Reflections on our learning: active travel, transport and inequalities

Jill Muirie
Glasgow Centre for Population Health
Active travel definition

• Active travel refers to walking, cycling or using some other form of physical activity for all or part of a journey instead of using motorised transport.

• The term covers all types of journeys, including journeys to work or places of study, to shops, to services and for leisure.
Physical activity
Road safety & casualties
Carbon emissions & climate change
Air quality & pollution
Mental wellbeing
Body weight & obesity
Congestion
Physical activity
Road safety & casualties
Transport is important

• We need reliable means of transport:
  – To reach employment and education
  – To meet family and friends
  – To access amenities, shops and services

• We’re more reliant on transport infrastructure than ever

• Transport patterns are changing…

• … we’re travelling less far by foot but further as a car driver
Travel to work trends, 1966 - 2011

Usual mode of travel to work in Scotland, 1966-2011

Source: Census

- **Car**: 43, 35, 25, 18, 12.5, 6.75, 4.5
- **Bus**: 4, 3, 3, 3, 3.6, 11.2, 11.1
- **Train**: 4, 3, 3, 3, 3.6, 11.2, 11.1
- **Motor Cycle**: 29, 25, 20, 15, 1.5, 1.5, 1.5
- **Bicycle**: 24, 24, 24, 24, 24, 24, 24
- **Foot**: 21, 21, 21, 21, 21, 21, 21
- **Other (e.g. taxi)**: 11.1, 11.1, 11.1, 11.1, 11.1, 11.1, 11.1
Out of 100 commuters...

- 21 travelled by car in 1966, by 2011 this had risen to 69.
- 24 walked to work in 1966, but only 11 walked in 2011.
- 43 took the bus in 1966; in 2011 only 11 travelled by bus.

Source: Census
Traffic - Vehicle Kilometres

Traffic - Vehicle kilometres (in billions of Kms) travelled on all roads, Scotland, 2003 - 2013

Source: Scottish Transport Statistics No 33 2014 Edition
Chapter 5: Road Traffic, Table 5.1
• But the pattern is different across the population…
Travel to work (excluding those who work at/from home) shown by annual net income of household, 2015.
Source: Scottish Household Survey
Households with at least one car, 2011

Percentage of Households with access to one or more cars, 2011

Source: Census 2011
Changing modes of transport: Edinburgh

Proportion of commutes to work or study by mode of transport, Edinburgh
Source: Censuses 2001 & 2011
Glasgow City Centre Cycle Counts, 2009-2016

Glasgow cycle counts from cordon sites around the city, 2009-2016
Source: Land & Environmental Services, Glasgow City Council

To City
- 2009: 2776
- 2010: 2957
- 2011: 2906
- 2012: 3597
- 2013: 3615
- 2014: 4812
- 2015: 4794
- 2016: 5225

From City
- 2009: 2438
- 2010: 2664
- 2011: 2680
- 2012: 3208
- 2013: 3234
- 2014: 4444
- 2015: 4280
- 2016: 4461
Rise in adult cyclist casualty rate

Rate of adult (16+) cyclist road casualties per 100,000 population in Scotland, 1999/2003 - 2009/2013

Source: Transport Scotland, Stats 19 data

25% increase
Despite reductions in casualties, child pedestrian casualty rates remain 2.5 times higher than for adults.
Child pedestrian casualty trends by deprivation

Rate of child (age 5-15) pedestrian casualties per 100,000 population in Scotland, by 2012 Scottish SIMD quintiles, 1999/2003 - 2009/2013

Source: Transport Scotland, Stats19 data

Child pedestrian casualties 3 times higher in most deprived areas
What influences transport choices?
What influences transport choices?

• Safety
• Traffic speed
• Infrastructure and urban design
• Convenience, time efficiency and cost
• Culture and social norms
Safety

• Safety concerns discourage walking and cycling (and use of some public transport)
  • Heavy, fast road traffic, unsafe routes, poorly maintained routes, darkness, potholes, broken glass…

• Safety concerns influence travel choices, particularly to school

• Greater sense of safety encourages use of new (segregated) cycle and walking routes
Traffic speed

- Slower speeds = fewer and less severe casualties
- 20mph limits associated with reduced casualties
- Slower speeds encourage more people to walk and cycle, and to let children walk and cycle to school and play outdoors
Good Infrastructure

- New cycle/walking routes associated with increased cycling and walking
- Cycle hire scheme encourages more cyclists
- “build it and they will come”
- … new road infrastructure also encourages more car use
Upgraded M77 opened April 2015
Good Infrastructure

- New cycle/walking routes associated with increased cycling and walking
- Cycle hire scheme encourages more cyclists
- “build it and they will come”
- New road infrastructure encourages more car use
- Importance of attractive places/spaces
Convenience, time and cost

• Inadequate public and active travel infrastructure can be a barrier to employment and other connections.

• Public transport:
  – Takes too long; no direct route; too costly; no or limited service.

• Car travel considered convenient, flexible, easy and affordable, particularly for those with complex journeys. Often “essential”
Transport needs of more disadvantaged communities?

- Likely to be relatively low-paid, self-employed, part-time, shift or contract workers
- Most likely to have transport needs outside of ‘working hours’
- May have long term health conditions
- More likely to have limited finances
- Less likely to have access to a car
“Are we forcing people into car ownership?”

• Relationship between car ownership and financial status changing

• Some indication of ‘forced’ car ownership in financially distressed households

• Reasons?

Culture and social norms

- Individual’s choices influenced what is ‘normal’.
- For most, cycling is not considered a transport option.
- Freedom and independence are important and associated with cars.
- Public transport is increasingly a service for those who can’t afford a car
How to increase active travel?

• Strong leadership, improved co-ordination and a shift in investment
• Innovative and progressive urban planning
• Integrated infrastructure
• Culture and behaviour change
“Strong political leadership and commitment is needed … that positively discriminates in favour of walking, cycling and public transport use over the car” (GCPH, 2010)

• Good developments in Glasgow
  – nextbike, new cycle routes, 20mph zones
• But …needs to go beyond active travel: a sustainable, inclusive transport policy.
• And be integrated with other key policies (air quality, climate change, urban planning)
• Consistent vision and leadership, community engagement and a shift in investment required
Urban planning

• Inequalities should be a key consideration
• Traffic speeds need controlled
• Safe routes to school should be a priority.
• Safe walking, cycling & outdoor play should be possible
• Neighbourhoods should be able to access high quality local amenities: connectivity.
Integrated infrastructure

• New infrastructure associated with increased commuting by foot and bike.
• Maintenance of active travel routes is important.
• Need greater recognition of the vital role of public transport and safe active travel routes in broader strategies to address inequalities and exclusion.
Culture & behaviour change

- Cars dominate
- If we want more balance, need to:
  - Involve communities in the difficult decisions about transport policy locally and nationally
  - Make walking and cycling and public transport safer, more convenient, more accessible and more acceptable for everyone
  - Improve knowledge and skills of all road users
Where next for GCPH?

What would you like to see us do next?

For example:

• Future programme of work on active *and sustainable* transport?

• Include research to better understand changes in bus use and in car ownership

• Learn from other UK cities who have seen promising change?

• How can we encourage more children to walk to school in Glasgow?

• Something else?
Thank you.

Jill Muirie
Jill.Muirie@glasgow.ac.uk

Glasgow Centre for Population Health
www.gcph.co.uk