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Sustainable Transport: How a Galway company made the 'Smart Move'

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Introduction

- Recent social and economic changes reflected in Ireland's transport sector
 - High spending on **transport infrastructure** from late 1990s until mid-2000s and limited integration of transport and land use policies led to **growing 'consumption of distance'**
 - Since late 2000s transformation of transport sector due to **recession** and growing emphasis on **sustainability**
 - E.g. emissions-related motor taxation since 2008 has increased share of cars with lower emissions

Recognising the Need for Change

- BUT:
 - Transport remains **among top three emitters of GHGs in Ireland** (~20% in 2012)
 - **‘Celtic Tiger’ legacy of car dependency** difficult to reverse
 - Since 2009 emphasis on **‘smarter travel’** – short-term response to financial difficulties or long-term commitment to sustainability?
 - Target 2020: 20% reduction (2005 baseline)

Source: EPA 2011

Time for Departure?

How to change travel behaviour

- Conventional view that people are **rational actors** who respond to 1) **information**, 2) (dis)**incentives** and 3) changes in **infrastructure** ('three Is')

BUT:

- Presence/absence of '**three Is**' does not sufficiently explain changes in how (much) people travel
- Significance of established **everyday travel practices**, their social and cultural functions and meanings and their material realities
- Crucial role of **meso level of social organisation** which connects individuals and households to large-scale social structures
 - e.g. communities, associations, organisations

Shared Journeys and 'Smart Moves'

Changing commuting practices in a large organisation in the West of Ireland

ConsEnSus - WP3

Researching change in travel practices

- **Critical comparison of social scientific theories** of travel behaviour and its transformation
- **Transport policy analysis** (national and international)
- **Empirical investigation** of travel and ‘virtual mobility’ practices in organisations
- **WP3 examines two areas of change:**
 - **Modal shift** from car to walking, cycling, public transport use and car pooling
 - Technology-led **reduction in physical travel** and shift to ‘**virtual mobility**’

Project overview

Comparative context on national level

ConsEnSus life style survey

Analysis of European and national transport policy

Case study

Exploration T1

Site analysis
Travel survey
3 Focus groups
42 Interviews
Observation

Change initiatives

Earth Day
Smart Moves
Challenge

**Evaluation T2
(short-term)**

18 Follow up
interviews

Observations

**Evaluation T3
(long-term)**

Travel survey

11 Follow up
interviews

Observations

Case study

- **Thermoking Galway** - large multi-national employer (ca. 500 employees)
- Well-established since 1970s
- European HQ & manufacturing plant; diverse workforce
- Part of cluster of large employers which attracts employees from Galway city and its hinterland (similar to other cities in IRL)
- Modal split among staff reflects national pattern (more than 70% drive to work)
- Intervention in April 2011 – **conventional travel plan** (based on ‘three Is’) + **innovative team-based competition** (‘Smart moves’ challenge lasting 30 days)

Qualitative assessment of employer-based change initiative

Exploration T1	Change initiatives	Evaluation T2 (short term)	Evaluation T3 (long term)
Travel Survey (Oct 2010)	Earth Day (20/04/2011)	22 Travel diaries (5 weeks)	Travel Survey (Oct 2011)
3 Focus groups (Dec 2010)	Smart Moves Challenge (27/04 – 02/06/2011)	18 Follow-up Interviews (June 2011 - directly after intervention)	11 Follow-up Interviews (Sept 2011)
23 Interviews (April 2011)	27 participants		

① Conventional workplace travel

1) Information

- specifically designed website on alternatives to car use
- emphasis on health related issues
- also used for Smart Moves Challenge

2) Incentivisation

- promotion of cycle-to-work scheme
- promotion of employer-travel-pass scheme

3) Infrastructural changes

- new sheltered & secure bike stands
- changing and shower facilities renovated

② Smart Moves Challenge

Participatory initiative designed as competition

- Teams of 3 employees
- Agree to commute actively, use PT or carpool once a week
- Teams get credit for every journey without car
- Daily travel diary via online interface on website
- Weekly scores published on website
- Duration: 30 days



Earth Day at Thermo King Galway



Earth Day at Thermo King

20th April 2011

Smart Moves Challenge

TEAM UP and WIN!

Goal: Stay healthy, get fit, keep weight off & save money!

