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Abstract (200 words):

This paper reports on the findings of a qualitative research project into older people's experiences of relinquishing or contemplating relinquishing a driver's licence. The project 'Being Safe, Mobile and Older' was conducted in urban, rural and remote rural communities in South Australia. A total of 64 people aged 65 and over participated in either focus group discussions or in-depth interviews. The data analysis techniques used in this project draw on insights from post-structuralist theory. People's responses to ceasing to drive ranged from 'don't care' or relief through to despair. Not surprisingly, these responses were closely linked to the way people identified as particular types of travellers (eg. public transport users, motorists), the performance of their journeys, and the meanings they attached to their journeys. Although this paper flags these broader issues of identity, performance, and meaning it focuses upon the diversity of people's responses to relinquishing a licence. We believe that keeping this diversity of responses 'out in the open' is both affirming for older people and can assist transport policy makers and planners in developing a variety of responses to the mobility of older citizens.

Introduction

The mobility issues faced by older people have been widely acknowledged within the literature on transport disadvantage. More recently, researchers and policy makers have turned their attention to the issues older drivers face as they continue to drive or contemplate relinquishing their driver's licence. The aging of the population, the increase in the number of people aged 65 and over who drive and the propensity for such drivers to be involved in road crashes provide the rationale for research into 'older drivers'. The present study focuses on 'older drivers' who relinquish their driver's licence but it locates this process within a broader concern for older people's mobility.

The considerable literature which now exists on older drivers falls into three broad and overlapping areas of research. The first area includes those studies that have examined the age and stage at which older people cease driving and the reasons they give for their changed mobility (eg. Waller 1991; Chipman et al 1997; Dellinger et al 2001; Raitanen 2003). The second and related area of research is that undertaken mainly (but not exclusively) in the health sciences. This work focuses upon the functional capabilities necessary to driving and how the aging process impacts on these capabilities and/or people's propensity to be involved in road crashes (eg. Mori and Mizohata 1995; Stamatiadis and Deacon 1995; O'Neill 1997). This literature also considers the assessment of older drivers including whether driving abilities should be tested, how, when and by whom they should be tested (eg. Marottoli and Richardson 1998; Owsley et al 2003; Parker et al 2003). Research in this area is concerned with identifying those older drivers at risk of accident or injury and predicting those drivers more or less likely to relinquish a licence. The third body of literature focuses on the impact that ceasing to drive has on older people. This literature can be divided into two areas of research. The first examines the mobility options available to older people and the problems they face if they lose their mobility (Stacey and Kendig 1997; Marottoli et al 2000). The second group of studies examines older people's experiences of their changed mobility. It is in this latter body of work that the present study is located.

Researchers working in the United States and Australia have found that relinquishing a driver's licence is a traumatic experience (eg. Johnson 1995; McKenzie and Steen 2002). The grief and anxiety associated with ceasing to drive has been explained in terms of reduced access to services, facilities and social networks. On the one hand, people no longer have the same range of options available to them when determining the timing, route, destination, duration, frequency, and mode of their journey. They must consciously fit their travel decisions around others (friends, family, taxi drivers, public transport operators) and this tends to be experienced as a loss of independence. Further, the individual must fit their changed mobility to a broader travel context in which the automobile is centred as the 'travel norm' and the supply of transport infrastructure and services are directed toward this norm. Although this broader context serves as a backdrop to the issue of relinquishing a licence, researchers have not interrogated the mechanisms by which this automobile norm has been established nor how it is perpetuated. These mechanisms, while fundamentally informing their research, are taken as issues beyond the 'problem at hand'.

Another group of authors has examined older people's experiences of relinquishing a licence specifically in terms of identity and culture (Eisenhandler 1990; Gillins 1990; Yassuda et al 1997; Buys and Carpenter 2002; Harris 2002). Eisenhandler (1990) and Yassuda et al (1997) argue that in the United States licence holding and driving exceed their utilitarian value in transport and operate as symbols of independence, freedom and citizenship. Driving an automobile acts as a positive marker of identity so that when a person relinquishes their licence it can say more about that person than simply changing their means of access. Echoing these claims in the Australian context, Harris (2002) found that a person's identification as 'motorist' has a significant bearing on the ease with which s/he relinquishes her/his licence. Buys and Carpenter (2002), also working in Australia, consider that the shift from identifying as a motorist to a non-motorist is so profound that it constitutes a 'rite of passage'. The work of these authors is important as it provides positive insights into relinquishing a licence which can be built upon by policy makers. However, they raise more questions than they answer about the mechanisms by which certain objects are invested with meaning, the formation of identity and how people come to acknowledge themselves as particular kinds of travellers.

This paper examines people's experiences of relinquishing a licence by bringing together issues of access and identity. We would argue that the mechanisms which have established the motor vehicle as the pre-dominant means of access – that is, the travel norm – have also established particular travelling identities and positioned travellers in relation to each other, as normal/abnormal. Further, drawing on the insights of post-structuralist theorist Michel Foucault (1977, 1978), we would argue that transport researchers do not stand outside of, but are indeed implicated in, constituting these norms. That is, the way in which transport researchers conceptualise and rationalise mobility, the practices they bracket off as transport, the discursive practices (written and spoken techniques) they use to gather, record, sort, categorise and report on travel data, the modes of analysis and the language they deploy, all operate to establish certain travel practices and certain travellers as normal. It is beyond the scope of this paper to examine the way in which transport researchers actively constitute particular travel behaviours and travellers as normal (see Bonham 2002). However, it is important to illustrate the relation between transport research and transport norms given that our research seeks to avoid – as far as possible – reproducing existing travel norms.

