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Decreasing popularity of the car? Changes in driving licence and access to a car among young adults over a 25-year period in Norway

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Abstract

The general impression that car-use has reached a peak or the orientation to have a car has stagnated in several Western countries has been associated with young people being less interested in obtaining a driving licence and getting a car. Examination of public statistics and of data from Norwegian National Travel Surveys indicates that the percentage of young people acquiring a driving licence fell during the 1990s and has been stagnating since the start of the year 2000. Over a 25-year period, we find that young people living outside large cities have a car(s) in the household; they are in paid work and are married/cohabiting. They have a driving licence to a much greater degree than those who live in cities and have good access to public transport; they are students and not married/cohabiting. In the same 25-year period we have seen a higher percentage of young people living in the larger cities, spending longer on education and delaying establishing a family. Our cohort analyses indicate that young cohorts/generations defer from obtaining a driving licence. At age 30 years the proportion of licence holders has been around 90 percent, but analysis of young cohorts from 2001 to 2009 shows that this figure is declining.

Introduction

Different studies show similar tendencies in different countries. After decades of steady growth in daily travel and use of a car, driving has levelled off in the UK (Metz 2010), in the USA (Puentes 2012), and in the Netherlands (Waard et al. 2013). Analysing trends in passenger transport in the USA, Canada, Sweden, France, Germany, the UK, Japan and Australia, Millard-Ball and Schipper (2011) found that total passenger kilometres by motorized modes of travel have slowed in growth relative to GDP, and, in per capita terms, even declined in a few countries (with the exception of Japan and Sweden).

Similar trends can be seen in the changed mobility behaviour of younger generations in many countries, who seem less interested in obtaining a driving licence and buying a car (Delbosc and Currie 2013, 2014, Kuhnimhof et al. 2012, 2013, Forward et al. 2010, Noble 2005, Hjorthol 1999, Hjorthol 2002, Hjorthol 2012). The reasons vary. No one single factor is suggested, but rather a combination of several. In a review of the literature, Delbosc and Currie (2013) classify these into six categories. *Life stage*: the increasing rate of educational participation, decreasing employment rates, delayed marriage/children, living longer with parents. *Affordability*: the cost of acquiring a driving licence, petrol and economic recession. *Location and alternative transport*: relocation to urban areas/accessible areas, better public transport. *Driver licensing regulation*: stricter regulation, increased minimum age, mandatory driving lessons. *Attitudes*: acute environmental awareness, car no longer a status symbol (although it still is in some countries), too busy/other priorities. *E-communication*: face-to-face contact supplanted, reduced need for physical mobility.

Of these categories, issues under *life stage* are suggested as having medium impact and *affordability* low to medium impact; the rest low or unclear impact. There is obviously a need for more research.

Research on the stagnation or decline in young adults' orientation to the car is just beginning, with findings reflecting different significance in different countries.

In Norway in the 1990s there was a decline and levelling out of the share of young adults (18-24 years) obtaining a driving licence. In 1985, 78 percent of this age group held a licence, in 1992 it was 83 percent, while by 1998 it had dropped to 73 percent (Hjorthol 1999). The share seems to have stabilised since the beginning of the millennium; 73 percent in 2001, 73 percent in 2005, 72 percent in 2009 (data extracted from the Norwegian National Travel Surveys) among young adults aged between 18 and 24 years.

In this paper, we present and discuss societal factors that have impacted on the daily mobility of young adults over a 25-year period, while focusing on the importance of holding a driving licence and having access to a car.

The questions we address are:

- Societal changes that might have had an impact on daily mobility during the 25-year period 1985 to 2009.
- Specific changes in the life situation of a young adult group (18-24 years), changes that have an impact on the holding of a driving licence.
- The impact of different factors on obtaining a driving licence and buying a car in this age group during the 25-year period.

- Young people delaying their application for a driving licence or even refraining from having one at all.

