



UWE Bristol

Understanding the Social Practices of Transport Management in the UK

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Monday 1st July 2013

Lancaster Sociology Intellectual Party/Summer Conference,
John Urry's Salon – SR5, Bowland North, Lancaster University

Presentation Overview

- What is a Social Practice?
- Why Change Travel Practices?
- Disruption Project Overview
- What is Disruption?
- Social Practices of Highway Network Management
- Changing Practices
- Relevance to Social Practice Theory
- Summary

What is a social practice?

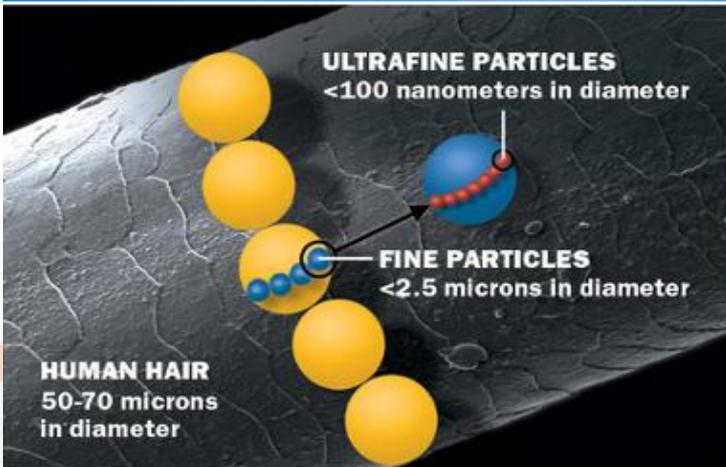


Practices....cannot be conceived as a set of individual actions, but....are essentially modes of social relations, of mutual action.
(Taylor 1971 from Shove et al. 2012)

“The individual is no longer the unit of enquiry”

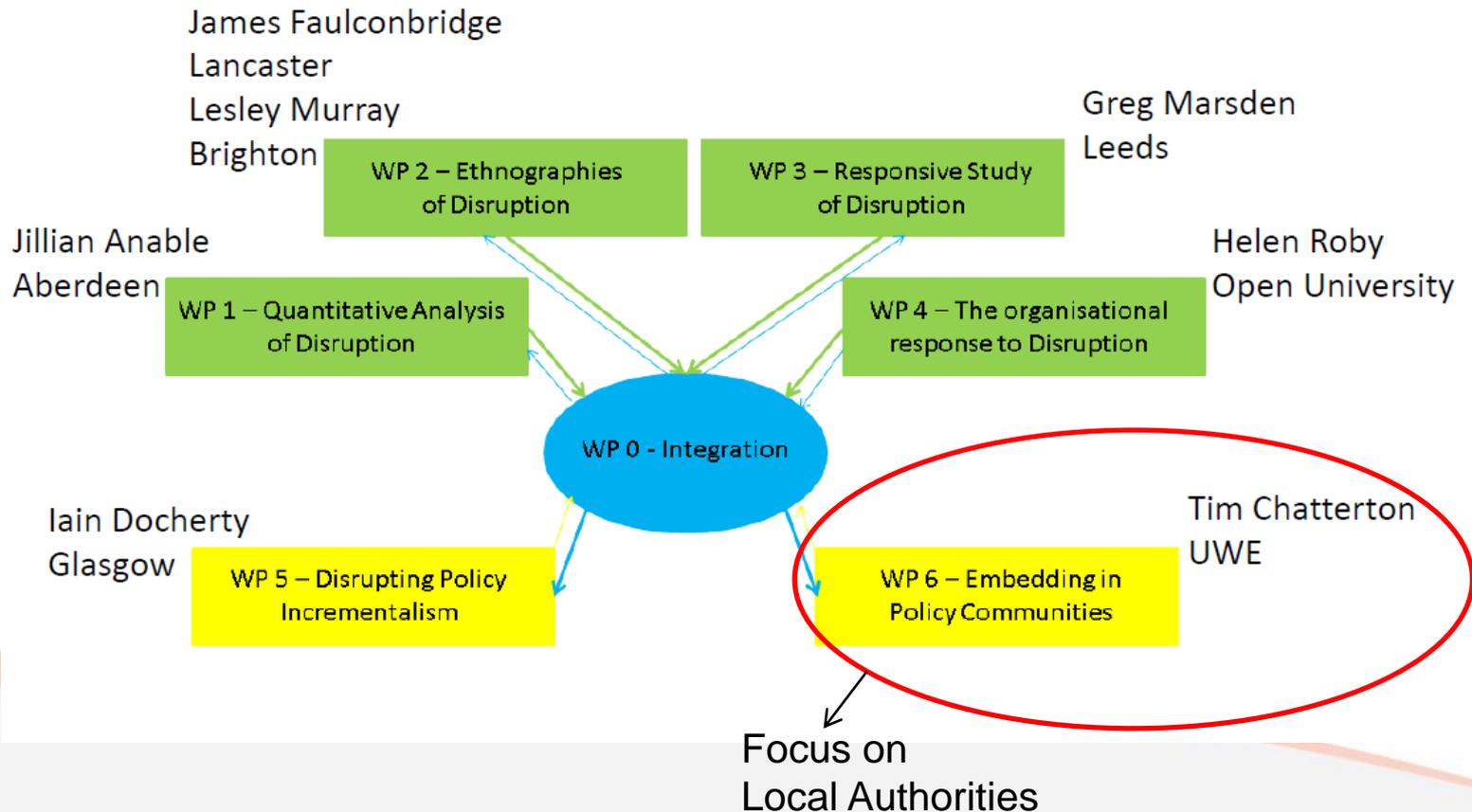
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Why change travel practices?