WIN a trip to the Aran Islands for TWO each (all expenses)

How does it work?

- ✓ Form a team of three
- ✓ Sign up and collect your starter pack, inc also phone credit voucher
- ✓ Agree to cycle or walk or carpool or use public transport to work at least once a week
- ✓ Competition will run for 5 weeks (22nd April to 31st May)
- ✓ Score for every trip without a car, just report online
- ✓ Team collecting most points wins, simpler!

Join, share a laugh and have loads of craic!

Teams interested should email smartermovement@gmail.com or contact Denis Mulgannon

Details also available on www.smartermovement.org



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Thermo King Smart Moves Challenge

[Click for the Challenge page!](#)

Do you want to calculate your carbon footprint? Then simply click on the link below...



Modes of Transport

[Walking](#)

Smarter Moves for the Mervue Area



WALKING

Walking is an excellent way to get your 30 minutes of physical exercise required for optimum health each day. It is also a low cost way of getting around so will help save you money on your overall

Results I

Key influences on commuting patterns

a) Material influences

- increase in car ownership & land use issues such as sprawl
- unfavourable infrastructure for cycling, walking and PT

b) Social nature of car use & routines

- providing transport to others
- commuting connected with other everyday practices
- social meanings attached to car use shape perception of alternatives (e.g. car use = flexibility & independence)

→ Combination of actual & perceived lack of alternatives!

Results II

Responses to three Is

1) Information provision

- no need for information, already informed
- website used for travel diaries & score (Google Analytics)

2) Incentives

- good uptake of cycle-to-work scheme
- helps to purchase high-quality, customised bicycle & gear
- no interest in employer-travel-pass-scheme

3) Infrastructural changes

- new bike stands well received, old shed run down & unsecure
- reaction to shower & changing facilities ambivalent – necessity for some, “nice-to-have” for others

Results III

Outcome of Smart Moves Competition

Evaluation T2 - Short term effect	Evaluation T3 - Long term effect
53 % switched from car to other mode	29 % continued to use alternative to car

Results III

Outcome of Smart Moves Competition

Commuting type	Number	Place of residence	Intention	Change in T2	Change in T3	No change
Commuting in the city	8	Urban	Cycle & carpool (1)	5	3 (of 5)	3
Commuting from hinterland	3	Rural & Peri-urban (1)	Carpool			3
Hybrid	2	Rural	Cycle	1		1
Trip-chaining	4	Urban (2) & Peri-urban (2)	Cycle (2) & Carpool (2)	3	2 (of 3)	1
Participants	17			9	5 (of 9)	8

Why did some participants change but not others?

Reported factors that hinder or help

Factors hindering change
Road safety
Perception of weather
Other everyday routines affected
Social circumstances

Factors helping change
Cycling is dangerous, but depends on route, skills & confidence
Weather not a hindrance
Integrating the new into old routines
Social circumstances

Typology of commuting practices

Typology based on focus group and interview data

→ **2 practices** - **car-based** (dominant) and **alternative** (marginalised)

→ **4 performance types** *within* dominant car-based practice

Car-based commuting practice				Alternative commuting practice
Commuting within the city	Commuting from the hinterland	Hybrid	Trip-chaining	Active commuting

Combination of material, social & cultural influences on commuting

→ frequently neglected in transport behaviour and policy research

Benefits and limitations of two-tiered intervention

- Conventional approach changed (infra)structural conditions in favour of alternatives → not sufficient on its own; omits social & cultural aspects
- Participatory & longitudinal initiative (SMC) → provided support & created favourable social context

BUT limitations of employer-based initiatives:

- Small-scale (infra)structural changes at local level → limited impact on wider structural, social and cultural conditions

Need for strategic and targeted policies that create a material, (infra)structural, social and cultural environment conducive to alternatives to car use.

Further changes needed?

- Policy recommendations based on WP3
 - Development of change initiatives that are **sensitive to people's existing practices** and their social, cultural and material contexts
 - Policies that recognise importance of **key events in people's lives** for their consumption patterns (e.g. parenthood, change in residential location)
 - Greater focus on role of **meso level of social organisation** (e.g. employers, institutions)
 - Need for **innovative policy solutions** with demonstrable economic, social and environmental benefits → critical assessment of **'virtual mobility' options**

Thank you for listening!

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