At the macro political level, transport knowledge (or research) normalises particular types of journeys and allows travel to be governed toward 'economic' ends. In transport research, travel is understood and studied (enumerated, measured, (dis)aggregated, compared) as movement from one point (origin) to another (destination) – a 'trip' - specifically to engage in the activities at the destination (eg. Schumer 1955; Hensher 1972; Allen et al 1996). Although other practices/meanings of travel have been acknowledged (site seeing, promenading, exercising) they are subordinated to reaching a destination (eg. Hanson 1996). Getting from 'A-B' is positioned as the essence of travel, while other practices and understandings of travel are located within the cultural domain. We would argue that in thinking about travel as movement between an origin and destination, transport researchers have not grasped an essential or ultimate truth about travel – one which stands outside of culture. Rather, this is a culturally specific meaning of travel that is privileged within the historical context of liberal government. (Liberal government is understood in the

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Foucauldian sense and – put crudely – it is a way of thinking about a ‘problem’ of government such as travel which makes that problem knowable and enables practical intervention to meet ‘desired’ goals (see Foucault 1979, 1981, 1982, 1991; Gordon 1991)). The rationalisation of travel as a point-to-point journey is privileged within transport discourse and it is simultaneously entrenched as it is deployed in programs, policies, street regulation and so forth by agencies that seek to shape travel behaviour and travel environments (Bonham 2000; 2002; forthcoming). Further, the concept that the point to point journey is a derived demand provides an imperative to transport professionals to ensure journeys are completed as economically (in terms of time) as possible (Ferretti and Bonham 2001). This economic logic allows particular travellers – i.e. speedy travellers – to be prioritised over others. In the twentieth century the automobile provides the greatest *potential* for the timely completion of the trip and as such it fits the economic logic of transport and can be legitimately prioritised in the use of street space. We would argue it is the rationalisation of travel as transport that has played an important role in the proliferation of automobile usage and the pervasiveness of car culture.

Second, as transport researchers create their particular knowledge of travel they also establish categories of travellers (pedestrians, cyclists, motorists, passengers) and they establish travel norms by reference to the economic imperative of transport (that is through measures such as trip times, distances, routes, purposes, modes and so forth). As they do this, they position and prioritise each of the categories of travellers in relation to these economically derived travel measures and norms. Following from this second point, travellers are incited to fit themselves into the categories provided by transport researchers and in doing so they are positioned in relation to the travel norms. For example, the team that undertook the research on older driver's incited people to identify as particular types of travellers (motorists, passengers, etc.) by the very act of asking people to participate in the research. Travel surveys and driving tests work in similar ways. The identities established in transport knowledge are deployed by various agencies (e.g transport bureaucracies, automobile associations, police departments, green groups) as they seek to regulate mobility (see also Butler 1990; Rose 1991; Barry, Osborne and Rose 1996; Hindess 1996; Dean and Hindess 1998; Dean 1999). It is in assuming these identities that travellers follow/deviate from the norm and regulate themselves in relation to their identity as a traveller.

The relation between transport knowledge, travel norms, travelling identities and the regulation of mobility is complex; however, the important points to be made in relation to the present study are four fold. First, transport researchers are actively involved in the cultural practice of creating knowledge and they constitute and prioritise particular meanings of travel. Second, as researchers create knowledge about travel they actively constitute different travelling identities – simultaneously attaching status to those identities positioning some travellers and some journeys as normal and others as marginal. Third, people are incited to identify as particular types of travellers and they are regulated (and expected to regulate themselves) according to those identities. Finally, as researchers are fundamental to establishing travel norms they can also work to reproduce or challenge those norms. These four factors have informed our own research on relinquishing a driver's licence. The way in which we have undertaken and reported our research is a deliberate attempt to avoid the normalising practices that we believe are inherent in the modernist epistemological frameworks (positivism and interpretivism) widely used in transport. Our research has

sought to make explicit the full range of experiences discussed by our respondents and in doing this we have tried not to give greater weight to any of these stories.

The project *Being Safe, Mobile and Older* (BSMO) was initiated by a multi-disciplinary research team including an occupational therapist, transport engineer, sociologist and cultural geographer and a research assistant with a background in urban and regional planning. The research was conducted in the state of South Australia and focused on the metropolitan area of Adelaide but also included discussions with people living in remote rural and coastal rural communities. The project commenced with a focus on licence holding and relinquishing but quickly became concerned with mobility and choice. A total of 68 people participated in the research 64 of whom were aged 65 and over (41 women, 23 men) while the remaining four had special concerns about the mobility of older citizens (two rural police officers, a health worker and a local councillor). Of the older persons involved in the study, 18 people (all women) had never driven, 27 (13 women, 14 men) were current drivers and 19 (10 women, 9 men) had ceased driving. It was important to include people who had never driven so that we could maintain our attention on the broader concern with mobility.