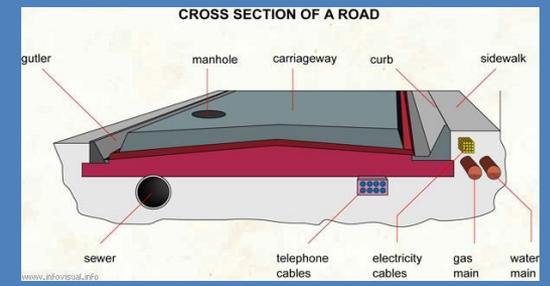
Disruption Project Overview

3 year RCUK Energy Programme funded project
Unlocking Low Carbon Travel



What is Disruption? (Local Authority Context)

Planned



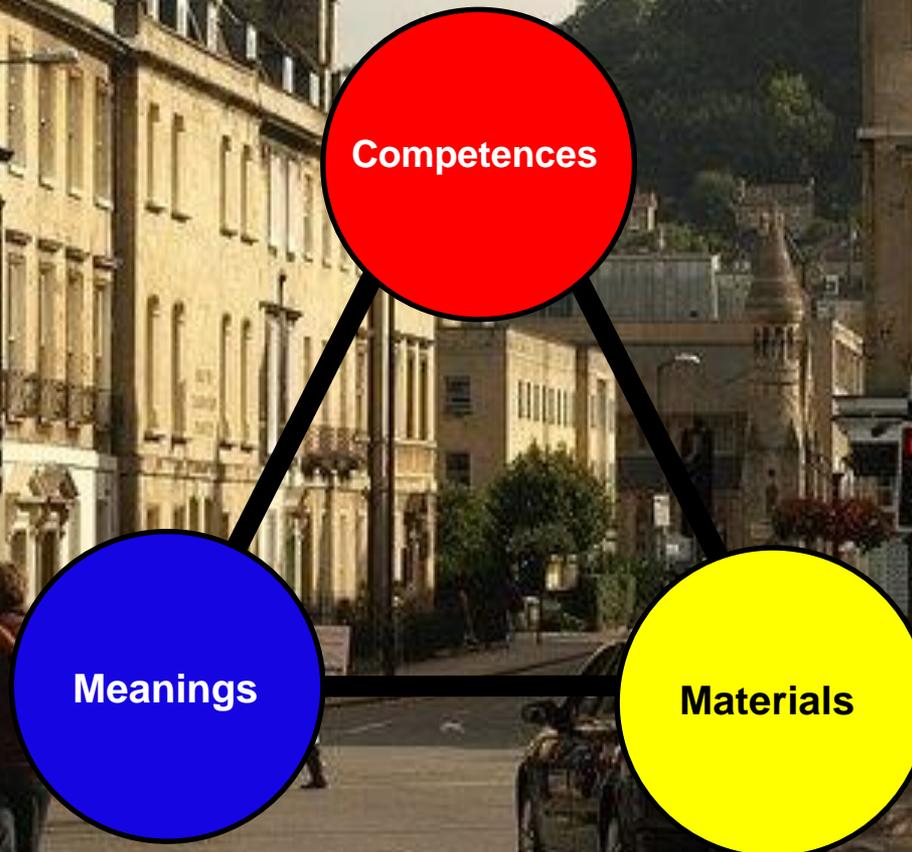
**Unplanned
(predicted)**



**Unplanned
(unpredicted)**



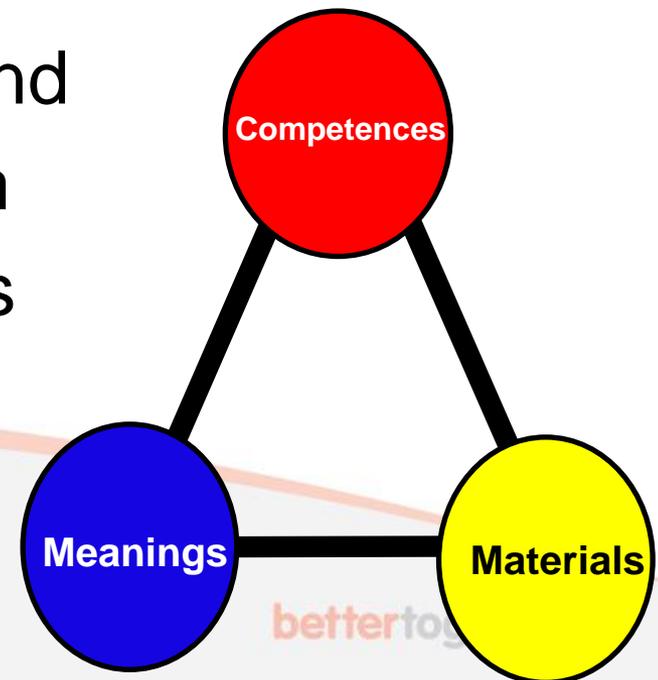
Social Practice of Highway Network Management



Methodology



- Local Authorities legally required to complete a Network Management Plan
- Designed to link up all parts of the Council's management of the Network
- Completed a review of Bath and North East Somerset's Plan in relation to the Three Elements Model



