



# UWE Bristol

## Understanding the Social Practices of Transport Management in the UK

David Williams (PhD Student)

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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?

All the world's a stage. And all the men and women merely players. They have their exits and their entrances. And one man in his time plays many parts...

- Jacques As You Like It 2.7.139-142



48 **Sun** woman | thesun.co.uk/sunwoman

## I do 17 jobs in 24 hours

### MUMS MULTI-TASK MORE THAN EVER

By LUCY GARDNER

**WOMEN are famous for their ability to multi-task, but recent stats suggest mothers are taking on at least 14 different jobs in ONE DAY.**

The average mum has a hectic 16-hour schedule packed with roles including wife, mother, coach, cleaner, dog walker and taxi driver.

That may sound like a ridiculous amount of work but as many mums know, the list is just the tip of the iceberg.

Hannah Skeritt, 37, is married to Dave, 44, a construction worker, and is mum to three children.

She considers herself an average mum - although she manages to take on several different roles in 24 hours.

**Onions**

Hannah, from Rochester, Kent, says: "A typical day starts at 6am as I get Darragh, Daniel, Joel and Jordan all dressed, fed and kitted, all in 15 minutes."

"Then at 7am I start my part-time job as a recruitment consultant.

"My husband will then pick up Darragh from breakfast club and I dash over from my work to pick up Darragh from school at 8am, before getting the other three and taking them all for a walk."

"I also have to look after the animals and animals we have three dogs, a variety of chickens and vegetables in the kitchen. Last year we grew green beans, onions, potatoes, and peas. When I look in on it, I had more than 100kg of onions and 10kg of peas."

"A few nights a week Hannah will look after her two-year-old son and his routine of roller skating, swimming lessons, karate and tennis, she says: "The car is disgusting, it's covered in mud from roller skating lessons."

From teacher to taxi driver, Hannah even likes to make fresh value meals for her family.

"Everyone loves my homemade cakes and even though I'm cheating a bit, I love making a bread for the family."

With barely any down time, a friend suggested they put an evening class on one night a week. Hannah took a break, up for a driving course. "I don't think I'd find time for it, but since then I've done that, and even whenever I can."

"Our company is growing, so perhaps that I have made for the kids too."

All in all, it's a busy life for Hannah, but she says she doesn't mind the social networking and online marketing, and she's planning parties for Christmas and New Year.

"I don't think I'd do anything if I had more time."

"Mums are just so busy these days, it's never more than I am bored."

**Hannah's daily schedule**

- Actual job
- Part-time recruitment consultant
- Domestic roles
- Mum
- Wife
- Teacher
- Help son with homework
- Exercise
- Socialite
- Party planner
- First aider
- Swimmer
- Social researcher (Facebook/Twitter)
- Baker
- Dog walker
- Cleaner
- Coach

**JUST SOME OF HER MANY ROLES**

- Mum and teacher
- The seamstress
- The gardener
- The party planner
- Wife to hubby Dave
- The dog walker

# What is a social practice?

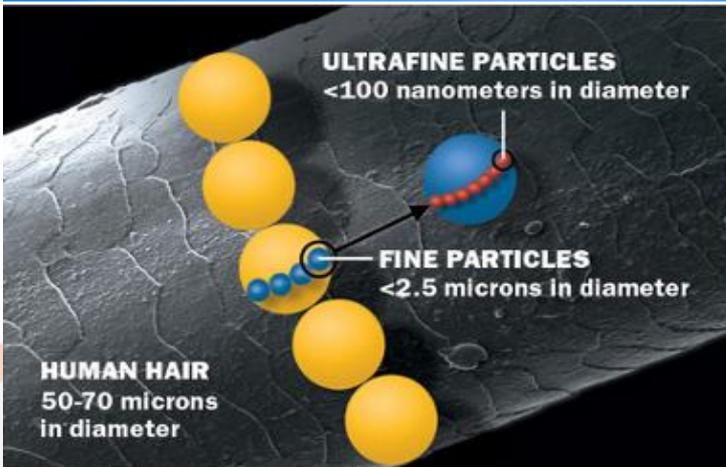


Practices....cannot be conceived as a set of individual actions, but....are essentially modes of social relations, of mutual action.  
(Taylor 1971 from Shove et al. 2012)

