travelling to the doctors / hospital
- Visiting friends / relatives at their home
- Travelling to other social activities
- Travelling for any other reason

Income Quintiles:
- Lowest real income
- Second level
- Third level
- Fourth level
- Highest real income
Great Britain 2002-2010, members of HH with cars:
Travel difficulties by Income Quintile (%, individuals)

- Travelling to the doctors / hospital
- Visiting friends / relatives at their home
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- Travelling for any other reason
Expensive *tastes*?

- Several studies showing that **richer / more mobile groups are equally or even more likely to report travel difficulties / accessibility problems** (Castrignanò et al., 2012; Currie & Delbosc, 2010; Unbehaun & Uhlmann, 2013)

- Long standing debate in Political Theory: do people have a right to more resources because of their **expensive tastes**? (Dworkin, 1981; Keller, 2002; Knight, 2013; Kymlicka, 1989)

- No, but it depends on **degree of voluntariness**

- ...but **what about structural factors / situations of lock-in**? (e.g. Third Culture Kids)
Adaptive preferences formation

- To help people out of social exclusion, often necessary to address **limited travel horizons** that can reduce employment opportunities (Fol, 2009; Lucas, 2004; SEU, 2003).

- “Long-standing (sometimes intergenerational) and inculcated activity patterns, (...) limited travel horizons, **low expectations and reduced aspirations**” (Lucas, 2004, p.146)

- “people on low incomes can be **reluctant to travel** long distances for a long time. This is a particular problem for jobseekers” (SEU, 2003, p. 31)

- Political theory: problem of ‘**adaptive preferences’** / ‘sour grapes’ effect (Elster, 1982; Nussbaum, 2000; Sen, 1984; 1999)
Conclusion – integrated framework

1. **Several features of T&SER are currently in contrast** with the goal of an integrated justice framework

2. **Human needs approach better suited** to reflect on how to decouple universal needs from energy-consuming need satisfiers (Gough, 2014)

3. **Concepts drawn from political theory** (expensive tastes, adaptive preferences) bring to light normative dilemmas

4. The **derived demand** nature of transport adds a **further layer of complexity**
Thank you for your attention!

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