Social Practice of Highway Network Management: “Normal Operation”



Traffic Manager – engage with internal and external stakeholders

Operations – understand routes appropriate for different types of traffic e.g. freight and abnormal loads

Understand predominant traffic flows

Urban Management Control – ensure signals are help traffic flows

Street Gazetteer – Accurate record of network

Street works and noticing of works – manage effectively to avoid major disruptions

Scheduled maintenance - minimise disruption

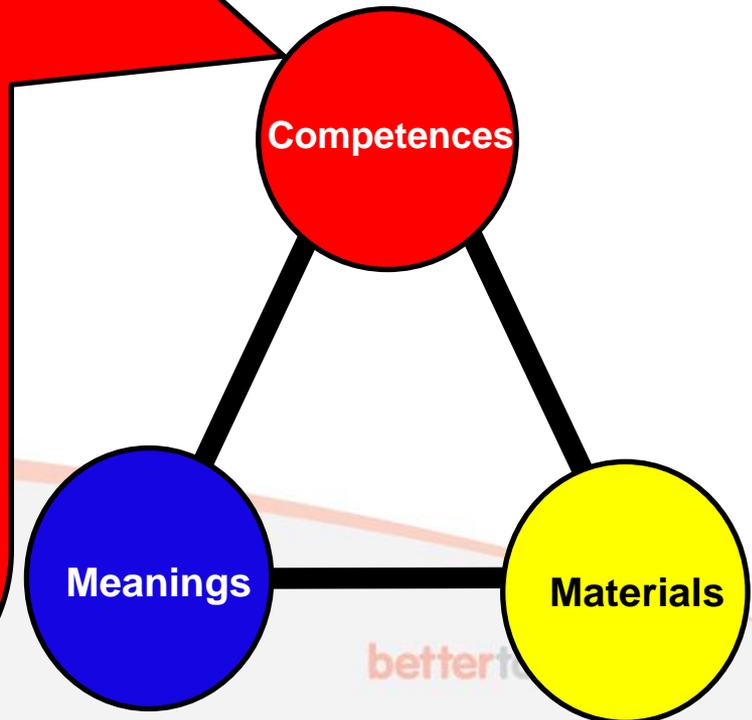
Works – ensure undertaken safely by utility companies, staff and contractors

