GOING SOMEWHERE EXOTIC?
THE GROWING ENERGY DEMAND OF THE MOBILE ELDERLY



International leisure travel is on the rise with significant consequences for energy demand. The travel industry has promoted leisure travel for the elderly, and this group is travelling further and more often than in previous decades. DEMAND research shows that this trend cannot be explained by changes in travel choices or by changing amounts of disposable income. Rather, the growth in international leisure travel is shaped by changes in how leisure travel in later life is understood and undertaken by the mobile elderly.

In *'Demanding Distances in Later Life Leisure Travel'*, Fox et al. explain that going to Majorca was once considered 'an adventure' and an 'exotic' destination; yet it doesn't excite the elderly travellers with whom they spoke in the same way today – partly because of the rise in mass tourism as well as wider infrastructural changes that have made traveling abroad more convenient. The article shows that 'unspoilt' destinations are today found beyond Europe, and that European leisure travel is increasingly seen as 'conventional' and 'easy'.

The social and material arrangements of later life leisure travel continue to evolve, as the industry develops, and responses to these opportunities also change as cohorts of travellers age. For example, people who were once willing and able to 'fly the distance' talked about switching to the 'comforts' of European travel or to cruise holidays as they got older. Others persevere with long distance travel, supported by more accessible airport infrastructures and travel operators catering for their needs. These social and material arrangements matter for what is considered as desirable and doable in relation to the lived realities of physical aging.



The current trend is towards more travel. But this is not the only option: there might be ways of enjoying new experiences closer to home. Identifying and encouraging less distance-demanding ways of delivering and defining such experiences, for example by promoting the benefits of 'staycations', would enable operators, providers and consumers to shape less energy intensive futures.

For more ideas and data from this project see:

- Fox, Emmet, Russell Hitchings, Rosie Day and Susan Venn (2017) *Demanding Distances in Later Life Leisure Travel*. Geoforum, 82, pp. 102-111 DOI: 10.1016/j.geoforum.2017.04.007
- DEMAND Research Insight #12 A LATER LIFE TRAVEL BOOM? From the DEMAND website: http://www.demand.ac.uk/what-is-demand/research-insights/
- DEMAND Research on "Older People and Mobile Lives". DEMAND website: http://www.demand.ac.uk/situations-sites-sectors/#olderpeople

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