

Summary:

Urban development and work trips – gentrification and reurbanisation as an environmental factors

The journey to work is important both to the individual and society due to its social, cultural and economic impacts. For the household the work trips influence the organisation of everyday life. Work trips are often combined with other types of trips and activities, for instance following children to kindergarten or school and shopping. The more complex institutional connections (kindergarten and school) the individual or household has, the more stress is related to temporal organisation. Even if an increasing share of workers has flexible working hours and some also have the possibility to work from home (teleworking), the majority of the working population has nearly identical rhythm in their working schedule. Thus the peak hours of the work trips dimension both the public and the road transport. The length of the work trips, the localisation of residential and working areas, the choice of transport mode and the frequency of the work trips are factors of great societal importance.

The recent trends, both national and international, of people moving back to the central parts of the cities, might cause impacts on both the length and transport mode.

The different aspects of work trips are the basis for the questions addressed in this report:

- What has happened with travel length and transport mode associated with work trips in urban areas during the 1980s and 1990s? Are there variations between social groups?
- What are the differences between residents living in the inner parts of the city compared to those living in the outer parts? What are the motives for selecting residential areas? Is distance to the work place a significant motive?
- What are the differences of travel length and transport mode among people living in the inner parts compared to those living in the outer parts of the urban areas? Are there differences between people from various occupational and educational categories? What are the most important factors, cultural or economical capital? What about gender differences? Do women still have shorter work trips and less car use than men?

The first set of questions is based on results from the Norwegian national travel surveys from 1985, 1992, 1998 and 2001. The analyses of the rest of the questions are based on a survey carried out in Oslo, Bergen and Trondheim¹ in April/May 2001.

Reurbanisation and gentrification

Characteristic of many towns and cities in contemporary Western societies is a dispersion of residential areas, services and places of work. This development has taken place during most of the post-war period, with central urban areas thus gradually becoming less important as residential areas and places of work. This has also been characteristic for Norwegian towns and cities. But in the beginning of the 1990s, the development seemed to change direction, with the older central parts of towns and cities witnessing a population increase. The trend seemed to change from suburbanisation to reurbanisation, and with it a change in the social composition of parts of the inner cities. In Norway, as in many Western societies, a process of “gentrification” was taking place where traditional working class areas in the inner cities were “invaded” by people from the middle classes.

The debate about gentrification, which has been long and extensive, can be divided roughly into three perspectives, i.e. explanations related to: economy and production, consumption and lifestyle and feminisation of the labour market.

Neil Smith has been the main spokesman for an economic oriented approach to explain the gentrification process. Smith claims that gentrification is more related to the movements of capital than of people. He maintains that the deindustrialisation of central urban areas, opens up a gap between the potential value of property and the actual value. This rent gap creates a market for reinvestments, and especially for housing in central urban areas.

Supply also needs demand. There has to be a group of well-off potential buyers for these expensive new flats in traditional working-class areas. David Lay, one of the main proponents of an opposing view of gentrification, claims that gentrification cannot be explained without knowledge of the preferences of the consumers. In his perspective, gentrification is related to the individual consumer’s taste and initiative, and to the cultural and social processes taking place in the urban areas.

A third perspective of gentrification focuses on feminisation of the work force. Women have increased their participation in the labour market during the past 30-40 years, and a considerable proportion work full time in Norway. This phenomenon has had three effects of significance on the development of the city: increasing household income, growing time pressure in everyday life and smaller households. The suburbs, or suburbia, has been related to patriarchy, with the husband as the traditional breadwinner and the wife responsible for domestic tasks. The prior notion of suburbia, with separation of work and housing, virtually presupposed a housewife. For working women in suburbia, distance between the home and work took up valuable time when they also were responsible for the

¹ Oslo, Bergen and Trondheim are the three biggest cities in Norway.

domestic work. A centrally localised home or a home in the vicinity of the workplace saves time, and reduces the need for a car to get to work. With increased employment, women are more economically independent. Households are smaller, many composed by only one person or by women with children. Central urban areas are probably more attractive than outer areas for single people with a more outward-oriented social life style than households with children.

The practical aspects of gentrification, like better access to services and reduced distances to both work and entertainment can be seen as an extension of the feminisation perspective. We believe that these aspects have been poorly communicated in earlier writings. In this report we also pay attention to some other factors, which reinforce the popularity of the central areas. Reduction of road traffic and reconstruction of residential areas have increased the quality of housing areas in the inner parts compared to the outer parts. The traffic has increased on the roads leading into the cities, which means that problems related to traffic are more often than before found outside the city centre where more queues evolve.

Development of the work trips from 1985 to 2001

From 1985 to 2001 the average distance of the work trips has increased from 12 km to 14 km. This change took place between 1992 and 2001. The most substantial increase occurred in the outskirts of the greater cities. The longest work trips are found among residents in the surrounding municipalities of Oslo. The differences in travel length between men and women are bigger outside the city borders than inside, which indicate a greater willingness, acceptance or opportunity for long work trips among men.