The first two questions are answered using accessible statistics (mostly from Statistics Norway) and the results used as a backdrop for analysis of Norwegian National Travel Survey data for this 25-year period.

These datasets provide a unique opportunity to analyse one and the same phenomenon over a long time span (cross-sectional multivariate analysis of the driving licence and access to a car) and to follow cohorts or generations (at an aggregate level) in a time perspective relating to development of the holding of a driving licence. Three effects can be examined: the *cohort effect* – belonging to a specific generation; the *period effect* – the time between surveys and what happens in the period; and the *age effect* – growing older.

After this introduction, we present and discuss the development of societal factors that have an impact on mobility and, especially, car-use. We present data and methods in section three, and, in section four, indicate factors that have an impact on the age group 18-24 years obtaining a driving licence together with analyses of factors explaining access to a car. In addition, we analyse driving-licence holders following the same cohorts over the 25-year period. The results are discussed in the final section.

Changes in important factors over a 25-year period in Norway

Material/structural and demographic conditions changed significantly in Norway in the 25-year period 1985 to 2009. The population increased by 17 percent, and more people now live in urban areas (Table 1). There was net migration to central urban municipalities and much of it to the south-eastern parts of the country, i.e. the metropolitan area of Oslo. Urbanization is characterized by both metropolisation¹ (Krätke 2007) and reurbanization (the movement of people and economic activities back into city centres, often related to gentrification) (Lees 2000).

Income and wealth increased significantly, with the proportion of higher educated people rising and the number of cars multiplying faster than the population. There was a greater proportion of women in the workforce in 2009 than in 1985, with more of them holding a driving licence. All this meant more travel and more cars on the roads.

Today, the official statistics show a decrease in the size of households in the country, increased life expectancy and increased average age of first-time mothers. These are factors that have had an impact on: the number of trips taken outside the home, why they are taken and the mode of transport used. The increased population has meant that more people are travelling. The average age has increased – first-time mothers in particular – and, with it, changes in the reasons for travel, in time-use and in the mode of transport.

Table 1 in about here

¹ An increase in weight of the largest cities in the distribution of some functions, as well as by concentration of population in the metropolitan area.

During the period 1985–2009, the public transport supply improved but mainly in the bigger cities (Vågane et al. 2011).

Penetration and distribution of information and communication technology (ICT) took place rapidly in the period, and while only 10 percent of people had a computer in 1985, by 2009 this had reached 92 percent. Internet technology came into use in the middle of the 1990s and by 2009 about 91 percent had access to the Internet at home. Nearly everyone (97 percent) had their own mobile telephone in 2009, while in 1999 the figure was only 58 percent.

Several of these factors clearly relate to the daily mobility of the younger generations. The increased level of education in the population indicated that young people spent longer in education, and as a result might postpone having a family and children (the increase in the average age of first-time mothers is an example). Adolescence is extended, often in the larger cities where the higher educational institutions are located, and these youngsters have relatively low income. Economic reasons and urban single living might contribute to a lessening interest in obtaining a driving licence and purchasing a car.

Access to and use of a wide range of information and communication technology (ICT) devices is more typical of young adults than of older generations. Many new ways of communicating socially have appeared on the Internet. The penetration of ICT has contributed to greater temporal and spatial flexibility in both private and working (educational) life. The discussion on whether and how ICT impacts on physical mobility is expansive and inconclusive. In many cases, use of ICT complements or modifies physical mobility (Hjorthol 2008, Line et al. 2011, Mokhtarian 2002). E-communication is hardly a substitute for face-to-face contact, but it is certainly a supplement to it (Aguilera 2012, Hjorthol 2002). Some have pointed to a decrease in the social status of the car and to increased popularity of the Smartphone, raising the question whether the Smartphone is the new icon of the age – as the car once was (Goodwin 2012). The Smartphone has many advantages compared to the car (as an icon). “Practically, the user does not need expensive lessons, a test, a license or insurance, and it will not be confiscated by law for misuse” (Goodwin 2012:22). Intensive use of the mobile phone/Smartphone among young people has rendered public transport more amenable than car driving.

