

Transitions and Tensions on the Move

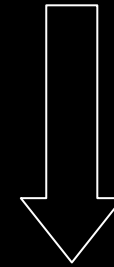
Juliet Jain
David Holley

Perspectives on travel time

Initial response - no value

Opportunity cost

Discussion about travel time

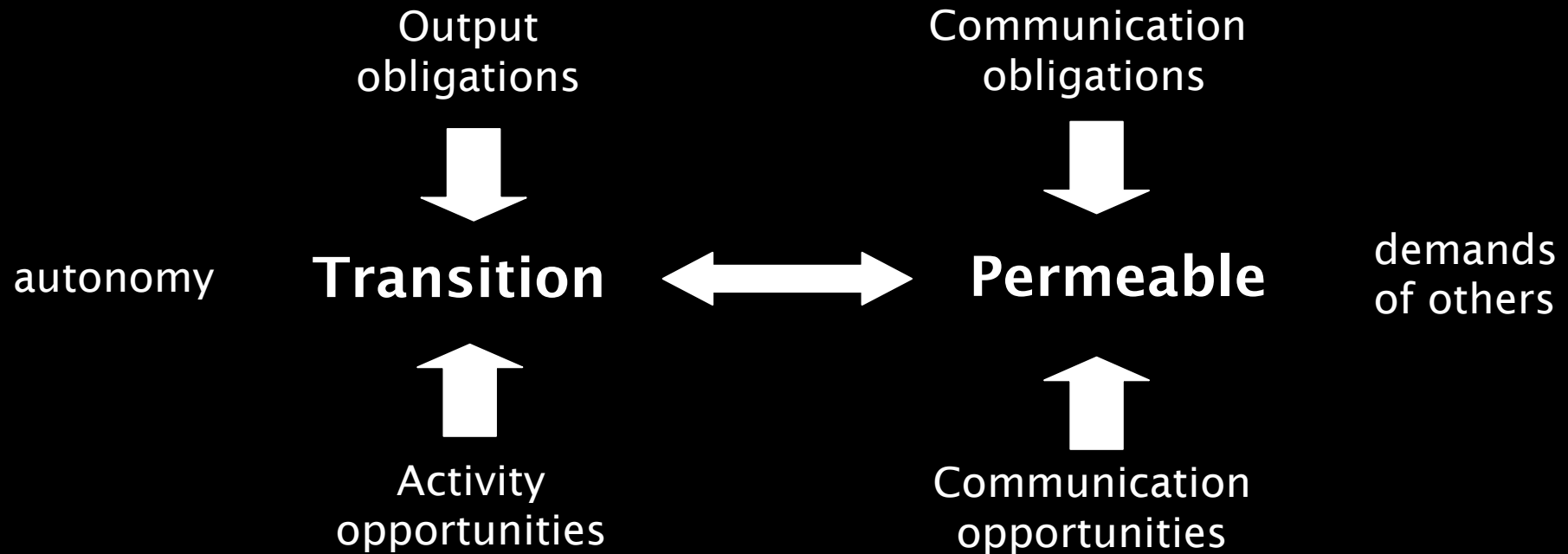


Actual travel time - valued

Opportunity

“I suppose the time on the journey was I would describe it overall as a time for making contact with my friends, phone them up. I actually put *a waste of time* but it wasn't, so I changed my mind.”

The imagined journey (1)



The imagined journey (2)

Personal

Relational and contextual

Routines, strategies and tactics

Noreen describes herself as atypical. She was used to commuting 30 miles as a teenager to school and did her homework on the train. She is an 'expert' commuter from a young age. (Ethnography interview)

"it's, the practices that I've got have evolved over years of doing it, because I mean it used to be, I'm going back years now, over time it has changed, historically it used to be, I'd be carrying a lot more bits of paper around with me and my briefcase would be, oh down like this, because I must make sure I've got absolutely enough to do, whereas these days I know I'm always going to have enough to do, because if nothing else I have the e-mail stuff coming in and if all else fails I can start to write some of the things that I haven't written because I know I've got to write a paper on X or Y. So it's changed over time, obviously the fact of technology, but it's also you get experienced and you work out just what works better for you." (Travel diary interview)

How the imagined journey is materialised



Packing for Susan

Jenny So she's a business woman she'll need a mobile phone obviously because like everyone says it's like a part of their body now. It's an hour's journey so we thought she might need a drink. She's got a French lesson so thought she'd need a book for study, very important a French book. We had a bit of a dispute, well not dispute, we had words, about her make up and toiletries. Senior accountant we thought she might have had them in work but then we're not sure so we're taking them with us anyway just in case and then didn't want her to be lugging around the laptop so we're taking the hand held computer instead. (Cumbria Women)

Simon First thing was mobile phone because it's almost mandatory for anyone anywhere on public transport.