Time spent on work trips has changed very little during the period, which means an increase in speed. The explanation is a change from public transport to a higher level of car use. In 1985 46 per cent drove their own car, in 2001 the proportion was 56 per cent. The increase in car use has been higher for women than for men. But still men use the car more frequently than women. In household with only one car men use it more often than women.

A multivariate analysis shows that free parking at the work place is the most important factor explaining car use. During the period this single factor has become even more important. Gender has the same impact in 1985 as in 2001. Access to public transport has also an effect on car use, but it has to be very attractive to compete with the car, and free parking is much more decisive. During the period the difference in car use between Oslo and Trondheim has increased, the latter with most frequent car users.

Motives for choice of residential area

The most important motive for living in the central parts of the cities is the possibility to walk or cycle to daily activities. The vicinity to the city centre is also quite important, and one in fourth emphasise short distance to work. These motives are all expressions of the same dimension; living in inner parts of the city is practical for reaching the activities and services that are needed in everyday

life. Women emphasise this aspect more than men. Also in the outer parts of the cities women more than men underscore the possibility to walk and cycle to daily activities.

Urban qualities like a varied supply of shops, culture and entertainment are not mentioned as a motive for choosing residential area so often as the more practical aspects. But on the other hand, people living in the inner parts of the cities say more often than other residents that they had chosen to live in this special area.

Safety for children is the most frequent mentioned factor for selecting residential areas in the outer parts of the cities. Protection from traffic noise and pollution and size of the dwelling are also important factors. In relation to these three motives the differences between residents in inner and outer parts are significant, but with regard to vicinity to parks etc and quality of the public transport, the differences are minimal.

Residence and workplace

A greater proportion of people living in inner parts of the city also work in the same area as they live than people living in the outer parts. Women more often than men work within the same area as they live. Professionals more often work in central areas than people in other occupational categories.

The probability to both live and work in inner parts of the cities increases with education, are higher among singles, professionals and women. Age has no significant impact. This result is similar to international research on gentrification, i.e. the middle classes move into former traditional working class areas. The findings underpins the feminine perspective. For various reasons women more often than men choose this adaption and they emphasise proximity to work, access to central parts of the city and to cultural activities.

The probability to both live and work in the outer parts of the city is common among manual workers and white collar workers on the lower levels. It is also more common among married or cohabiting couples than among singles.

Travel length and transport mode

Distance to work is significantly shorter for people living in the inner parts than for those living in the outer areas. Women's work trips are shorter than men's, also when controlling for occupational status and age/phase in life cycle.

People living in outer and working in inner parts use the car more often than people who both live and work in the inner parts of the city. In Trondheim the difference in car use between these two groups is 36 percentage points. The difference is smaller when the workplace is localized in the outer parts, but the differences are still significant. About 65 per cent of the residents in the inner part of Oslo walk or cycle to work, in Trondheim the proportion is nearly 80 per cent.

The differences between men and women are significant. Men use the car much more than women. In the inner parts the difference is 15 percentage points, in the outer parts 20 percentage points. Women walk and travel by public transport more than men.

The most important conditions for using the car are location of the work place in the outer areas, travel length, gender and income. The youngest cohort, 30-35 years use the car most frequently.

To walk to work is most typical for those who both live and work in the inner parts of the city, have short distance to work, are women and in the oldest cohort, 60-65 years.

The typical cyclist works in the inner parts, is a man, in the middle age group and professional. Residential area is not significant, but the probability of cycling decreases with travel length.

The probability to travel by public transport is highest for people working in the inner parts and it increases with travel length. It is more common among women than among men and among people with low income.

The possibility for teleworking

More flexibility in work life and an extensive use of information- and telecommunication technology (ICT) have increased the possibility to work from different places. The flexibility in time and space might also change the length, frequency and transport mode of the work trips.

Great expectations have been raised to ICT generally as a substitute for travel activities and thereby reducing the extent of problems connected to road traffic. Research on substitution or change of travel activities has mainly been concentrated on work related travel and often on trial projects at various work places.

In our survey the respondents were asked if they had PC at home and if they had the possibility/allowance to work from their home. In average 40 per cent confirmed this opportunity, ranging from about 10 per cent among manual workers to 60-70 per cent among professionals.

Even if the possibility exists, the average actual use was only 1,6 times per month or 8 per cent of the working days. The most frequent users were professionals and owners of companies, who worked at home about 17 per cent of the days in a month. The typical teleworker in this survey is a professional man, living in the inner parts of the city and have a long work trip.

The urban population want it both ways

The analyses in this report have shown that central localization of work places and residential areas have a favourable effect on transport mode used on the work trips. It reduces the probability of using the car and increases walking, cycling and the use of public transport. The central parts of the cities have increased their attractiveness as residential areas. People living here have a much more environmentally friendly way to organize their daily activities than those living in the outer areas. The motives for people's preferences for a central residence are related both to practical reasons in organizing everyday life and a manifold supply of culture and entertainment. The results from this project show that the urban population, especially people with high education, want it both ways, an easier

daily life with good access to work and a rich variety of leisure activities. For urban planners this is a challenge. New urban areas have to provide a variation of offers to their residents to make it attractive. The urban population will make greater demands on the residential areas in the near future.