For changes in the conditions concerning car-use and daily mobility in the age group 18-24 years, see Table 2 (this information is taken primarily from the Norwegian National Travel Surveys of the actual years).

The number of people living in the four largest cities in Norway increased from 21 percent in 1985 to 36 percent in 2009. Living in a large city reduces the need for a car. The public transport supply is better, the distance to work and services is shorter, but parking is more difficult. In addition, housing costs are higher in the larger cities than in less urbanized areas, so with equal income the amount spent on transport is lower in the most urbanized areas due to housing costs.

While one-third of these young adults were students in 1985, by 2009 more than half were students. More young people are living in larger cities where most colleges and universities are located. The fact that there are more young adults in education also indicates a less favourable economic situation in 2009 for this age group than in 1985.

There is less money disposable for activities and purchases that are not absolutely necessary, obtaining a driving licence and buying a car being two of them.

Stagnation in the number of driving-licence holders in this age group (18-24 years of age) in the period 1992 to 2009 was 78 percent in 1985 and 83 percent in 1992, while in succeeding years it was 73 percent (see Table 2). The same, but not so clear, tendency is access to a car (which here means holding a driving licence and having a car available whenever required). This can be connected with the fact that a significant share of these youngsters live with their parents or others. In 2009 only 22 percent lived on their own. Use of a car as an individual transport mode also declined, from 47 percent of daily trips in 1985 to 34 percent in 2009. It can be said of this age group that “car orientation” levelled out during the 1990s and 2000s.

There is a significantly larger percentage of this age group with very good access to public transport (at least four departures per hour and a distance of less than 1 km to the station/bus stop from home). This is a result of more young people living in urban areas, and also of a better public transport supply (Vågane et al. 2011). There was a reduction in the percentage married or cohabitating among these young people during this period (see Table 2).

Urbanization, longer in education, fewer family responsibilities and better access to public transport are all factors pointing to less need for a car.

Table 2 in about here

In addition to the factors discussed, the penetration and use of information and communication technology in the second part of this period increased greatly. In Table 2 the home-based computer (PC) is used as an indicator of access and use of ICT. The statistics start at 1998 and show that the share of daily home-based computer-use increased from 22 to 80 percent up to 2009. Time spent in front of the computer increased from 21 minutes per day in 1998 to 130 minutes in 2009. The statistics do not say anything about the content of this use, but part of it is probably a result of the rise in social media such as Facebook (from 2004) and Instagram (from 2010 – so this is too new for these data) and that television is viewed more on PCs or tablets.

For younger generations, access to and use of different ICT devices (primarily the Smartphone) is part of everyday life, but, in relation to the development illustrated in Table 2, it is primarily the generation at the latest survey (2009) that has experienced this in adolescence. Intensive use of mobile ICT devices is conducive to travelling on public transport (Gripsrud and Hjorthol 2012, Lyons et al. 2007), and the possibilities for Internet access on PT are improving. The above discussion indicates that structural change is significant in the changes in car orientation of the younger generation. Two questions addressed in the remaining part of this paper are:

- Have the factors that have an impact on someone obtaining a driving licence remained the same over time (from 1985 to 2009) or have some become more/less important than others?
- Do young people simply delay their decision to get a driving licence and buy a car, or is the decision based on a more permanent disinterest in the car?

To examine these questions we compared the results of multivariate analysis (logistic regression) with the same variables over years and carried out cohort analyses on the basis of National Travel Surveys (NTS).

Methods and data

Methods

Logistic regression

Logistic regression is a probability model. The binary logistic model, which is used here, is employed to predict a binary response based (holding a driving licence and always having access to a car) on one or more predictor variables. It is used in estimating the parameters of a qualitative response model. The probabilities describing the possible outcomes of a single trial are modelled as a function of the explanatory (predictor) variables using a logistic function. Logistic regression is often used in referring specifically to the problem in which the dependent variable is binary. Logistic regression measures the relationship between the categorical dependent variable and one or more independent variables, which can be continuous and/or categorical.