Bill The last one we discovered in the pack was the make up and toiletries so we thought being a lady she's bound to have that so we put that in last. I kept on about it. The pda and the hand held computer because I thought you could link it to the mobile and increase that communication.

Ray Reading matter there, magazine for a quick read and paperwork for work and study, I think she would probably do a bit of both on that journey (Bristol Men)

The mobile 'must have'

we've given her a mobile phone because she's very inconsiderate

He's obviously got a mobile phone because everyone does. No one goes anywhere without their mobile phone.

We think mobile phone, it's a must

and mobile phone obviously because she needs to phone her friends to organise the date.

She needs her mobile phone, which I cannot live without, I feel like I'm left alone if I haven't got a mobile phone on me.

Jane needs to arrange a date with some friends so she needs her mobile phone

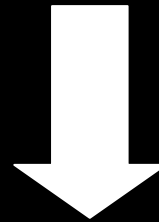
The night before Noreen charges up her laptop batteries, as they don't have power points on Southwest trains. I ask Graham if his bag is already packed and he shows me his bag. They have 'his 'n' hers' rucksacks. Graham says they are designed by an American. His bag is always ready to go with stuff that always stays in there – umbrella, phone, other bits and bobs and tucked in a special pocket is the laptop. He nearly always carries his laptop. Noreen has to pack her bag because she's been working at home. She is carrying some documents – yet to read, and the laptop now packed away.
(Ethnography notes)

Transition time

Travel space
unique space away
from other demands
(office/home etc)



Travel time
focus on specific activities



Transition Time

Changing roles

Preparation

Time for/out

Me time

Changing roles
Preparation
Time for/out

Evidence from
focus groups
ethnography
travel diary interviews

“Has anybody ever taken a longer route because they wanted time to travel from work or business?”

“Yes”

“Especially if you’ve had a bad day at work and you always want to clear your head, right rather than go home and be grumpy I’ll chill out first before I get home.” (London Men)



“often I rely on that someone being in the car with me to actually prepare for that meeting, so we’re having a pre meeting in the car and that’s valuable.” (Bristol Men)



“going up [on the train] was good because I was going for a meeting about the work magazine, I’m on the committee so it actually gave me 2 hours to read the magazine the latest edition so I could *actually be ready* for the meeting because I’ve always been too busy at work to find two hours to sit and read a magazine.” (Bristol Men)

“The most relaxing and productive means of travel is the train, providing you can sit down and providing you can actually do something like having a table, once you’ve got that, it’s good. Aircraft for some reason I find it very difficult to work on. Any other form of transport but the train very good. I used to do Newcastle and back which is 5 hours in one go and I used to think it was absolutely fantastic. Really was. Because I have 5 hours to prepare and 5 hours to sort out on the way back what I was supposed to sort out and that was really productive, and it was also relaxing. Because when you’ve finished you can doze off, fall asleep and hope to goodness you wake up on time at Bristol” (Bristol Men FG)

“say for example I’ve had a meeting with John Lewis in London, when I actually get back on the train, I will have been travelling all day, I will have not stopped for lunch, I would have had the meeting, I will have had all the information to write down, complete head storm, I then would have got on the train, I would have bought my lunch just before I got on the train, the last thing I want to do actually is open my laptop and write it all up. I actually quite like sitting on it for a few hours in my head thinking, what’s the best way to approach this, what’s the best way to tackle the objectives I’ve been given or problems I’ve experienced, so I might not write it up straight away...” (Travel diary interview)

Time for/out Me Time

**Evidence from
focus groups
ethnography**



“I used to find when I was coming home, driving, and I was on my own very relaxing listening to the radio and the music there was hardly any traffic on Finchley Road and I would take a longer way home and a nicer way home as well.” (London Women FG)



“when I travel I don’t really plan to do anything, to me it’s time to myself you know, just to think about life in general, just chilling out.” (London Men FG)



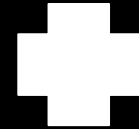
“on the train you are isolated from other distractions, it’s a good place to think or work. Since I do a lot of creative writing for my role-playing hobby, essentially I’m writing a stage play, I really need time to just ‘be’ and let my thoughts wonder. The train is great for this.” (Ethnography interview)