Understanding of drainage and flood risk

Manage events safely – planned events e.g. half-marathon including road closures

Incident management – ensure diversion routes and staff training up to date

Provide accurate information to the public Deliver information and signage for people accessing tourist sites



Social Practice of Highway Network Management: “Normal Operation”

Network Management Duty – Traffic Management Act 2004

Council’s Highway Strategy – optimise network and promote mode shift

Local Transport Plan – Vision for network to 2030

Road User Hierarchy – pedestrian and cycle highest priority. Car drivers the lowest.

Road Hierarchy – which roads are the most important to the network

Traffic Sensitive Streets – impose work times and conditions to prevent disruption.

Scheme Prioritisation – decide which schemes are deliverable

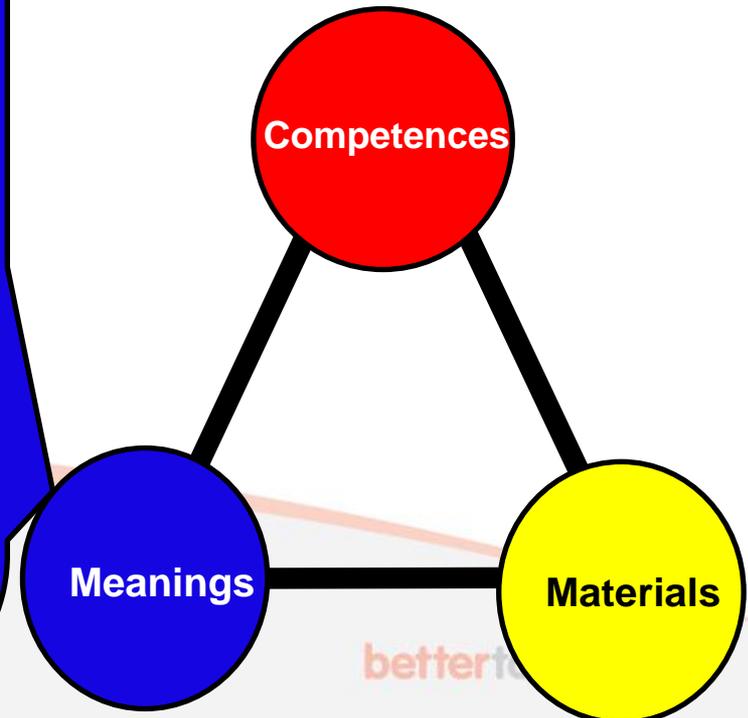
Street Gazetteer – able to put additional information such as Special Engineering Difficulties

Lead Local Flood Authority – power to enter private property

Events management – change use of network

Diversion routes – changes to where certain vehicles can travel

Civil Parking Enforcement – demand management



better

Social Practice of Highway Network Management: “Normal Operation”

Highway Network – including carriageway, pavements, bridges and structures

Appropriate signage – to allow people to navigate around the area safely and effectively