Cohort analysis

As mentioned in the Introduction, the NTS datasets are well suited to cohort analysis, in which social changes in a specific generation or cohort are studied over a period of time. Three effects can be examined – *cohort*, *period* and *age*.

Cohort in reference to the effects of being born at a specific time in history. Examining cohort effects can show how differences in socialization and experiences between different generations can vary, and how specific characteristics will follow the cohort. Intra-cohort comparisons are made by following the same cohort at different points in time.

Period in reference to effects limited to a specific period of time and applied to all cohorts. Comparisons between the same age categories at two different times are investigated.

Age in reference to the effects of growing older and associated with the life span and the ageing process as such. The cohort analysis in this paper focuses primarily on the (intra-) cohort effect, since the time span is less than ten years.

Data

The data analysed in this paper come from Norwegian National Travel Surveys (NTS) starting in 1985 and ending in 2009. NTS is a nationwide survey of the entire population 13 years of age and above. Its purpose is in obtaining information on people's travel activity and travel patterns: scope, purpose, means of travel, and how travel activity varies among different groups of the population. In 1985 there were 5000 respondents, which was a response rate of 77%: there were 6000 (67.5%) in 1992; 6000 (51%) in 1998; 20 000 (64.2%) in 2001; 30 000 (47.9%) in 2005; and 30 000 (45.6%) in 2009. During this 25-year period the content and construction of the questionnaire remained pretty much the same.

The core of the survey comprised detailed questions (a diary of the day) about travel on the day of registration (usually the day before the interview). In addition, background information is given about the respondent and his/her household. Not all questions are repeated from survey to survey, but the diaries remain identical. Detailed geographical location data of the origin and destination of every trip were introduced in 2001. Some of the socio-demographic background variables changed over time; for example, in 1985 there was no question on education, information which would have been of interest for the objectives in this paper. The surveys were carried out in the form of computer-aided telephone interviews (CATT), except in 1985 when respondents were interviewed in their homes. The big differences in the number of respondents from year to year indicates limits to how detailed the analysis can be when we are concentrating on a specific age group (18-24 years) while comparing their actions and behaviour from one year to the next. We have to use the surveys with the lowest numbers of respondents as the basis for the cohort analysis. In the logistic regressions, all respondents in the particular age group (18-24 years) are used for each year.

In examining the factors that have an impact on a person obtaining a driving licence and access to a car, we used logistic regression. We end the section with a cohort analysis of development of the driving licence in these age groups (using SPSS software).

Results

The driving licence and access to a car over a 25-year period – logistic regression

The information in Tables 1 and 2 and the discussion in the Introduction point to questions that should be raised in these analyses. Are place of living (the urban/rural dimension), education/employment, gender and family situation all just as much associated with the car orientation of young people in 2009 as they were 25 years previously? How significant were the different factors on the trend to get a driving licence and access to a car? If we find that the same factors/elements had the same effect, it could be claimed that structural/demographic changes explain a significant number of the changes.

The dependent variables

The dependent variables in the regression analyses are *holding a driving licence* (in Table 3) and *always having access to a car* (in Table 4) in all years. In Norway, the age at which a driving licence can be obtained is 18 years, as indeed it was in the period in question here. Always having access to a car is a combination of holding a driving licence and being able to use the car for the entire registration day (usually the day before the interview).

The independent variables

The independent variables in the two tables are mostly the same: Gender; Main occupation: employed, unemployed, on leave, etc., and student (as reference category); Place of living: the four largest cities (Oslo, Bergen, Trondheim, Stavanger), the surrounding municipalities of the four largest cities, other cities, rest of the country (as reference category); Access to public transport, very good, less than 1 km to nearest station/bus stop and at least four departures per hour; Number of cars in the household

(not in Table 4); Education (not in 1985), elementary school, high school, university/college (as reference category); Married/cohabitating, not married/cohabitating (as reference category).