Permeable space

Mobile communications

Other travellers

Travel space



Travel time

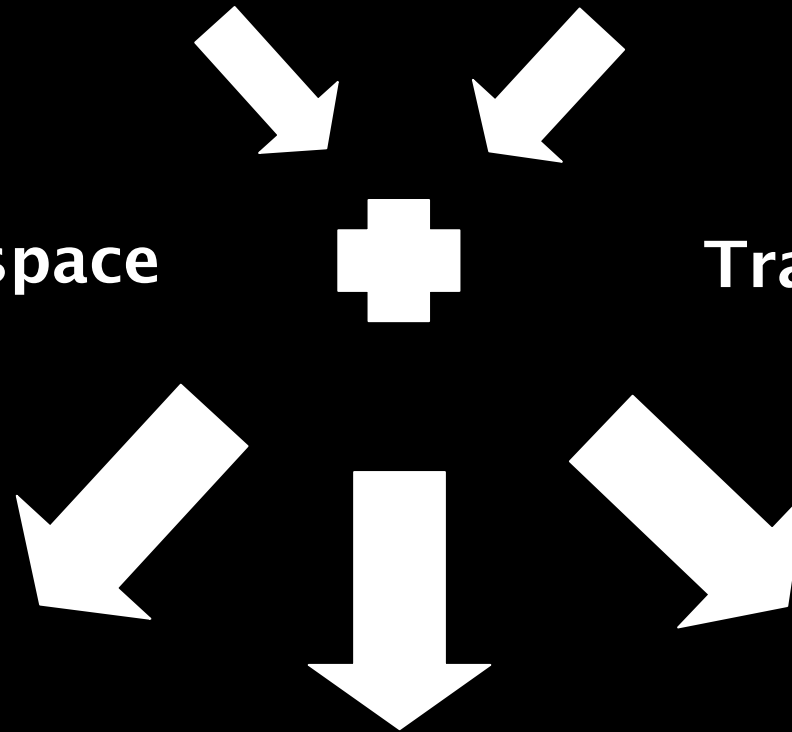
Belonging to
social networks

Surveillance

Obligations

Business

Social



Business obligations Surveillance – work

**Evidence from
focus groups
ethnography
travel diary interviews**

“but for business it’s different you’re always you can’t relax you’re not away from work because the phone’s going, you’ve got to answer it and all the usual stuff and then you’re on the phone come off the phone and someone’s left a few messages on your answer phone on the mobile it’s not a relaxing journey, you’re worried about making sure you’re there on time which I was because unfortunately I was a few minutes late getting there and they’d started the meeting. Unfortunately I had to ring them and say I’m going to be a few minutes late because I was trying to decipher the streets of Cambourne.” (Bristol Men FG)

“I get phone calls my head office is in Italy and I get Italians phoning me up and I’m trying to really listen and understand what they’re saying and I miss my turning and I’m going to Scotland it’s annoying” (London Women FG)

“I am on the phone continuously on the way up sorting out problems, talking to the office, getting people to do certain jobs for me...”
(Travel Diary Interview)



Brian is doing something with a phone. It goes back into his trouser pocket and he momentarily gazes out of the window. . . .[later]. . .Brian draws the curtain. The sun is shining on his computer but not on me. I'm a bit cold. He shuts out the sun and view. So do others. He fiddles with a PDA. Why carry three mobile communication technologies? . . .[later just before Peterborough] . . .08:00 Brian changes the drive in his laptop. He gets out a DVD and plugs in his earphones. What can you watch in an hour? . . . [a few minutes later after the passengers get on at Peterborough] Brian is back at work. Does someone sitting next to him shift his obligation back to work from the DVD or didn't he enjoy it. He's on the phone. May be he's received an urgent message that requires work. (Monday Newcastle to Kings X train – Ethnography notes)

Social obligations
Belonging to social networks
Surveillance – friends and family

Evidence from
focus groups
ethnography

I enjoy it. The journey. Just the local bus. As I say being in the country you know who there's people to chat to. It is enjoyable. (Cumbria Women FG)

'Celine', who is another large black woman with exotic hair and dress, talks to a man with a brief case. He tapped her on the shoulder, having obviously recognised her. They chat and he asks what she is up to. He gives her his business card and gets off. 9.49. (No 2 Bus Victoria to Brixton – Ethnography notes)

Oh yes I do get the most ridiculous phone calls. I had one yesterday as I was coming home from work on the bus. Mum we've got no water, what do you mean we've got no water, no I need to take some to school, well check we've got water in the house in a bottle somewhere. (Cumbria Women FG)

A phone rings and a voice tells John and the world "Hello John, I'm so upset...." Lindsey with bump sits next-but-one to me. She is casually dressed, and contemplates her diary. The phone conversation continues about tiles and grouting "...need to re-groute that bit. Thanks John. I'm so grateful. Bye bye". Lindsey checks her nails. (Tuesday Southend to Farringdon train – Ethnography notes)

INT You all use a mobile phone all nodding. When you're travelling who do you talk to, who do you text, who phones you.