Improved sustainable travel provision – including cycle paths and bus priority

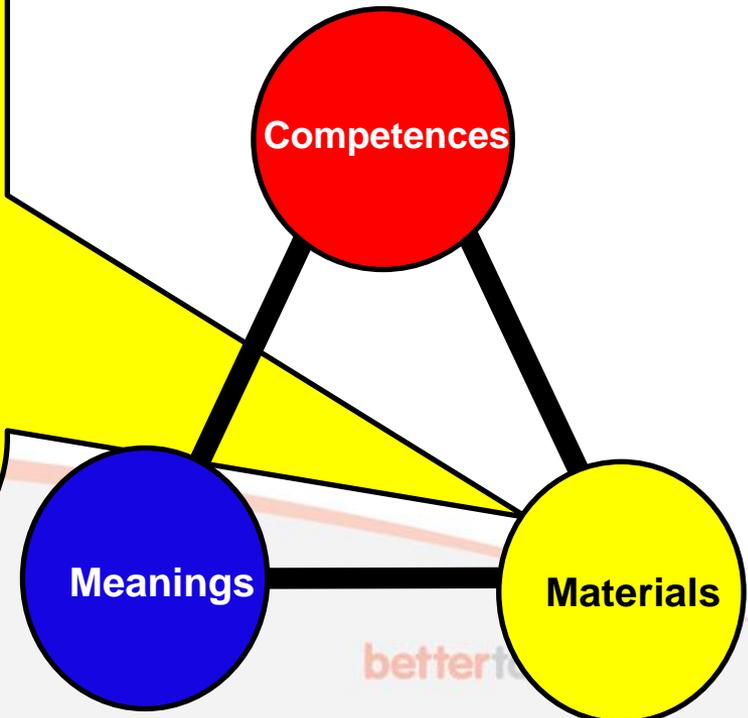
Street works – ensuring network and utilities are maintained adequately

Managing works on network – ensure the network is suitable to pass an adequate level of traffic.

Highway Drainage – ensure drainage is managed maintained effectively to reduce flood risk

Urban Management Control – Traffic signals, CCTV and Variable Message Signs

Information – contact centre, internet site and leaflets



Social Practice of Highway Network Management: “Planned Disruption”

- Manage “*noticing of works*” by utility companies to minimise disruption
- Manage other works to ensure no significant conflicts
- Set up appropriate diversion routes
- Responsibility for public safety passes to people undertaking work for duration for duration of works
- Inspect works to ensure public safety
- Plan works for appropriate times of day/week/year

Competences

- Traffic Restrictions in place
- Changes to road user priority
- Changes to parking restrictions

Meanings

- Reduced availability of carriageway/footpath
- Information (signs, internet, leaflets) informing of disruption
- Changes to traffic signal times and use VMS signs

Materials



Social Practice of Highway Network Management: “Unplanned - Predicted”

- Interpreting weather forecasts
- Spreading rock salt
- Having adequate supplies of salt and ploughs
- Preparing and implementing diversion routes for impassable routes
- Workforce available to manage network
- Providing correct information to the public

- Priority routes for gritting: A roads, public transport routes, freight routes, hospitals and fire stations, links to other local authority and links to schools
- Change to road user hierarchy - pavements and cycle paths cleared if staff available

- Reduced network -38% of network gritted
- Grit bins available for public use on pavements and non gritted routes
- Changes to signals (if required) and use of VMS
- Appropriate signing for diversion routes

Competences

Meanings

Materials

Social Practice of Highway Network Management: “Unplanned Unpredicted”

- Incident Management procedures adopted
- Co-ordinate with internal and external bodies e.g. Emergency services
- Mobilise trained volunteers to provide public support

- Management may pass to Incident Management team (dependent on incident)
- Instigate emergency conditions
- Give authority to emergency services where necessary

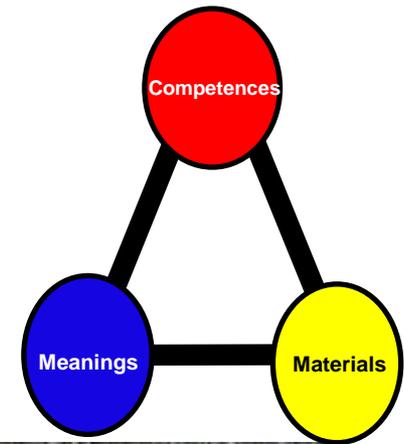
Competences

Meanings

Materials

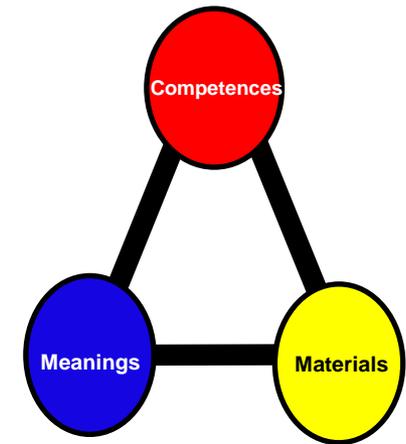
- Reduction in network
- Changes to signals (if required) and use of VMS
- Appropriate signing for diversion routes
- Have trained volunteers ready to support Council and emergency services

Changing Practices



Surrey County Council, 2012

Changing Practices



Proceedings of the Institution of Civil Engineers
 Municipal Engineer 133
 March 2012 Issue 1
 Pages 13-22

Issue 133 (7)
 November 2011 (2011)
 Accepted for publication 12/2011

Keywords:
 Road & city planning; Transport planning; Urban environment

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Disappearing traffic? The story so far

S. Cairns, S. Atkins and P. Goodwin

Reallocating roadspace from general traffic, to improve conditions for pedestrians or cyclists or buses or on-street light rail or other high-occupancy vehicles, is often predicted to cause major traffic problems on neighbouring streets. This paper reports on two phases of research, resulting in the examination of over 70 case studies of roadspace reallocation from eleven countries, and the collation of opinions from over 200 transport professionals worldwide. The findings suggest that predictions of traffic problems are often unnecessarily alarmist, and that, given appropriate local circumstances, significant reductions in overall traffic levels can occur, with people making a far wider range of behavioural responses than has traditionally been assumed. Follow-up work has also highlighted the importance of managing how schemes are perceived by the public and reported in the media, with various lessons for avoiding problems. Finally, the findings highlight that well-designed schemes to reallocate roadspace can often contribute to a multiplicity of different policy aims and objectives.

1. INTRODUCTION
 Reducing roadspace for general traffic, and reallocating it to pedestrians or cyclists or buses or trams or other high-occupancy vehicles, could significantly increase the attractiveness of these modes, and facilitate more efficient use of the road network. Yet proposals for such changes are usually controversial. One recurrent issue is whether the displaced traffic will simply divert to neighbouring streets, clogging them up and leading to worse congestion and pollution. This paper reports on findings from research based on over 70 case studies from eleven countries, and the opinions of over 200 transport professionals worldwide. The findings suggest that such problems are, in reality, rarely as bad as predicted, and that, with careful planning and appropriate implementation, reallocating roadspace to more sustainable modes of transport can result in a variety of complementary benefits.

2. CONTEXT
 In the mid-1990s, there was a radical shift in UK Government policy on road building. Specifically, the Government clarified that building roads was not always a solution to congestion, as creating new capacity could generate traffic. This was partly due to technical advice from its own Standing Advisory Committee on Trunk Road Assessment (SACTRA),¹ and partly due to the popular recognition that, for example, building the

M25 motorway had not produced consistently free-flowing traffic conditions around London (despite having been built with excessive spare capacity according to the traffic conditions before its construction).

However, while it was officially recognised that building roads could induce additional traffic, the opposite proposition, namely that reducing roadspace could reduce traffic, was not widely accepted in either theory or practice. Consequently, numerous proposals for pedestrianisation or bus priority schemes were rejected, due to fears of the problems that they could create on surrounding streets. Examples in London include schemes in the London 'Green Area' study, and parts of the London Bus Priority Initiative such as the whole route priority proposed for Route 68 between Camden and Camberwell.

To address the issue, a research study was commissioned by London Transport and the Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions in 1997. Two reports were published—by Cairns, Hass-Klau and Goodwin on the practical evidence,² and by MVA³ on the implications for modelling. This paper summarises and updates the evidence study.

3. THE ORIGINAL STUDY
 The original evidence study (by Cairns, Hass-Klau and Goodwin) sought to identify all possible case studies of circumstances where roadspace had been reallocated, whether due to positively planned schemes, temporary road closures for maintenance or renewal of transport facilities, or natural disasters. Although the stimulus for change varied, in each case drivers needed to decide what to do when their normal travel patterns were disrupted, and there were useful insights from all the examples as to how they reacted.

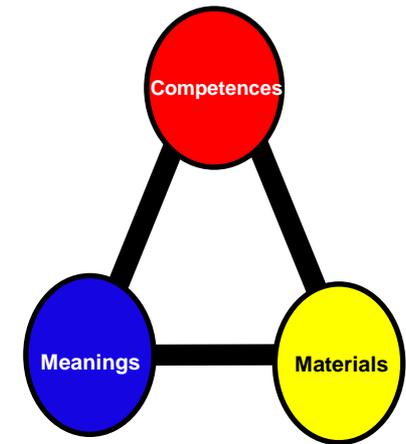
Examples included pedestrianisation schemes in German and other Continental European cities; the City of London 'King of Street' project following IRA bombing; closures of bridges such as London's Westminster Bridge, Tower Bridge and Hammersmith Bridge for repairs and maintenance; city-centre traffic schemes in places like Oxford, Cambridge and Wolverhampton; the introduction of bus lanes in cities such as Cardiff, Bristol and Toronto; the closure of a rural road south of London; the street enhancement projects in Norwegian towns; the Six Towns Bypasses Monitoring Project; the Tasman Bridge collapse in Hobart, Australia; and the effects of earthquakes in

Disappearing Traffic (urban focus), Cairns *et al.* 2002

Look for opportunities to reduce road capacity in urban areas

Reduce the need for travel

Changing Practices



Risk - insurance

AA provided details of how to sue local authority in 2013

Keep roads closed due to damage

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Pothole damage

How to make a claim for damage to your vehicle if you hit a pothole

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At low speed, hitting a deep pothole can cause damage to tyres, wheels and steering alignment but the cost of repair probably won't justify an insurance claim.



At higher speed, hitting a deep pothole can cause severe damage and also risks loss of control resulting in impact with other vehicles, the kerb or roadside objects.

When safe to do so, stop and check your wheels and tyres after hitting a pothole although damage to tyres may not be immediately apparent.

If you notice a **vibration**, the steering wheel doesn't 'centre' properly or it pulls to one side, get the car checked at a garage or tyre specialist as faults such as **tracking or steering damage** can lead to later expense or even an accident.

Statutory defence

You might be able to claim for the cost of any repairs required to your vehicle from the Highway Authority. It's important to understand that

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Collapsed footway between Cholsey and Moulsoford

Published 01 March 2013

Engineers are investigating a section of collapsed footway alongside the A329 between Cholsey and Moulsoford.

The council is looking into the cause and extent of the damage, including whether the carriageway itself has also been affected.

The council has a responsibility to ensure safe passage for pedestrians at this location, and having considered a number of options, a decision was made to close the section of footway and divert pedestrians onto the adjacent carriageway. Unfortunately this has meant reducing the road to a single lane for vehicles and installing temporary traffic lights.

The council acknowledges this is causing significant delays for motorists and apologises for the inconvenience caused. However, without a safe walkway there would be a significant risk of an accident involving passing traffic, and under such circumstances we have to prioritise the safety of pedestrians.

It is not yet clear how long the temporary lights will need to remain in place, as engineers are still investigating the causes of the collapse and whether the carriageway has also been affected. This work will determine the nature and extent of the required repairs.

At this early stage, our best estimate is that the repairs may not be completed until the summer, but we will make every effort to resolve the problem as swiftly as possible to minimise the disruption this is causing motorists.

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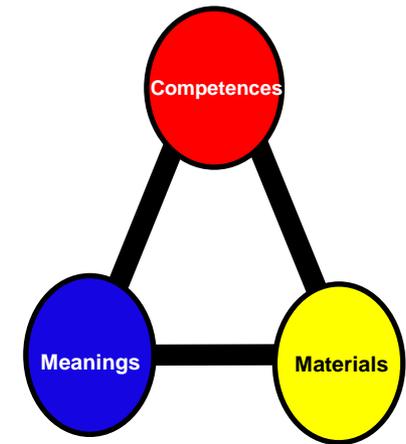
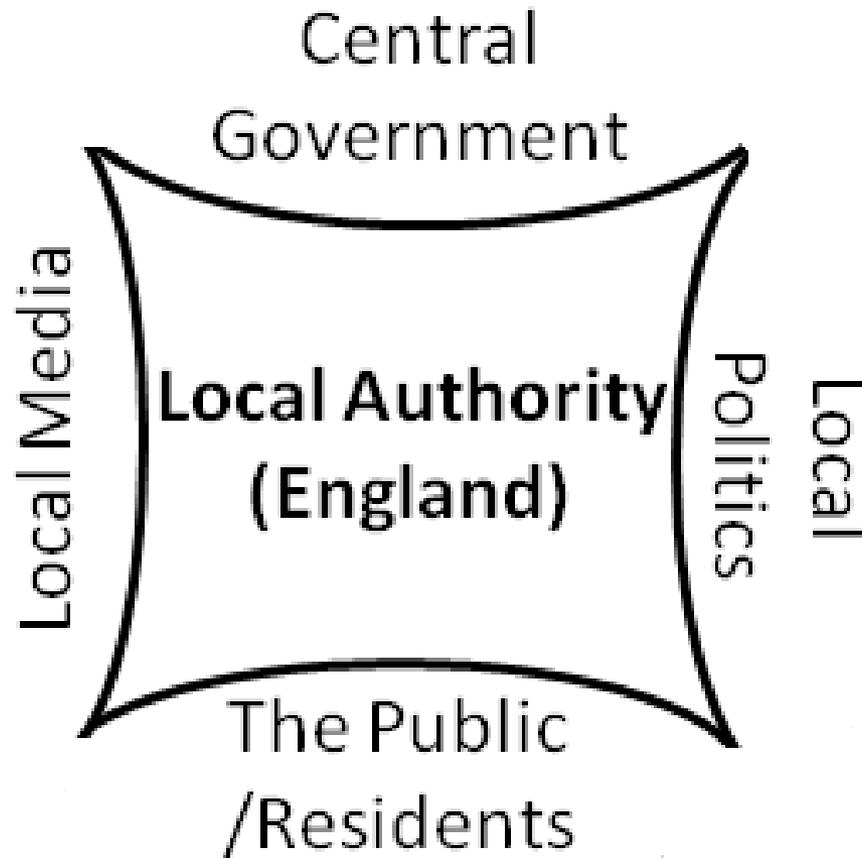
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Changing Practices



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Bath loses fight to ban lorries from Cleveland Bridge

A proposed ban on heavy lorries using the Grade II-listed Cleveland Bridge in Bath has been overturned by the Department for Transport (DfT).

Bath and North East Somerset Council wanted the A36 taken out of the national road network so it could impose an 18-tonne weight limit.

Councillors in Wiltshire and Somerset and the Highways Agency appealed saying traffic would move onto local roads.

The DfT upheld the appeal saying an alternative scheme had to be found.

Related Stories

- Bridge weight limit challenged
- Bath lorry ban could impact town
- Council bid for A36 weight limit

Relevance to Social Practice Theory

- Disruptions provide an opportunity to understand how social practices change
- Not all disruptions/breaks are the same, some can be planned or predicted
- Planned and predicted disruptions provide an opportunity for change that is rarely taken up
- Policy makers need to be bold in using disruption to create step change in carbon intensive sectors
- However, There is always the risk of unintended consequences

Conclusions

- Need to change travel practices for environmental, health and economic purposes
- Disruption is a normal part of the network's operation
- Better understanding of flood risk in new developments would help to make flooding events more predictable
- The three elements model provides a picture of the “now” and helps identify the gap between policy and practice
- Understanding and changing the materials, meanings and competences at a local authority level will change the way ‘actors’ travel through the network