Gender

With the exception of the results from 1992, young men in this group are more likely than young women to have a driving licence, which indicates a very clear difference in priorities and/or resources (Table 3). Whether this is tradition – the car belonging more in a male than female domain – or that young women prefer to spend their resources on other forms of consumption is difficult to tell from these data. What is interesting in this context is that the gender difference obtains.

In the NTS from 2005, some additional questions were put to respondents in the age group 19-35 years, one of which was why they did not have a licence. While 28 percent of the female respondents said they preferred to spend their money on other things or that they could not afford to set about getting a licence, only 21 percent of males said the same – a significant difference ($p < 0.01$, χ^2). Nearly one in four (23 percent) men and women said that they did not need a driving licence. Environmental aspects were barely mentioned.

Employment and education

Being in the workforce (in paid work) had a positive association with inclination to have a driving licence in 1985, 1992 and 2001 compared to those in education or not in the workforce for other reasons, where the association was less positive. In many jobs a driving licence is necessary, perhaps more so in male-dominated occupations than in female, but it seems that the association in the 1992 and 2001 surveys was lower. In 2009, in particular, there was no difference in this respect between those in and those not in the workforce when controlling for variables in the model.

It is obvious that education has a bearing on the likelihood of someone having a driving licence; the lower educated being much less likely than those at university level. This did not change during the period. High formal education correlates with a high percentage of driving-licence holders. Since we have treated this age group as a whole, the effect of education will also be related to age.

Family situation and a car in the household

Table 3 shows that married or cohabiting couples more often have a driving licence than others who are single or still living with their parents. The effect of this variable is significant throughout all the surveys, indicating that the driving licence has a functional significance during this phase of the life cycle.

A car (or cars) in the household has an effect on the number of individuals in the household with a driving licence. Some of these young people still live with parents who own one or more cars, and that could be an incentive for obtaining a licence.

Place of living and public transport

Living in one of the four largest cities is negatively associated with holding a driving licence starting in 2001. Young adults in these cities were less likely to hold a licence than

they were elsewhere. During the period 2001 to 2009, these cities increased in both size and density and the quality of public transport improved, especially in Oslo (Vågane et al. 2011). The need for a driving licence among urban youth is much less urgent than among others living in less urbanized and rural areas. It could be that young people in urban areas put off getting a driving licence until they feel there is a real need for it; for example, when they establish a family and perhaps discover that a car might ease organization of their everyday lives.

A good public transport supply has no effect on propensity to get a driving licence when controlled for place of living and the other variables in the model.

During the period, most of the independent variables were significantly associated with the dependent variable in the same way in each survey. The exception is living in large cities, which has become more important since the start of the year 2000.

Table 3 Have driving licence – logistic regression. In about here

Access to a car

Gender

Access to a car when required is analysed in Table 4, where the results are similar to those of the previous analysis. The gender differences are stronger even if the parameter (B) is lower in 2009 than at the beginning of the period. As presented earlier from the survey in 2005, women showed less interest in obtaining a driving licence – a feature that could also be the case when it comes to purchasing a car.

Employment and education

Being employed is more often associated with better access to a car than being a student and/or unemployed for other reasons. This is the same throughout all years.

People with lower education have less access to a car than those with higher education, and being married means better access than not being married. This, too, was found throughout the period.

Place of living

Living in one of the four largest cities has a significantly negative association with access to a car and has increased with time. The population in these cities has increased during the period, along with housing costs. For young people, housing costs constitute a considerable part of their means, and so a car is probably not a priority. The quality of public transport was better during the period and for those with good access to it the need is less. This was the same throughout the period.

