

Mobility Biographies and Mobility Socialisation

13-14th February 2014 (TU Dortmund University)

Summary – the *Mobility Biographies and Mobility Socialisation* workshop in Dortmund in February 2014 demonstrated a strong body of research in Austria, Germany and Switzerland which is looking at how travel behaviour evolves over the life course and is affected by social and residential context. In particular, a collaborative project involving universities in Dortmund, Frankfurt and Zurich is using biographical data collected for family members of three generations to obtain unique insights on locational and mobility decisions and their relationship to events over the life course and how these vary between the generations.

I had the pleasure of participating in the *Mobility Biographies and Mobility Socialisation* workshop in Dortmund in February 2014. The mobility biographies term was coined by Martin Lanzendorf (now Professor at Goethe University Frankfurt) in 2003¹ to refer to a way of studying travel behaviour that considers how travel behaviour changes through the life course and utilises biographical data to examine this. Mobility socialisation has been described as ‘the process that makes the individual be a part of the mobile society’ (Tully and Baier, 2006²). I had not appreciated the extent of research activity in these areas in German speaking countries until I attended this workshop. Most of the research that I heard about has not been published in the English language academic press,

The workshop was held as a conference within a conference at the Dortmund Conference on Spatial Planning Research. It was jointly organised by TU Dortmund University (Christian Holz-Rau and Joachim Scheiner), Goethe University Frankfurt (Martin Lanzendorf) and ETH Zurich (Kay Axhausen), who are collaborating on a two-year research project ‘Mobility Biographies: A Life-Course Approach to Travel Behaviour and Residential Choice’ funded by Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG).

25 presentations were given by Austrian, German and Swiss researchers (with exception of myself and Julia Hibbert from Bournemouth University) in two parallel sessions. The researchers had diverse disciplinary backgrounds (spatial and transport planning, geography, psychology and sociology) and brought varied perspectives to the event. Given that I could only attend half of the presentations and the workshop was mainly held in German (my German is not of a standard to understand and engage in technical presentations and discussion) I could not get a detailed appreciation of papers presented. What I have tried to

¹ Lanzendorf, M. (2003) Mobility biographies. A new perspective for understanding travel behaviour. Paper presented at the 10th International Conference on Travel Behaviour Research (IATBR), Lucerne, 10th–15th August, 2003.

² Tully, C. J. and Baier, D. (2006) *Mobiler Alltag. Mobilität zwischen Option und Zwang — Vom Zusammenspiel biographischer Motive und sozialer Vorgaben*. 1st ed. Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften.

do in this note is encapsulate the range of subject matter covered and identify some items of particular interest.

The collaborative project of the organisers 'Mobility Biographies: A Life-Course Approach to Travel Behaviour and Residential Choice' spawned a number of presentations. In this project self-completion biographical data collected from TU Dortmund students and their parents and grandparents (three generations) is being used to study: (1) the effect of changes in household and family structure, residential relocations and employment changes on travel behaviours; (2) inter-generational similarities and differences in residential preferences and travel attitudes and behaviours; and (3) the effects of childhood experience on residential preferences and travel attitudes and behaviours in later adulthood.

Two of the presentations from this project focused on location decisions and compared the three generations. Ilka Ehreke (ETH Zurich) compared working status and workplace location choices between the three generations and between genders. Janna Albrecht (TU Dortmund) looked at different residential trajectories (staying where grew up, returning to where grew up or moving away) and how this is influenced by socio-economics, spatial context and the residential mobility of parents/grandparents.

Hannah Müggenburg and Martin Lanzendorf (Goethe University Frankfurt) used the three generation data to examine how mobility relates to career development (starting from entering higher education or vocational training). Across the sample of 4620 survey respondents, they found that the car becomes increasingly dominant as the main mode for getting to education/training/work as people move further on in their careers (e.g. more car use for second job than first job). Comparing the working life of the grandparents and parents they found that the parents experienced more changes in workplace. Changes in main mode for education/training/work were found to be much more likely in the year when career transitions take place between studying, training and work, rather than stable years. Increases in individual car access were found to be more likely when starting studying, training or working life and decreases more likely when starting studying, changing workplace and starting self-employment.

Lisa Döring (TU Dortmund) talked about her development of a theoretical basis for examining mobility and intergenerational socialisation. She referred to Klaus Hurrelman's theory on socialisation which suggests that identity is constructed in the process of socialisation, i.e. "the productive procession of the inner and outer reality" (Hurrelman 2001). Her analysis of the three generation data shows that attitudes and residential locations of younger generation in a family are associated with those of parents.

Away from the collaborative project of the organisers, a number of presenters focused on specific population groups. Karin Kirsch (TU Dortmund) presented research looking at older people and the key events and life transitions that influence their travel behaviour. Tatjana Fischer, Wiebke Unbehaun and Tina Uhlmann (BOKU Vienna) reported on their research studying the effect on older people of suddenly not being able to drive in a rural area in Austria. Sarah Krompholtz (University of Vienna) presented research on the motivations and decision making of people with multiple home locations. Her qualitative study has identified four different types of people/situations that are associated with this lifestyle. Janina

Welsch (ILS) talked about the early stages of a study of the travel behaviour of migrants in Offenbach am Main which is comparing this to those of non-migrants.

Melanie Herget (InnoZ) explored how families with children in rural areas said they would manage without cars and found that those in former East of Germany were more accepting of using public transport as an alternative than those in the former West which may be attributable to their having more earlier life experience of being public transport users.

Gesa Matthes (TU Hamburg-Harburg) presented research seeking to understand the relationship between residential relocation and travel behaviour by interviewing people who moved to Hamburg about their relocation decision and how their mobility attitudes and behaviour altered before and after their move.

Seeking to translate knowledge into practice, a presentation by Garrit Atkins (OWL, Bielefeld) was concerned with applying concepts of life course transitions to encourage public transport use in Bielefeld region in Germany.

A fuller appreciation will be possible of the research presented at the workshop when a book (edited by Joachim Scheiner and Christian Holz-Rau and published by VS Verlag) is published before the end of 2014 which brings together papers presented at the workshop.

Information about the workshop (in German) is available at <http://www.vpl.tu-dortmund.de/cms/de/Aktuelles/Meldungen/Workshop/index.html>

Kiron Chatterjee (25/09/14)



‘Das Stufenalter des Mannes’ – ‘The life stages of man’ (in Museum für Kunst und Kulturgeschichte - Museum of Art and Cultural History, Dortmund)