

## Car Dependent Practices and their Consequences

Research by the DEMAND Centre shows that people become car-dependent (they rely on the car to travel), not for reasons of individual choice, but because of the social practices they engage in.

### What is the role of the car in everyday practices?

DEMAND research (Mattioli et al. 2016) shows that some activities have become more car-dependent than others. By analysing the detailed sequences of activity and how use of the car is positioned within these sequences, the authors show that traveling by car is often associated with carrying objects or people. This cargo-function of the car is routinely overlooked in attempts to understand and influence patterns of car driving.

*Mattioli, G., Anable, J. and Vrotsou, K. (2016) Car Dependent Practices: Findings from a sequence pattern mining study of UK time use data. Transportation Research Part A: Policy and Practice 89: 56-72.*



Other DEMAND research (Mullen and Marsden 2018) shows that for some people, insecurities in housing and working conditions and unpredictable patterns and places of work prompt people to maintain or acquire a car, even where the costs of running one make it difficult to pay for other 'basic needs'.

*Mullen, C. and Marsden G. (2018) The Car as Safety-Net: Narrative Accounts of the Role of Energy Intensive Transport in Conditions of Housing and Employment Uncertainty. In A. Hui et al. (eds.) Demanding Energy: Space, Time and Change. Palgrave Macmillan.*

In related DEMAND research, Mullen and Marsden (2016) suggest that some efforts to reduce travel demand may be at odds with the goal of mobility justice. For more on this topic, see:

*Mullen, C. and Marsden, G. (2016) Mobility Justice in Low Carbon Energy Transitions. Energy Research and Social Science 18: 109-117*

### Travel demand is changing

Gathering evidence over a 12 month period from experts across the UK and internationally, the Commission on Travel Demand, funded by the DEMAND Centre, showed how patterns of travel are changing. On average, people make 16% fewer trips than in 1996. This reduction is particularly evident amongst 18-30 year old males who travel 50% fewer miles today than they did in 1995. The Commission also found that people spend 22 hours less traveling today than they did a decade ago, and since the 1990s, there has been a 20% reduction in commuter trips per person per week. At the same time, other kinds of travel are growing, such as fast food deliveries and van traffic. The Commission's report explains that because of these changing patterns in travel, there is a need to adapt the methods used to understand and plan for future travel demand. For more on this topic, see:

*Marsden, G. et al. (2018) All Change? The Future of Travel Demand and the Implications for Policy and Planning. First report of the Commission on Travel Demand [http://www.demand.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/FutureTravel\\_report\\_final.pdf](http://www.demand.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/FutureTravel_report_final.pdf)*

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