These two analyses show that for the most part it is the same factors that have a bearing on whether or not young people have a driving licence and access to a car; gender (being a man), employment, education and being married/cohabiting increase the probability. The association with these variables is significant during the entire period.

Living in one of the four largest cities did not have a significant association before 2001 with obtaining a driving licence, which indicates that city life has changed when it comes to transport. These Norwegian cities have become more densely populated: there are more people living in inner districts, there is a tendency toward gentrification, and clearly a better public transport supply.

Table 4 Have access to a car whenever required – logistic regression. In about here

As Table 1 indicates, the trends are clear, more people are living in urban areas, the educational level is increasing (which means that more young people spend more time at school/university before working life begins), and mother's age at the birth of her first child is rising (which means families established at a higher age). As we have seen, all these factors impact on propensity to obtain a driving licence and a car, and explains a significant part of why having a driving licence and access to a car is stagnating among young adults.

Development of the driving licence – cohort analysis

What happens when young adults age? Do they just postpone acquiring a driving licence or do some not bother at all, in which case how many?

On examining this question we carried out two cohort analyses (one in 1992 (N = 766) the other in 2001 (N = 1909)) of those between 18 and 24 years and looked at what had happened 9 years later (in 2001) for the 1992 group and 8 years (in 2009) for the 2001 group.

Figure 1 gives the percentages of cohorts in the age range 18 to 24 years who held a driving licence in 1992 and 9 years later (in 2001), when each cohort had reached a level of 90 percent or higher with a driving licence. In 2001, the share of licence holders was "normal" in these cohorts. It seems that for them there was a postponement in getting a licence (in some of the groups the number of respondents is small, so there are rarities like the share of 31-year-olds that have a driving licence in 2001 being lower than the share of 22-year-olds in 1992, but this is not significant).

Figure 1 Cohorts with a driving licence in 1992 and 2001 (9 years later). In about here

The corresponding age groups in 2001 and 2009 are presented in Figure 2 (a time span of 8 years rather than 9). What happens to these young adults when they reach the age range 26 to 32 years? While more hold a driving licence, the level is lower than for those who were 18-24 years in 1992. But the cohorts in 2001 both started at a lower level and had 8 rather than 9 years to obtain the licence.

Figure 2 Cohorts with a driving licence in 2001 and in 2009 – 8 years later. In about here

These results indicate that young people put off taking their driving test until they reach a certain age, but the data also indicate that a higher share of the newer cohorts perhaps never obtains a licence. This is not clear, however. We do not yet know what happens

when those who were 26-32 years in 2009 are older – how long can the deferment be and will it change for new cohorts?

The cohorts (18 to 24 years) from 1992 can be followed until they are 35-41 years in 2009 (Figure 3). On following them from 1992 to 2009, as they are growing older, we can see that it is primarily in the period up until they are 26-33 that the changes took place. In the next period the changes are small. It is difficult to tell whether this will also happen to later cohorts. Figure 3 indicates different adjustments for these newer cohorts.

Figure 3 Percentage with a driving licence in 1992 and the same cohorts in 2001 and 2009. In about here

Discussion and conclusions

The general impression that car-use has reached a peak, or the propensity to have a car has stagnated in several Western countries, has been connected with young people being less interested in obtaining a driving licence and acquiring a car.

Examination of public statistics and analyses of data from the Norwegian Travel Surveys has provided some answers. As in many other countries, the percentage of young people acquiring a driving licence has dropped since the beginning of the 1990s and has stagnated since the start of the year 2000 (Hjorthol 1999, 2012, Nordbakke 2002). The same can be found in countries like Great Britain (Noble 2005), Germany, France and Japan (Kuminhof et al. 2012), the USA and Canada (Sivak and Schoettle 2012), and Australia (Delbosc and Curries 2013).

During a 25-year period we find that, for the most part, it is the same variables that impact on one's inclination to obtain a driving licence. Young people living outside the larger cities, with a car(s) in the household, in paid work and married/cohabiting – have a driving licence to a much greater degree than those living in the larger cities – good access to public transport, students and not married/cohabiting.