Data was gathered using qualitative research methods - in-depth interviews and focus groups. A variety of organisations (Council of the Aging, Royal Automobile Association, Local Councils, Police Department, Aged Care Housing) were approached to assist in advertising the research, identifying and recruiting participants and providing meeting facilities. In-depth interviews were conducted with 21 older people, 7 lived in the inner suburbs of Adelaide and 14 in the middle suburbs. Focus groups attracted 47 participants, 25 from rural communities and 22 from the metropolitan area. Two focus groups were conducted in a remote rural community and had a combined attendance of 17 people while the focus group held in the coastal rural town had 8 participants. Of the five metropolitan focus groups, 10 participants lived in the middle suburbs and 12 lived in the outer suburbs.

The interview transcripts provide a wealth of data about the mobility experiences of respondents. This paper presents findings on the stated ease/concern with which people relinquished or faced relinquishing their driver's licence. In reporting our findings, we have separated relinquishers into five categories: relief from anxiety; ease; adjustment; trauma; and temporary setback. The responses of current drivers were separated into three groups: acknowledgement – preparation; acknowledgement – concern; unthinkable. These groupings are not necessary, there are resonances between responses which make alternative groupings possible. However, this particular way of presenting the interview and focus group materials does provide useful insights into people's experiences. Given the focus on relinquishing, we have not included the experiences of people who have never driven except where it adds insight to the discussion. A separate paper is being prepared which examines all three groups of respondents in relation to (in)dependence and mobility. Further, given the complexities involved in interpreting gendered performances of mobility we have also addressed this issue in a separate paper.

As this paper is intended to foreground respondents' views, we have frequently used their words to describe their experiences rather than our own. We have also used names (exchanging real names for pseudonyms to ensure anonymity) rather than

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numbers or codes to identify respondents. These strategies (words and names) are an attempt to acknowledge research respondents as ongoing participants in the discussion, they are not passive objects of study. Rather, they are speaking, active, responsive beings: people whose views and actions are in on-going process and whose reflections upon mobility may have been influenced by their experiences in this project.

Experiences of relinquishing

As stated above, there were 19 research participants who had relinquished their driver's licence. The first sub-set of relinquishers included five people who expressed relief at no longer driving. Four of the respondents lived in the inner suburbs while the fifth lived in the coastal rural township. These respondents had voluntarily relinquished their licences and identified road conditions or deterioration in their health as the reasons for giving up driving. None-the-less, they all expressed considerable anxiety about driving which could be traced over different time periods or places. Ted and Alex had enjoyed driving in their home country but they felt the Australian road environment was too dangerous and they had become quite nervous when they had to drive. Physical ailments had led Delia, Ruby and Cal to give up driving.

Although physical conditions were the stated reasons for relinquishing, Delia, Ruby and Cal went on to explain that throughout their lives they had been either ambivalent about driving or had never enjoyed it.

I was not unhappy to sort of hand over to [my wife] later on. I didn't actually enjoy driving (Cal, coastal rural).

Ruby explained to Cathy (research assistant):

Ruby (inner metropolitan): I have got friends that would say 'Oh. I'll go for a drive.'...that would never have occurred to me. I would have to have been going somewhere and I would have to look it up in the street directory first and...have it firmly fixed in my mind that it was 1, 2, 3 streets past a certain spot...

Cathy: So it was a very demanding experience for you, driving?

Ruby: Yes it was to me...yes, yes

Cathy: It wasn't a pleasure?

Ruby: No, not really, no.

Both Ruby and Cal had been driving for more than 50 years but this did not make the experience any more enjoyable.

The relationship drawn between the reason for relinquishing a licence (the physical ailment) and disliking driving can be read in several ways. First, it may be that these respondents were consoling themselves that the loss was not so great because they had had many negative experiences as drivers. It may also be read that the physical ailment provided legitimate grounds to stop driving. The fact that when Delia broke her wrist she also took the opportunity to sell her car suggests her ailment provided 'reasonable grounds' for her to stop driving altogether. Cal discussed the weight of responsibility he felt in being in control of a car - an object that he described as a 'lethal weapon'. The responsibility of this lethal weapon coupled with his declining

capabilities may have given Cal legitimate grounds – indeed made it imperative – to stop driving.

Whether these respondents actually felt the need of an excuse to stop driving is one part of our concern. There are two more problems that these people's experiences bring to our attention. The first is that these types of responses are largely absent from the literature on relinquishing a licence. A dislike of driving does not appear in the older driver's literature. The literature focuses upon the desire to drive and the positive experiences or understandings of driving. This focus has (unintended) effects as the positive experiences of travel are not only re-positioned as the norm through explicit and universalising statements such as '...most adult Americans' (Yassuda et al p525) and 'In our society...' (Gillins 1995 p12; McKenzie and Steen 2002 p198) but also it obscures and marginalises other points of view. Positive attitudes toward driving tend to fill up or exhaust what can be said about driving. Those people who do not share this view are positioned as outside of the norm and as such either their views can be ignored or they have a problem to be treated. The second issue raised by the responses outlined above is the relation drawn between aging and driving. Our respondents described a dislike for, or apprehension about, driving that preceded the changes in capabilities they were experiencing. However, in the literature on relinquishing a licence, questions of confidence, nervousness, and anxiety are identified as part of the aging process. As researchers link anxiety about driving to the condition of aging they effectively silence such feelings amongst younger people and construct anxiety as 'another problem' of aging.