Susan Friends

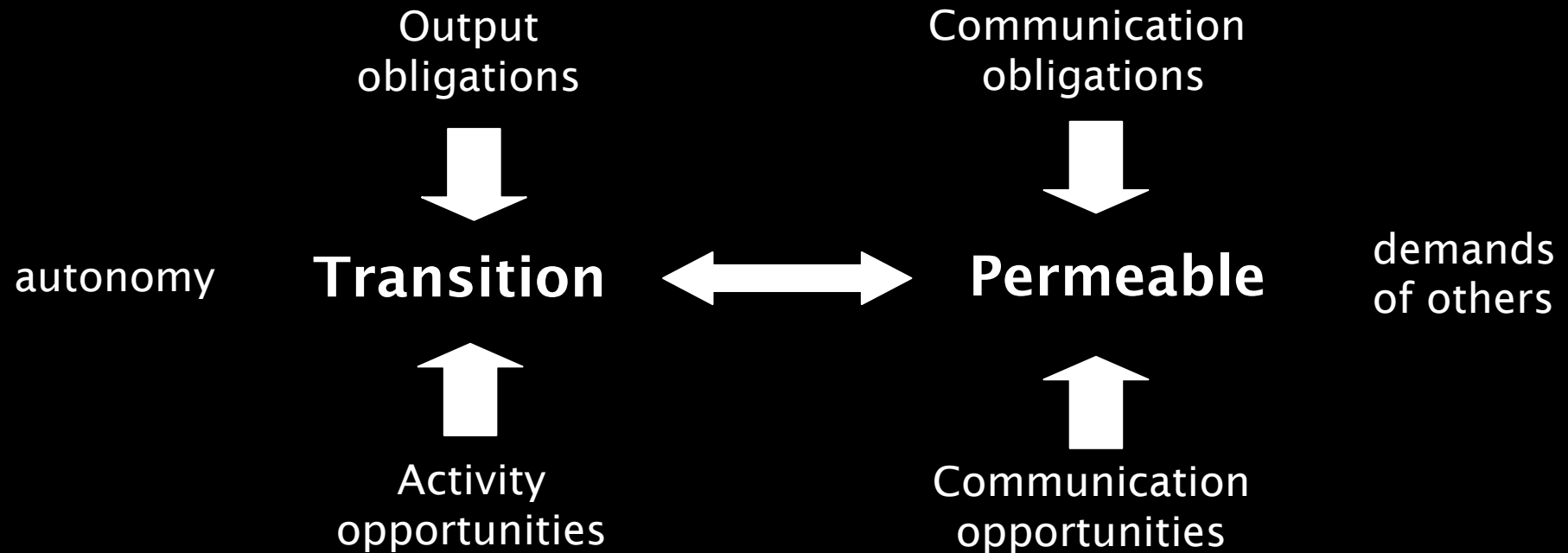
Irene Boss, sisters, brothers, aunts, uncles you name it

Susan Children wanting money

Freya Perhaps to meet me when I get off a train. Or ring a mini cab 20 minutes before the train is due to pull in to meet me.

Lucy I've ordered take away in Reading on Thursday to be at home at the same time as me.

Integration or tension



Rose I do have a mobile phone, but I won't have a, I've deliberately, I've decided not to have a, you know ...

DH Hands free.

Rose Hands free, because it's time when I can legitimately turn off the mobile phone, switch off, and I can't be contacted and it's really nice.

DH Do you see that more as your own time then?

Rose It's thinking time, it's enjoying the countryside time, yeah, I, it's a sort of sense of freedom that I get.
(Travel Diary Interview)

“I drive everywhere and I consider it private time to myself that I would actually enjoy and I would catch up on my mobile with my friends at the lights or on loudspeaker.”

(London Women FG)

And finally...

Is the tension between travel being a transition time and a permeable space a result of the relatively short time individuals, employers and society have had to produce the routines, strategies and tactics necessary to fully adapt to the increased permeability arising from ICTs?

And finally...

It may be that the tension is a result of individuals, employers and society not having time to produce the routines, strategies and tactics necessary to fully adapt to the increased permeability arising from ICTs.

...?