**“The individual is no longer the unit of enquiry”**

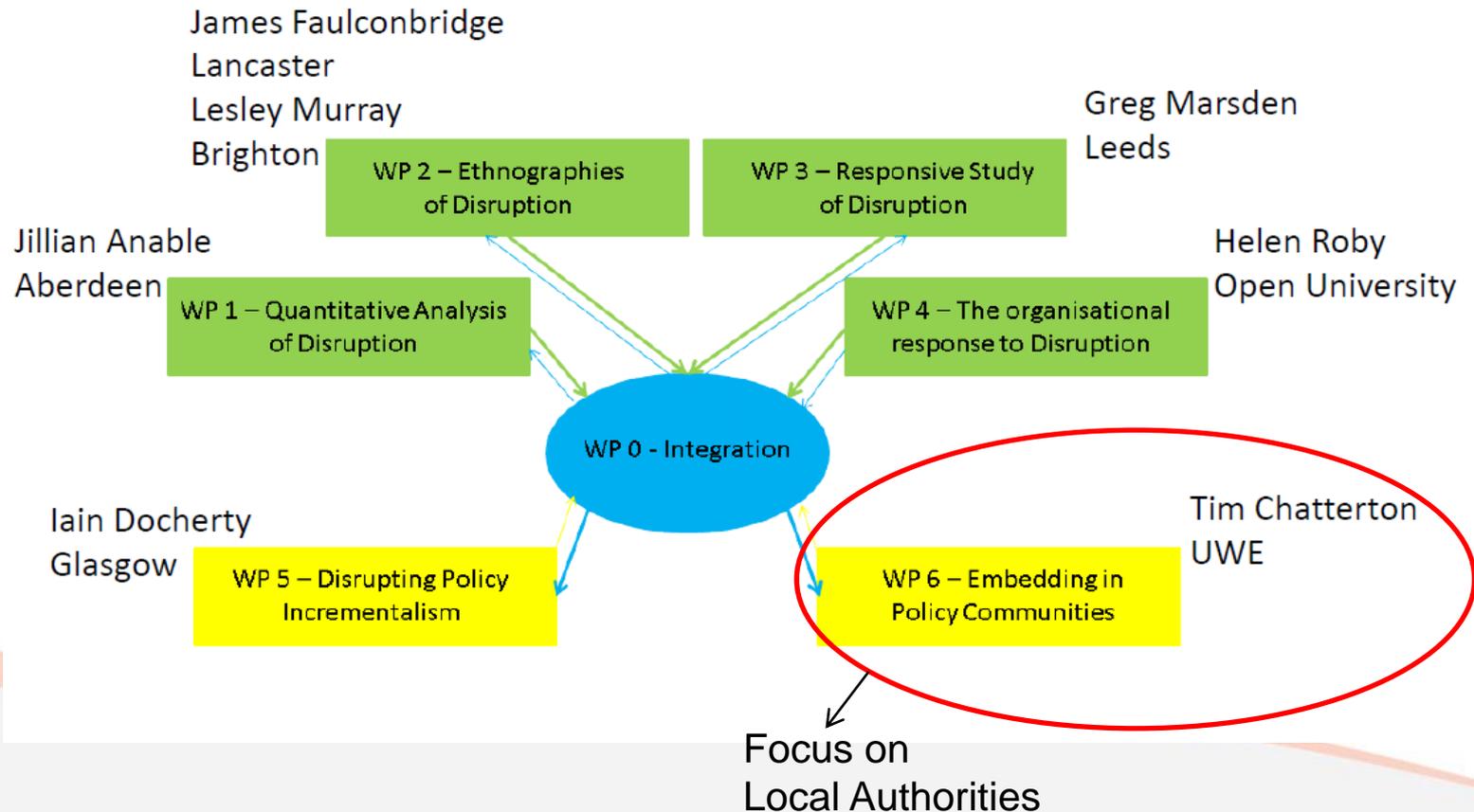
bettertogether

# Why change travel practices?



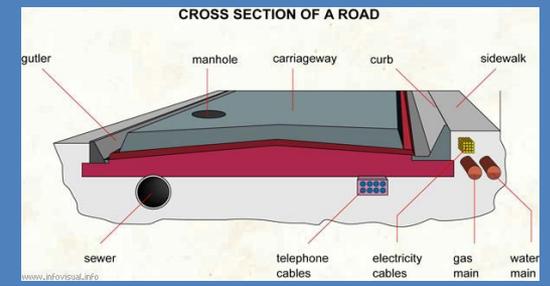
# Disruption Project Overview

3 year RCUK Energy Programme funded project  
*Unlocking Low Carbon Travel*



# What is Disruption? (Local Authority Context)

**Planned**



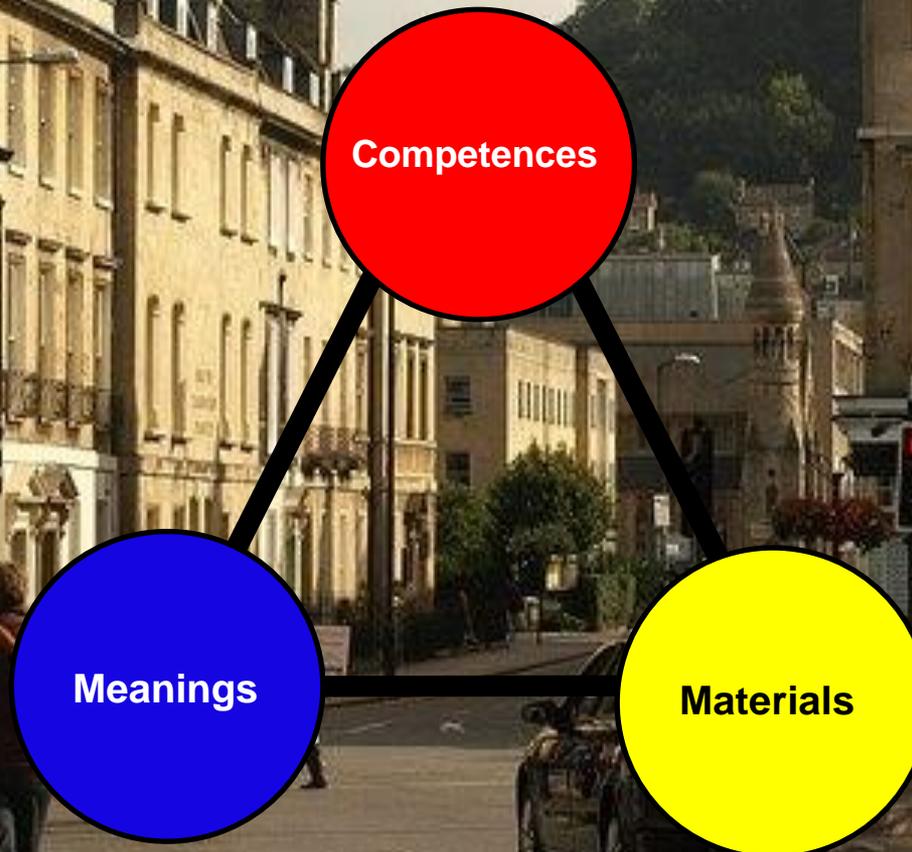
**Unplanned  
(predicted)**



**Unplanned  
(unpredicted)**



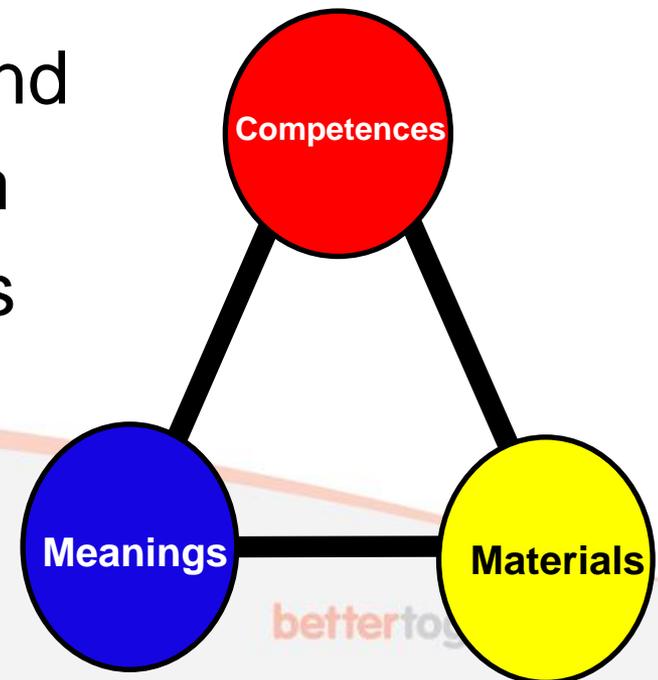
# Social Practice of Highway Network Management



# 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

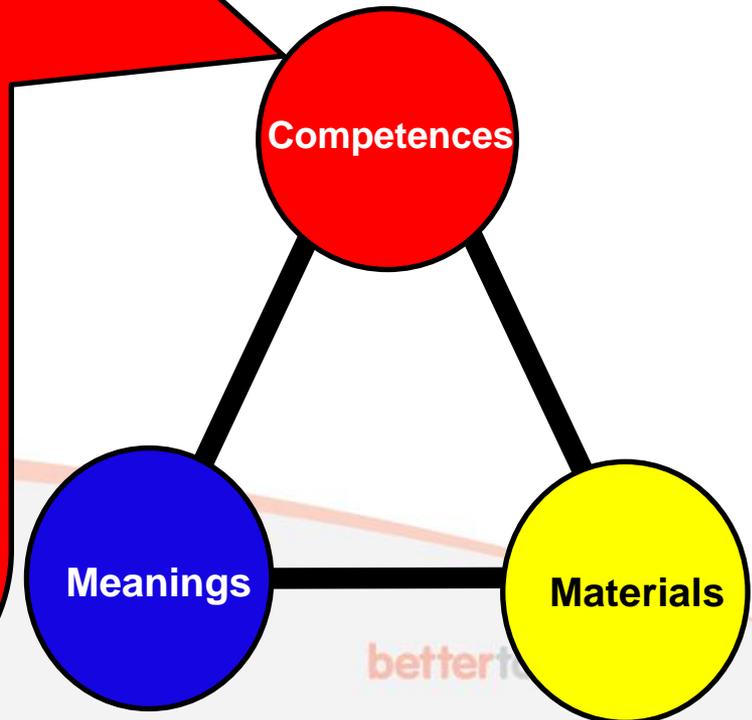
**Works** – ensure undertaken safely by utility companies, staff and contractors

**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

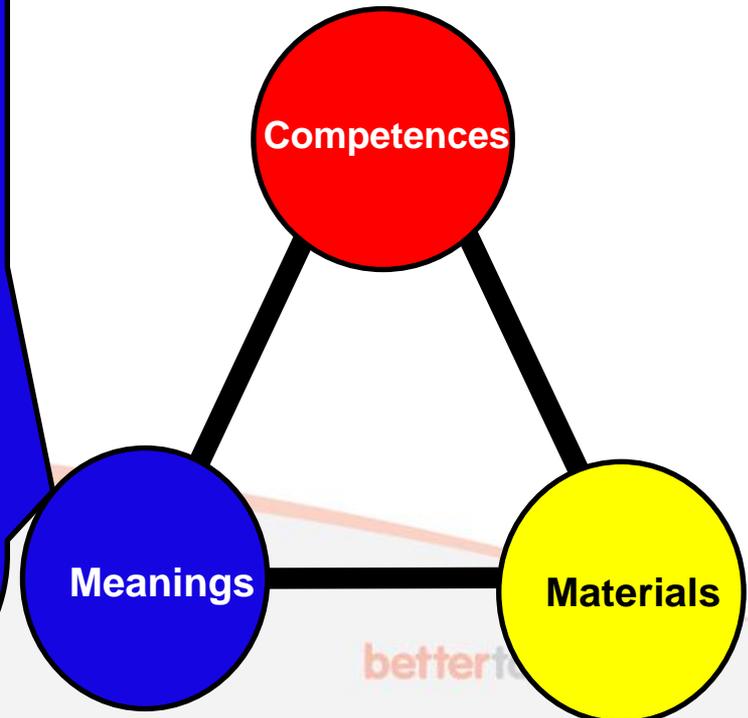
**Street Gazetteer** – able to put additional information such as Special Engineering Difficulties

**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



# 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

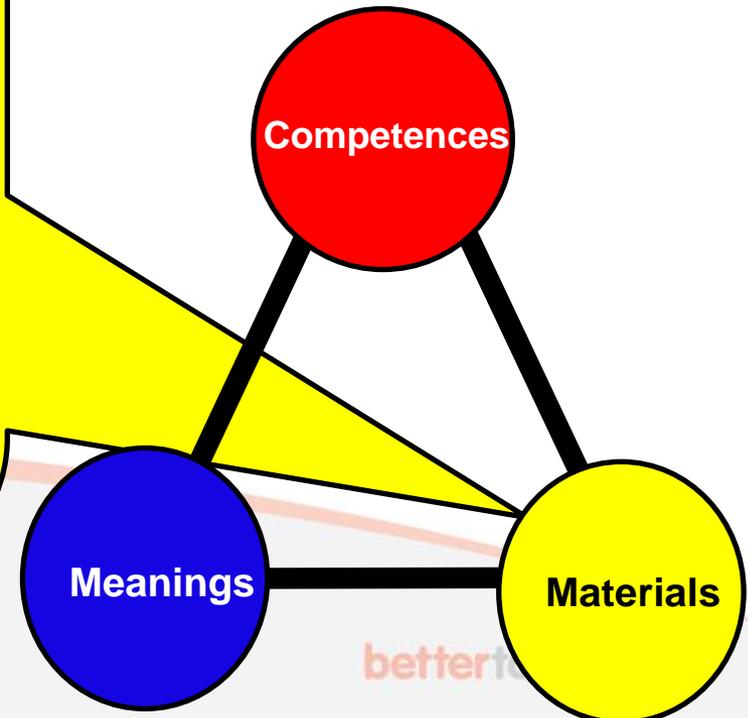
**Street works** – ensuring network and utilities are maintained adequately

**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

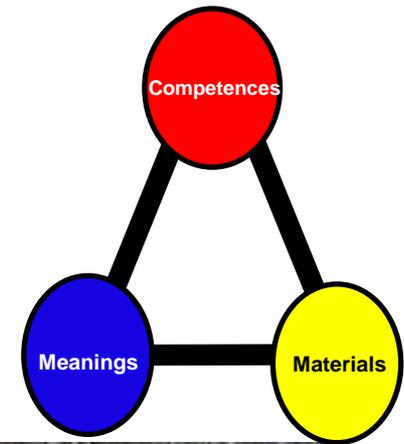
**Competences**

**Meanings**

**Materials**

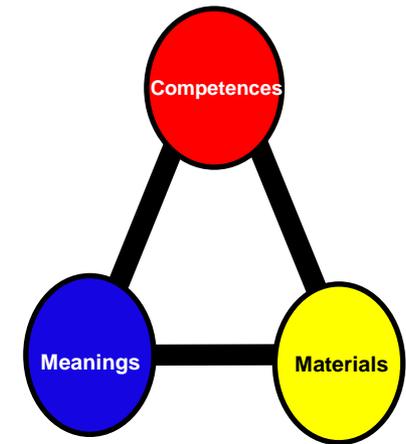
- Reduction in network
- Changes to signals (if required) and use of VMS
- Appropriate signing for diversion routes
- Have trained volunteers ready to support Council and emergency services

# Changing Practices



Surrey County Council, 2012

# Changing Practices



## 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),<sup>1</sup> 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 recognized 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,<sup>2</sup> and by MVA<sup>3</sup> 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.

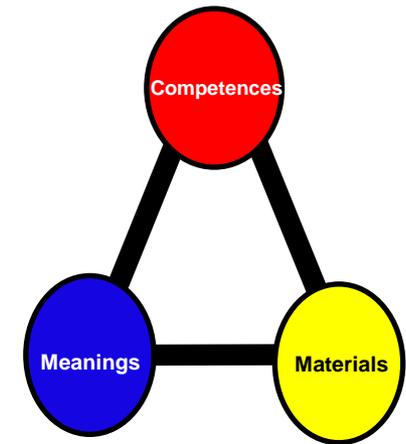
Examples included pedestrianisation schemes in German and other Continental European cities; the City of London 'King of Street' project following IRA bombing; closures of bridges such as London's Westminster Bridge, Tower Bridge and Hammersmith Bridge for repairs and maintenance; city-centre traffic 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

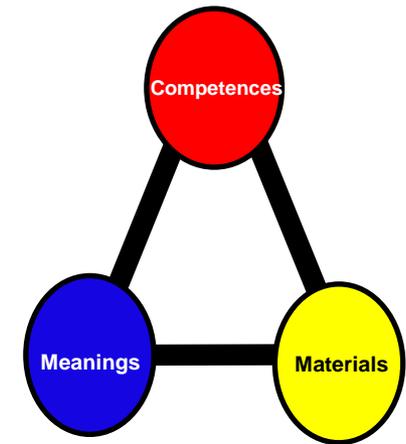
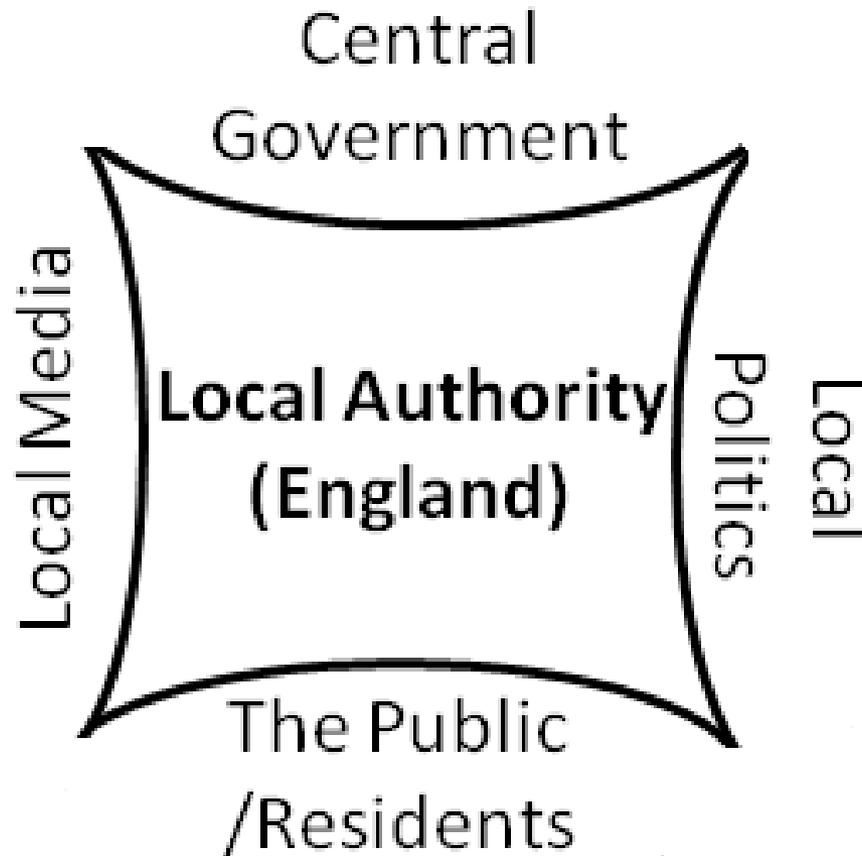
AA provided details of how to sue local authority in 2013

Keep roads closed due to damage

The screenshot shows the AA website's 'Pothole damage' article. The header includes the AA logo and navigation links like 'HOME', 'BREAKDOWN COVER', 'INSURANCE', etc. The article title is 'Pothole damage' with a subtitle 'How to make a claim for damage to your vehicle if you hit a pothole'. There are social media sharing icons for Facebook (69 likes), Print (5), and Twitter (31). The main text explains that at low speed, hitting a deep pothole can cause damage to tyres, wheels, and steering alignment. A photograph shows a large pothole filled with water. The article also mentions that at higher speeds, hitting a pothole can cause severe damage and risks loss of control. A section titled 'Statutory defence' is partially visible at the bottom.

The screenshot shows the Oxfordshire County Council website's news article 'Collapsed footway between Cholsey and Moulford'. The header includes the council logo and navigation links like 'Main menu', 'Where I live', 'A-Z', 'Help and accessibility', and 'Contact us'. The article title is 'Collapsed footway between Cholsey and Moulford' with a subtitle 'Published 01 March 2013'. The main text states that engineers are investigating a section of collapsed footway alongside the A329 between Cholsey and Moulford. It mentions that the council is looking into the cause and extent of the damage, including whether the carriageway itself has also been affected. The article also notes that the council has a responsibility to ensure safe passage for pedestrians and that the collapse has caused significant delays for motorists. A section titled 'Need AA Breakdown Cover?' is visible at the bottom.

# Changing Practices



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31 October 2012 Last updated at 21:56

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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