The second group of relinquishers were those who were at ease with relinquishing a licence. This group included five women, one of whom lived in the middle suburbs, the remaining four lived in the outer metropolitan area. It appears that for all but one of these women there was no defining moment in ceasing to drive and as the following focus group exchange demonstrates, three of these women spoke quite casually about relinquishing their licence.

Cathy: So when you decided that you weren't going to drive any more was that a decision you made on your own or was it with family and friends?

Hilda (outer metropolitan): Yes. On me own.

Pat (outer metropolitan): I just didn't renew it.

Ellen (outer metropolitan): No. No I didn't...it sat there for a long time. I never used it.

Cathy: Have you still got it?

Pat: No. Probably tore it up.

Ellen: It's got lost in moving.

Hilda: I was living in [a country town] with my husband, and when he passed on...I came over here to live with my eldest son. When I knew that I was going to come over here I...never worried about driving. I just gave it up.

Relinquishing a driver's licence was certainly not a traumatic experience for these women and does not fit the models of adjustment or rite of passage offered in the literature. This position of 'ease', like the position of 'relief' discussed above, is not acknowledged or explored in the various studies on relinquishing a licence. However, in explicating this experience some people may feel affirmed in their own experience of relinquishing a licence while others may find it a useful position to reflect upon.

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Throughout their adult lives, all of the women in this group had made extensive use of a range of mobility options. They all spoke of walking, using public transport or taxis, and taking lifts with family and friends as being important in their everyday travel experience. Two women in this group had held a driver's licence for much of their adult lives but they had travelled with their partners, children, friends or by public transport. Both women said they were quite content not driving and even when their partners had passed away they still had a range of options for staying mobile. For all of these women, driving a car was only one travel option so that life continued, largely unaltered, once they had relinquished their driver's licence.

Two women in this group linked their ease of giving up driving to their experiences as drivers in several ways. First, as a learner driver one of the respondents (Ellen) avoided a potentially serious collision when going for her driving test and never regained confidence in the abilities of other drivers. Second, these women related their driving experiences to the behaviour of their partners. The husbands of both women used the car to travel to work leaving them without a car. Greater access to the car may have increased their attachment to driving. Perhaps, more importantly were the comments made by their husbands:

Ellen: My husband, he didn't like anybody else driving him...

Pat: That's right you get more arguments...You didn't put the brake on! That sort of thing. Look in the mirror...you know, you are conscious of it.

Ellen, her confidence already shaken by a near serious accident, stated that her husband's behaviour had undermined her driving.

The experiences of these women resonate with two members from the 'relief' group of relinquishers discussed above – Cal and Ruby. Cal's wife positioned herself as a better driver than Cal while Ruby's husband taught her to drive:

He was the only one who gave me lessons. As I said, with much profanity. I look back and laugh now but many the time I threatened to get out of the car and walk home (Ruby).

From this initial negative experience, Ruby did not relate any subsequent redeeming moments in driving.

These exchanges between husbands and wives might be read as a struggle for control over the car. However, Ruby's husband insisted she learn to drive to assist him in his business while Ellen said her husband also disliked driving and only used the car when he felt he had no alternative.

Taken together the respondents who felt at ease with giving up driving had quite diverse driving experiences. However, the thread that runs through each of their stories is their preparedness to use a range of different means of travel and an obvious enjoyment and appreciation of these alternatives. It is important to bear in mind that four of these women lived in the outer suburbs where public transport services are often seen to be poorly developed. Further, these women, despite the lower socio-economic status of their respective localities, were also prepared to use taxis whenever necessary.

The third group of relinquishers were those who, borrowing Harris's (2002) term, had 'adjusted' to not driving. This adjustment focuses attention on the steps people take in making the decision to cease driving. Only two respondents are included in this group but we have also drawn on comments made by Carol (a regional health worker) about her father's experience. The two respondents had been driving for more than 50 years and had given up driving 6 and 8 years prior to the focus group discussions. Carol did not provide any information on how long her father had been driving but he had relinquished his licence within 12 months of the interview.

The people in the 'adjustment' group each took time to reflect on the prospect of ceasing to drive. Carol's father had been prompted to think about relinquishing his licence by an impending visit to the doctor:

I think it was last year. He thought the doctor was going to tell him he wasn't going to be driving again and that [made him] anxious...having those twelve months to make up his own mind it's a different attitude. But he's got the resources around him in town to support him (Carol, remote rural).

It is clear that Carol's father was assisted in making his decision to relinquish by having alternative travel resources available to him. However, as Carol interpreted her father's experience, it was the time to reflect on not driving that made the decision possible.

Ben (middle metropolitan) had also given considerable thought to the prospect of not driving. Ben's unease about his driving was compounded by his son's negative feedback about driving as well as being involved in a crash. Ben subjected himself to a driving assessment which he subsequently failed. While Ben was pursuing an appeal to this decision, he began to contemplate the alternatives to being a driver. He collected public transport timetables for the bus and train routes he would travel along and learned how to use the system. His daughter also obtained taxi vouchers for him which he uses in emergencies. Ben found that combining the public transport system with the occasional taxi ride and lifts from family worked well for him and saved him considerable amounts of money.

Kelvin took a different approach to relinquishing his driver's licence. Throughout his working life Kelvin had had the use of a company car so that on retiring he noticed the expense of buying and running a car. After his wife died and he stopped using the car for holidays, he wondered whether he might be able to do without a car altogether. Kelvin lived in the metropolitan area and he explained that his locality was well served by public transport:

I thought to myself I would give it a go and see if I even need a car or want a car...and I got along without it very well. The thought of having a car now would terrify me, I wouldn't dare get [one]. I sit with people in the car and I think oh god I am glad I don't drive...Well I found out I didn't need [a car]...I can honestly say, it's not the fact that I haven't got [a car] and I am saying I don't need it. I honestly don't need it...I got all the bus time tables I need from various places (Kelvin, middle metropolitan).

Kelvin had promised himself that if, after a fair trial, he could not cope without a car he would purchase one again. He found that he did not need a car for longer journeys

and good friendship and neighbourhood networks meant he had people visit him regularly or he was in easy walking distance of others.

During the focus groups, Kelvin and Ben stated that they were happy with their respective decisions to stop driving. These men found that they could meet all their mobility needs by using a combination of modes of travel. Further, they appreciated the economic benefits of not having to run a motor vehicle. It seems that taking time to reflect on relinquishing a licence and testing travel alternatives are mechanisms that can help people make the shift away from driving.

The fourth group of relinquishers found the experience of ceasing to drive extremely traumatic. Two respondents lived in the middle suburbs (Hugh and Helen) while the third lived in the outer suburbs (Tess). The three people in this group expressed anger, regret, or grief over losing their licence. Two of the respondents had been driving since their 20s while the third obtained her licence in her 40s. Each of these people had their licence revoked suddenly or they felt forced into a sudden decision about their driving. Failing eyesight and health had caused them to cease driving. Two respondents had been advised by doctors 12 months before the focus group discussion that their eye-sight was failing. One (Tess) was advised that she could not renew her licence while the other (Hugh) reported being 'borderline' and he decided not to drive because of the risk involved. By contrast, the third respondent's licence had been revoked 12 years before this research was conducted.

These three research participants were all involved in the same focus group and the group dynamic appears important in mapping their responses. Hugh's attitude on not being able to drive shifted throughout the course of the focus group discussion. At times he concurred with other group members musing over the financial benefits of not driving or the frantic pace and behaviour of motorists. At these moments, Hugh was reconciled to, even pleased about, not driving. At other times he was clearly angry and upset. For Helen, the loss of her licence 12 years earlier was a source of great anger and she maintained this position throughout the focus group discussion. Tess, on the other hand, appeared reconciled to being a non-motorist throughout the discussion but in its closing moments she explained to Cathy that it had been a terrible blow to hear that she could no longer drive and she despaired at her changed mobility.

It would be easy to explain this anger, regret, and despair in terms of the years each person had spent driving or the lack of alternatives. Helen and Hugh had both been driving since their 20s and driving was an important part of their lives. In ceasing to drive, they each felt severely limited in their mobility options. Hugh found it difficult to use public transport (he could not read the bus numbers) while Helen's physical condition made it impossible to use the local bus service. Both Helen and Hugh felt uncomfortable asking friends and family members for lifts and this contributed to a sense of constraint. Although Hugh could get to activities – his friends insisted on giving him lifts – he was unhappy with this arrangement. Tess's position was quite different. She had only started driving in her 40s, she had not used her car very often, and her family were extremely supportive - children and grand children were always available to give her lifts. However, Tess linked learning to drive to a crucial time in her life – the moment her partner passed away. Obtaining her driver's licence was not related in any simple way to reaching destinations. Driving allowed Tess to maintain the mobility previously ensured by her partner and it was a type of 'in-dependence'

she gained amid her loss. Like Tess, Helen had also been widowed in her 40s and her position as motorist was linked to her position as the mother of four young children.

The final groups of respondents (all residing in the inner suburbs) were those who did not hold a current driver's licence but did not see themselves as relinquishers. Norma had not driven since a serious illness ten years before the interview while Jim and Terrence had not been able to obtain a driver's licence since migrating to Australia. All three looked forward to the time when they would re-commence driving and yet, given their circumstances, this seemed unlikely.

Norma had obtained her driver's licence in her 60s when her husband had become too ill to drive. She described in detail her experiences of learning to drive, going for her licence, buying a new car and driving it home. She also explained how she dealt with her husband's complaints about her driving. Unlike the respondents in the 'relief' and 'ease' group, Norma was in a strong position to challenge her partner's view of her as a driver. She had been taught to drive by a third party which meant that the micro-politics of her relationship with her husband did not mediate her learning to drive. Further, as Norma's partner relied on Norma for his mobility he was obliged to accept her judgement of herself as a capable driver. For Norma, like Tess, obtaining a driver's licence held significance beyond reaching a destination.

The participants in this study who were most at ease with relinquishing their licence were those who: had not particularly liked driving and were not attached to the identity of the motorist; had time to reflect upon the consequences of relinquishing a licence; used a variety of mobility options in their everyday travels. However, the experiences of the respondents set out above indicate that relinquishing a licence cannot be reduced to a series of bald factors. The stories told indicate that driving a motor car and holding a driver's licence are not always experienced in positive ways nor are they universally read as positive markers of identity (see also Wajcman 1991; Miller 2001; Dunnaway 2002). In this study, some respondents found driving had placed pressure on their lives and did not enhance their sense of well-being. Following from this, and not surprisingly, these people did not find relinquishing a licence a difficult experience. For those respondents who felt a strong attachment to the motor vehicle, this attachment had a complicated history that cannot be reduced to notions of in-dependence, citizenship or freedom in any straightforward way.

The literature on relinquishing certainly acknowledges that positive experiences of driving and negative experiences of relinquishing are not universal. However, our concern is that in focusing on these particular types of experiences researchers close out other ways of thinking about driving and relinquishing a licence. This closure shapes policy responses and the direction of further research. More importantly though, as these discourses circulate they can silence/erase alternative – perhaps affirming - ways in which people can think about their changing mobility.

Reflections on being 'Differently Mobile'

The remainder of this paper considers those people who currently drive and their reflections on relinquishing a driver's licence. Of the 27 current drivers only 23 offered comments on relinquishing a licence and these people have been grouped

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according to their sense of ease about giving up driving. The categories included here are: acknowledgment - preparation, acknowledgment – concern, and unthinkable. This discussion ranged across the difficulties people found in, or the particular fears they held about, changes in their mobility. Three commonly discussed issues were proximity, availability of (and ability to use) alternatives, and support networks. These were key issues whether people lived in country towns, on farms, or in the metropolitan area. As people discussed their lives as motorists, they also drew out the importance of the journeys they made and the significance of these journeys in terms of their relationship to others.

Most respondents acknowledged that they would give up driving at some stage. Seven of these people, three living in the middle suburbs of Adelaide and four in the remote north, had given the matter considerable thought and were preparing themselves psychologically and/or in terms of their mobility. These preparations included substituting journeys by car with journeys by bus, asking friends and family for lifts, or identifying alternatives such as buying a scooter, or learning about community buses and volunteer driver services.

Although respondents were preparing themselves for that moment when they would no longer drive, all but one person stated that they would miss not having a motor car on hand.

I know I will miss it but I would sooner live quietly and be in good health and not be in a wheelchair after some accident or lose my mobility. The time has just got to come (Joseph, middle metropolitan).

[Not having a car] would absolutely curtail my activities because most of my activities would require me to catch public transport (Frank, middle metropolitan).

I have been threatening [to give up driving] but then I think and I think...there are a lot of things to think of before you take that drastic step (Brenda, middle metropolitan).

It won't be hard for me if I have to give up my licence (Marg, remote rural).

Recognising that driving was not a life long option allowed respondents to contemplate and prepare for alternatives but it did not of itself make relinquishing a straightforward or easy task.

Of the three participants living in the metropolitan area, two believed the time to stop driving was immanent. They were both substituting driving with buses, walking, and travelling with friends and family but they were having difficulties in finally giving up. One respondent, Brenda, only used her car once or twice a week and she had been struggling over whether to keep it 'just in case'. Joseph imagined he would give up driving within the following year but was having difficulty negotiating some transport

alternatives. He had recently moved to a retirement village and needed someone to explain the local bus time table and wait with him at the bus stop on one or two occasions to affirm him. Joseph was not aware that such a service is available from the local transport authority and so he continued to use his car. In each of these cases, the car was not necessary to participating in activities or maintaining social contacts but it was reassurance.

Frank, also living in the middle suburbs, was very active in a range of clubs and he did not see himself retiring from driving in the near future. However, Frank and his friends shared lifts to various activities and he had been planning for the possibility of ceasing to drive. He explained his arrangements to move to a retirement home in the town where his daughters lived and went on to detail the many activities that he would join once he moved.

The four respondents living in the remote north all imagined a time when they would no longer drive.

Yes. I think a small town like here, so far, I don't think you would have any trouble getting around.

...I've accepted that I won't have my licence for a long time...I'm quite sure [that here] I'll be OK. I'm cultivating quite a few friends (Marg).

These respondents felt their own mobility needs were small and those who lived in town could walk (Dan, Marg) or use a scooter (Jim) much of the time. When they needed lifts they were sure they would find them but otherwise they were quite happy staying at home.

Driving seems to be one of the things I can do for people, but if I'm not allowed to drive, I'm quite content at home (Dan, remote rural).

Although Dan was a volunteer driver for the community his story resonates with Buys and Carpenters (2002) claim that people find other ways to engage in meaningful activities once they can no longer driver.

I would like to stay put out [on the farm]. We don't do much except come in and do a bit of shopping, increasingly in and out to the doctor, one or either of us or both...it's about all we can cope with to keep the two of us going. Then, there's all the people who will call in and have cups of tea. Plenty of visitors (Gayle, remote rural).

Each of these respondents felt they were embedded within a community which had strong social networks. Gayle lived some distance out of town on the family farm. None-the-less she did not see herself becoming socially isolated given that receiving visitors was still an important part of her social life. Further, residents living in and beyond the town could rely on a volunteer driver (Dan for now) who delivered outreach meals, transported people to the local hospital, or took them to the regional centre for more serious medical treatment. Not all respondents felt supported in these community networks – an issue which requires further investigation - but they worked well for many. One of the participants living in this remote rural community had never driven but she felt she could approach anyone in the community for a lift if necessary. A key issue for this community is maintaining and extending the volunteer

driver networks especially as younger people leave the area to take up employment opportunities elsewhere.

The strategies pursued by each respondent in identifying and trying transport alternatives, building networks, having at home activities and planning or imagining their lives without a car appear to have reduced the centrality of the car to their lives. Following Buys and Carpenter (2002), each person could imagine their lives going on after they had given up driving as they focused on those aspects that were meaningful beyond driving. In contrast to Buys and Carpenter (2002), these people are not necessarily subject to a dramatic change in identity.

The second group of 'current drivers' were those who acknowledged the possibility of relinquishing a licence but were uncertain about alternatives. Their initial responses to ceasing to drive were quite negative. However, as the interviews progressed these respondents often suggested alternatives to driving or gave careful consideration to those alternatives identified by the researchers - rejecting some but talking through others as if to test their plausibility:

I doubt that [public transport] will be adequate...our nearest point [for] public transport is...along this road here [and] down the next road. You have got a way to walk and by that time we could not feel like walking there, so perhaps we will get access cabs (Mr. Collins, middle metropolitan).

Well we will have to make arrangements to be more vigilant with our shopping and do it once a week. Home delivery or get a bus to Glenelg, which we can do, and get a taxi home from there (Mrs. Collins, middle metropolitan).

These people commented that they had discussed relinquishing a licence with their friends and they were all quite worried. The interview process provided respondents with an opportunity to talk through the various issues with people outside of their own networks. This process *may* have assisted research participants in tracing through the implications of each different type of travel making the alternatives more explicit and therefore feasible options. The micro-techniques of the interview process could be deployed to assist older people (amongst others) explore mobility alternatives (this technique has been used in recent programs initiated by the state government department *Transport SA*).

The final group of 'current drivers' found the prospect of not driving extremely difficult or 'unthinkable'. These included people from all localities – metropolitan, peri-urban, regional centres, rural, and remote rural. People varied in the strength of their responses to not driving. Some simply stated that it would be difficult others commented:

I can see the time coming when I will have to give up but I hope I die before that (Fran, inner metropolitan).

Now to me, as I have said to other people, if I lost my licence I would feel as though I might as well shoot my brains out, at this stage (Hayden, middle metropolitan).

If [my licence] was cut back and I had to sit home, I think I'd be dead in six months (Donald, remote rural).

Almost all of these respondents had entertained the idea of not driving and they agreed that people should not drive if it put others at risk. However, they felt that in their particular circumstances ceasing to drive would have drastic effects. As people talked about this issue they linked it to: their weekly travel routines; their support networks; and how they felt about the activity of driving.

People often approached the 'problem' of relinquishing their licence by listing out the range of clubs, organisations, community and social activities that took them out of their homes each week. These destinations formed their weekly travel routines and alternative means of travel were inadequate for their many responsibilities.

I would be stuck with this bus which is about once an hour. So losing a licence would be quite an impediment (Chris, middle metropolitan).

Further, people such as Chris often trip chained – undertaking several tasks in one journey – or picking up friends along the way:

Our meetings are at Fullarton...If I want to be at Fullarton, I can leave here at 9am clear the mail box in town and be at the meeting by 9.40. If I had to use public transport to Fullarton, I would just have to give up (Chris).

The fact that these people discussed the many activities they were involved in does not mean they were more active or socially engaged than other respondents. But it does demonstrate the central position these people accorded to the motor car in engaging in life outside the home.

As stated at the outset, accessing destinations has been privileged in transport discourses and it is not surprising when people speak of their driving in these terms. However, getting from A-B was not necessarily the essence of the journey for many respondents but was discussed along with other meanings and experiences of travel.

Some people spoke of the support networks they had available for accomplishing journeys. Not all respondents were bereft of willing family and friends. Fran spoke of the friend who insisted on taking her to committee meetings because Fran was not comfortable driving at night. Julian spoke of his children organising a roster amongst themselves when he did not have his car available.

But they each enjoyed driving beyond the fact of getting to a destination. Julian, Hayden and Fran, like Norma (who refused to see herself as a relinquisher) and Frank (who acknowledged ceasing to drive) spoke of driving as an enjoyable activity in itself. Julian and Norma spoke of their relationships with their respective partners being developed through their journeys:

Cathy: What was it about driving that you loved?

Norma: Oh the independence. You could pull up anywhere and I used to put a flask in the back of the car and I had a couple of very light little pressed wood trays I put in the back of the car. [We would] pull up and buy Cornish pasty or we'd buy fish and chips or a hamburger...and I'd

take some salad and...fruit. We'd sit there and feed the seagulls and then we'd go for a walk along the beach and paddle our feet.

These journeys are of course co-journeys and as such they unsettle the importance or central position accorded to the vehicle operator. The significance of the journey is not in the in-dependence of the motorist but precisely in the inter-dependence between the vehicle operator and the co-traveller – not a passenger nor a 'chauffeuree' (the inadequacy of language threatens to silence us) – both people are essential to the journey.

Cathy: Do you actually enjoy driving?

Julian (inner metropolitan): Yes...with my wife. [We go] along the coast especially moonlight [sic] night and we visit the lights when it is nearing Christmas. We go to Lobethal, we go to different areas to see those beautiful lights.

