Creative Industries, Flexibility, and Travel to Work

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My background and interests:

- 2\textsuperscript{nd} year PhD Student
- Graduate from the University of Salford
- Undergraduate dissertation focussed upon a Workplace Travel Plan
- Interests in commuting, travel to work, working practices, flexibility
Introduction

• The story so far…

• Creativity and Creative Industries

• Fixity and Flexibility

• Theory and conceptualisation

• Questions and hypotheses

• Approach
The story so far…

• Workplace travel planning

• The Commute

• Backcasting/future of commuting

• Global Perspectives

• My approach…
‘The key to economic growth lies not just in the ability to attract the ‘creative class’, but to translate that underlying advantage into creative economic outcomes in the form of new ideas, new high-tech businesses and regional growth’


‘…it seems as if human capital, especially the ability to handle large amounts of information and to come up with bright ideas, has surpassed financial capital, raw materials, and labour in general as the key resources for economic progress’

The concept of creative industries emerged in the late 1990s primarily as a policy discourse, …its origins can be traced to the decision of the then newly elected British Labour government of Tony Blair to establish a Creative Industries Task Force (CITF), as a central activity of its new Department of Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS).

(Flew and Cunningham, 2010. p.113).

‘Creative work facilitates autonomy and flexibility, with informality and diversity seemingly regarded as key characteristics of the creative workforce’

Flexible working practices have become an increasingly popular initiative within many organisations, with the merits and disadvantages associated discussed at length within the literature:

- Work-life balance discussions
- Increase in women participating in labour market
- Intensification of work
- Blurred boundaries between home and work
- Job satisfaction and quality
Fixity and Flexibility

There is a lack of consensus over what flexible working actually is! For instance, these concepts are visible in the literature:

- Schedule Control
- Flexible work practices
- Flexible work arrangements
- Job Control
- Job Autonomy

‘transportation geographers commonly denote activities as fixed or flexible on the basis of their purpose or type. Roughly speaking, paid employment, education, sleep, and transporting children or other persons are considered fixed, and shopping and leisure are regarded as flexible’

(Schwanen, Kwan and Ren, 2008. p.2110).
Responsibilities, mainly those associated to the household, have interesting effects on the way people travel to work. For example:

- Residential location
  Amongst which, residential environment often prevails over travel mode preference (Schwanen and Mokhtarian, 2005).

- The presence of children in the household
  Findings were associated to gendered differences in commuting times (McQuaid and Chen, 2012).
Social practice:

Social practice theory pertains that people (as practitioners) when doing things like walking, driving or cooking, and in the case of this research; working, they actively combine elements from which the practices are made (Shove et al., 2012).

These elements are **Materials**, **Competences** and **Meanings**.

It is anticipated that through discussions of participants’ ‘everyday practices’ regarding work, travel and responsibilities, insight into how and why these are produced will be explored. Hopefully this approach will identify avenues for travel demand reduction through practice reconfiguration.
Creative industries/occupations $\uparrow$ opportunities in flexibility

$\uparrow$ opportunities in flexibility $\uparrow$ lower carbon

$\downarrow$ travel demand
How work is structured has an important impact on how people travel to work.

Those with greater flexibility in determining their own working practices have greater potential to be flexible with how they travel to work.

Where there is greater possibility for flexibility, reducing overall travel demand and/or choosing lower carbon options are contingent on a multitude of factors, namely (household) responsibilities and activities.
Questions and hypotheses

1. Does the structure of work have important impacts on daily schedules?

2. In what ways does flexibility influence travel to work?

3. How do (household) responsibilities influence travel to work decisions, and for whom are these decisions most impacting?

4. What would be required to reduce overall travel demand and/or lead to an increase use in lower carbon options?
Approach

Design
• Comparative Case-study
• Purposive Sampling
• Architects vs Accountants
• SMEs

Methodology
• Two semi-structured interviews

‘The experience of these SMEs showed that a greater degree of genuine flexibility is possible in the small-scale context where relationships are understood and working conditions are clear and visible’. (Dex and Scheibl, 2001. p.411)
Questions and hypotheses

Thank you for your attention

Any Questions?
References:


