



School trips in Germany: Gendered escorting practices



Joachim Scheiner

Technische Universität Dortmund, Faculty of Spatial Planning, Department of Transport Planning, 44227 Dortmund, Germany

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received 7 October 2015

Received in revised form 25 May 2016

Accepted 5 September 2016

Keywords:

Child travel behaviour

Escorting practices

Independent travel

School trips

Gender

Family

ABSTRACT

Children's trips have become a growing issue of interest in recent transport studies. This paper studies parental escort on children's school trips in Germany. It uses binary logit regression models to look at social and spatial context factors simultaneously, as well as considering the gendering of parental escort, i.e. the allocation of escort trips to fathers and mothers. The results generally support other studies in terms of parental and children's sociodemographics, and trip attributes. The results for parental employment complement previous, somewhat inconsistent results. Descriptive analysis sheds some light on the interplay between escort and travel mode, as well as on age and gender structures and their intersections with spatial context. The effects of spatial context in regression are mixed. Urban locations seem to be more suitable for the independent mobility of adolescents, but less suitable for smaller children. Within municipalities escort is less common in inner city areas with mixed land-use and a well-established public transport system. Shorter distances to school in areas with mixed land-use further encourage independence. As in other countries, women carry a disproportionate burden of escorting. In large cities fathers are more involved in child escort, suggesting more gender equity.

© 2016 Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

1. Introduction

Children's trips have become a growing issue of interest in recent transport studies. This is motivated by a number of concerns (see Carver et al., 2013; Fyhri et al., 2011; Lopes et al., 2014; Mitra, 2013; Shaw et al., 2013, for more discussion).

1. Increasing concern about child health and, more specifically, obesity and deficits in motor skills and cognitive development, which research suggests are related to a lack of independent mobility and active travel (walking and cycling);
2. Children's decreased independence and knowledge about their environment (see Fusco et al., 2012 for a nuanced discussion), both of which have been linked to children being increasingly driven in their parents' (and other people's) cars;
3. Increasing concern about the environmental, social and financial effects of free school choice and the associated increased trip distances and modal shifts towards the car, including local congestion and traffic safety problems at school sites (Marique et al., 2013, for energy consumption; McDonald et al., 2016, on the public and private financial effects of increased walking);
4. Increasing political interest in family issues including their time budgets and mobility. For instance, in Germany the latest federal governmental family report is dedicated to families' time budgets (BMFSFJ, 2012), the government's demography strategy places emphasis on strengthening families (BMI, 2013) and, most recently, the Federal Ministry of Transport has commissioned a project on travel behaviour in families (Manz et al., 2015), on which this paper builds;

E-mail address: joachim.scheiner@tu-dortmund.de

<http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.tra.2016.09.008>

0965-8564/© 2016 Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

5. A general increase in interest among transport researchers to better understand the social fabric of travel and mobility as opposed to earlier decades when transport studies focused more on questions of engineering, modelling and forecasting. This research, if mainly hosted by planners and geographers, is now broadly embedded in feminist and gender studies, studies on time use and activity patterns, and the sociology of the family.

The latter two points do not just refer to a child-centred perspective on school trips, but also to the gendering of parental escorting practices,¹ i.e. to a parent-centred perspective (e.g. [Schwanen, 2007](#)). The first three points need to be seen in light of the general observation that children's use of active travel modes has steadily decreased over time, while car use has increased (see [McDonald, 2007](#), for the US; [Fyhri et al., 2011](#), for Denmark, Finland, Norway and the UK; [Boussauw et al., 2014](#), for Belgium; [Funk, 2008](#), for Germany). Children's independence in school travel has also decreased over time ([Kytta et al., 2015](#), for Finland), although the emerging patterns in travel mode use may have developed differently according to school location ([Shaw et al., 2013](#) for Germany). At the same time school trip distances have increased ([Shaw et al., 2013](#); [Andersson et al., 2012](#), for Sweden; [Boussauw et al., 2014](#), for Belgium; [Schlossberg et al., 2006](#), and [McDonald, 2007](#), for the US), which is a composite effect of concentrating schools in larger units, shifting from public schools to private schools, and demographic aging and the associated decline in the number of students and, hence, schools in developed countries.

While a large number of studies from the US have investigated children's travel, there is somewhat less research from Australia, Asia and Europe, and, specifically, considerably less from Germany, despite the seminal comparative study (UK and Germany) conducted by [Hillman et al. \(1990\)](#) and its follow-up study ([Shaw et al., 2013](#)). Other studies on school travel in Germany either focus on mode choice and the associated cost effects of school closures ([Müller et al., 2008](#)), or on long-term trends ([Funk, 2008](#)), which show inconclusive results due to data limitations.

This paper studies children's and adolescents' trips to school in Germany. It builds upon findings from a study commissioned by the Federal Ministry of Transport on travel behaviour in families ([Manz et al., 2015](#)). The focus here is on escorting. Escort purposes account for 16% of parents' trips in Germany, and this share is even higher among single parents (18%) and the parents of children aged 10 or younger (22%) (for comparison: 4% for couples without children) ([Manz et al., 2015, 97](#)). Specifically, the paper seeks to explore the conditions under which children make school trips without parental escort. Other companions as well as interrelations between escorted/joint trips and mode are considered in the descriptive analysis. A gender perspective is employed by studying gendered escorting practices, i.e. by considering the conditions under which the father rather than the mother accompanies a child to/from school. The study utilises the most recent national travel survey Mobility in Germany (MiD) 2008.

The next section introduces the state of the research on escorting practices on school trips. This is followed by a description of the data, the methods and the variables used. Subsequently the results are presented, starting with a descriptive analysis of escorting, followed by three logit regression models of parental escorting practices. The paper closes with some conclusions for policy and further research.

2. Escorting children to/from school – state of the research

2.1. Theoretical considerations

Research on children's (including adolescents') school travel can be subdivided into studies of mode use, independent vs. escorted travel, and school trip distances. These strands of research are not independent of one another, but are nonetheless distinguishable. For instance, independent travel tends to be equated with active modes in research ([Fyhri and Hjorthol, 2009](#)), as children transported in a car are clearly not travelling independently, while those who walk often make the trip alone ([McDonald and Aalborg, 2009](#)). Specifically, in car-oriented settings such as the US it is very unlikely that a walking or cycling child would be escorted ([Hsu and Saphores, 2014, 550](#)), while in Germany 22% of escort trips are made using active modes ([Manz et al., 2015, 96](#)). Even though children walking or cycling may be accompanied, at least they have the chance of learning to travel independently.

The theoretical grounds on which school travel research is based are, firstly, the generalised travel cost paradigm, which captures distance, time and financial barriers and the relative utility of different modes in overcoming these barriers. Secondly, the household activity-travel framework, which lends credit to this research by proposing that children's travel can be understood within the context of household capacities, resources, constraints and interpersonal interactions ([Mitra, 2013](#)). When considering these strands together, time geography may serve as a worthwhile theoretical starting point, especially as children's travel is more severely constrained than adults' travel. [Hägerstrand \(1970\)](#) introduced the triad of authority, coupling and capability constraints, all of which clearly contribute to understanding children's travel. Children's travel is to a large extent an outcome of choices made by parents, rather than by the child herself ([He and Giuliano, in press](#)). Parental attitudes and decisions in this sense function as authority constraints. Choices will become more autonomous as the child grows older, and the child's self-efficacy belief, attitudes and wishes will play an increasing role ([Mitra, 2013](#)). For

¹ The term 'escorting' has been used in recent literature ([He and Giuliano, in press](#); [Motte-Baumvol et al., in press](#); [Vovsha and Petersen, 2005](#); [Yarlagadda and Srinivasan, 2008](#)). It may sound less natural than other, more common terms such as 'serve passenger trips' or 'chauffeurage'. However, the latter two terms both refer to car use (or at least evoke associations of car use), which does not necessarily apply when children are being escorted.

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/4929018>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/4929018>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)