Cathy: Does your wife drive?

Julian: I am the driver she is the map reader.

The co-traveller is important to this journey – and it is the relationship built through the practice of the journey that has been, or is at risk of being, lost through ceasing to drive.

Overall, most 'current drivers' faced the prospect of ceasing to drive with some trepidation. Location did not have a straightforward bearing on this fear. People who lived in areas well-served by alternative transport (public and community transport, taxis, and access cabs) were as anxious about ceasing to drive as people in the remote rural areas. However, there were some differences amongst people living in the remote areas. Those who lived in the township felt more comfortable about ceasing to drive while those living on farms were often anxious about relinquishing a licence. This difference may have been related to gendered performances of mobility as much as location.

Many of the stories of the 'current drivers' can be linked by an implicit or explicit concern for social contact. For many people, the motor vehicle was a principal means of staying in contact. None-the-less some respondents believed they would maintain social contact either by receiving visitors or taking lifts to particular events. Several people saw the motor car itself as a vehicle of social contact. That is, it was through the performance of the journey that people developed and extended their relationships with partners, friends, and family members. Losing a licence would mean losing an important way of being with others. On the other hand, one respondent who had never driven saw her position as a passenger assisted in maintaining networks of social relations. The importance of the journey as a social experience (whether made by car or some other means) is beyond the scope of this paper but it raises important and complex questions around 'in-dependence', 'inter-dependence' and alternative means of travel.

Although a number of respondents expressed deep concern about relinquishing a licence, few people retreated into denial. The length of time respondents had been driving did not necessarily impact on their preparedness to cease driving. Rather, one of the greatest sources of anxiety was the prospect of having a licence revoked when people still believed themselves to be capable drivers. This fear resonates with our finding that the people who experienced most difficulty in relinquishing a licence

were those who had stopped driving quite suddenly. Time to reflect on being a non-driver seems to be important in the process of letting go of driving.

Conclusion

This paper has explicated the diverse responses of older driver's to the issue of relinquishing a driver's licence. The responses from people who had already ceased driving ranged from relief through to anger and denial. Of those respondents who were current drivers, all but one person was worried at the prospect of relinquishing their licence. This anxiety was not only related to issues of access or self-perception but also the importance of the journey by car in developing particular social relations. The journey itself often exceeds the boundaries of an origin and destination and cannot be reduced to or necessarily understood in terms of a transport meaning of travel.

Our strategy in analysing the data and reporting the research findings has been to give attention to all experiences of relinquishing a licence. This strategy is important for several reasons. First, drawing on Foucault's insights into normalisation, our concern with the existing literature is its tendency to (re)constitute the motorist as the normal traveller and (re)produce the experience of relinquishing a driver's licence as a normally traumatic experience. In positioning the motor vehicle as the normal means of travel, researchers also position the motorist as the 'normal' traveller (non-motorists become 'abnormal') and this has been reinforced by the focus on positive understandings and experiences of motoring. Our study revealed that some people have an on-going apprehension about driving that is not linked to the process of aging. These people did not have positive experiences of motoring and they did not perceive driving as a positive marker of identity. This anxiety is not an 'illness' or 'problem' to be overcome but it does open up reflections upon travel beyond the motoring norm.

Our study also revealed that older drivers do not necessarily experience difficulties in relinquishing a licence. These alternative experiences are acknowledged in the literature but as researchers focus upon negative responses to driving cessation they close discussion around these responses. Such closure effectively marginalises people who have positive experiences of ceasing to drive and silences alternative ways in which people might experience and understand relinquishing a licence. This closure also threatens to shut down the range of policy responses and strategies that might be deployed in maintaining the mobility of older citizens. We have kept all responses 'in full view' precisely because they can entrench or unsettle the motoring norm, they affirm and acknowledge diverse experiences, and they assist in developing diverse mobility strategies.

We believe that a range of strategies are necessary to addressing older people's mobility and the issues they face around relinquishing a licence. These strategies might fall into three broad approaches: supply of services; mobility support; opening choice. We wish to focus on the last two of these approaches. Mobility support needs to be provided for those people who would like to stop driving but are uncertain about their mobility options. Transport agencies (government and private) might link with agencies concerned with the rights of older people to establish mobility advisory

services. These services could include counselling/coaching sessions whereby older people who have relinquished a licence might assist (on a voluntary or paid basis) other older people in identifying their mobility needs and the travel options available to them to meet those needs. A phone service might also be established which provides information on mobility options – how to enlist family and friends where appropriate, how to catch public or community transport, what specialised services are available and how to use these services. These types of services could be advertised to all citizens when they receive their driver's licence renewals.

Opening choice does not simply mean supplying infrastructure and services (public and community transport, specialised transport – with volunteer or paid labour, cycling and pedestrian facilities, roads) that maximise people's mobility options. Opening choice is also concerned with broadening the ways in which people can think about their travel and making it possible/acceptable for people to speak about being differently mobile. We, as transport researchers, need to be cognisant of the discursive and non-discursive mechanisms through which we position travellers as normal and abnormal. The techniques we have used in writing this research paper is a conscious attempt to value, affirm, and acknowledge the multiple ways of speaking about relinquishing a licence. If we make explicit the diverse ways we can speak about relinquishing a licence we will provide people with different ways of comprehending their experiences.

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