Delbosc and Currie (2014) also used travel survey data from Melbourne, Australia from 1994 to 2009 and found that full-time employment and child-rearing were associated with higher adult licensing rates. Many of these factors are also found in studies by Kranz (1999) (employment, densely populated areas), Noble (2005) (education), Delbosc and Currie (2012) (education, family and children), Le Vine and Polak (2014) (large city, good public transport, education). There is also a gender aspect in our analyses. Young men more often hold a driving licence than young women also when controlled for the other variables in the analyses. Gender difference is found in Sweden (Cedersund and Henrikson 2006, Forward et al. 2012) and in Australia (Delbosc and Currie 2012).

In the same 25-year period we have seen that a higher percentage of young people live in the greater cities, spending longer on education and delaying establishing a family (Table 2). These issues lie behind the decline/stagnation of the orientation to have a car, holding a driving licence and owning a car.

Our analyses indicate that young cohorts put off obtaining a driving licence. On reaching age 30 the proportion of licence holders is around 90 percent, but, as seen in the analysis of young cohorts from 2001 to 2009, there are not as many as before reaching this level.

They will perhaps never obtain a driving licence. The third analysis is an indication of this (Figure 3).

When young people in urban areas live without the possibility to drive a car for a longish period after they have reached 18 years, they have to use whatever transport supply is accessible, either public transport or by walking/cycling. This can be seen as a learning period. They learn how to use public transport, how to find their way around and become accustomed to the system. Public transport is also well suited to the use of Smartphones. If this learning period is experienced positively, there could be a lasting effect reducing the need or desire for a car. The percentage reduction of daily trips by car could be a sign of this.

The reduction or stagnation in car-use and car orientation has been related to three main hypotheses (Goodwin 2012).

- *Interrupted growth* – car traffic growth interrupted by degraded economic conditions coming back to growth when economic conditions become more favourable.
- *Saturation* – most travel needs for which car-use is the more efficient choice are satisfied, with the average car-use per adult maintained at its current level.
- *Peak car* – having reached a peak, car-use has begun to decline, in some cases when fuel prices are low, following trend-makers who changed their behaviour earlier.

How can these three hypotheses be related to the younger generation and their adjustments?

In many countries the unemployment rate is much higher among young people than among the workforce in general. More promising economic conditions will have a positive effect on the possibilities of employment for young people, but will they result in renewed car orientation among young adults, who may already have learned new ways of tackling daily mobility needs without the car? There are studies indicating that costs in relation to driving explain some of the stagnation (Le Vine and Polak 2014). But we have not seen studies of what happens when young people face a better economic outlook.

Saturation – will saturation have a different impact on young people from what it has had on other generations? Do young people feel a greater need for a car in order to travel? It seems that they more often give priority to long-distance leisure trips by air over local car trips (Frändberg and Vilhelmson 2003). As a much larger percentage of the younger population live in urban areas, especially in larger cities, the need for a car is not that important. In several countries there is also a growing interest in car-sharing schemes, which can be a good solution for many who do not need a car for everyday mobility.

Peak car – young people are very often trend-makers, initiating new ways of behaving, new ways of dressing, creating music and art with a modern front, and so on. Among some of the young urban generation it might not be seen as trendy to buy/drive a car – parallel with non-smoking being normal and in fashion. Students and young adults are increasingly concentrated in the larger cities, where there is much less need for a car than in rural areas. For modern adults (with higher education) urban areas are more attractive in terms of both interesting jobs and leisure time activities. A study of motives in someone choosing to live in inner parts of cities (in Norway) seems to reflect practical

matters such as short distance to work, easy access to the city centre and the possibility to walk or cycle to everyday activities (Hjorthol and Bjørnskau 2005). Having an urban lifestyle independently of the car can be attractive for the new generations.

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