

## COMMUTERS: MAJORITY STILL GOING BY CAR

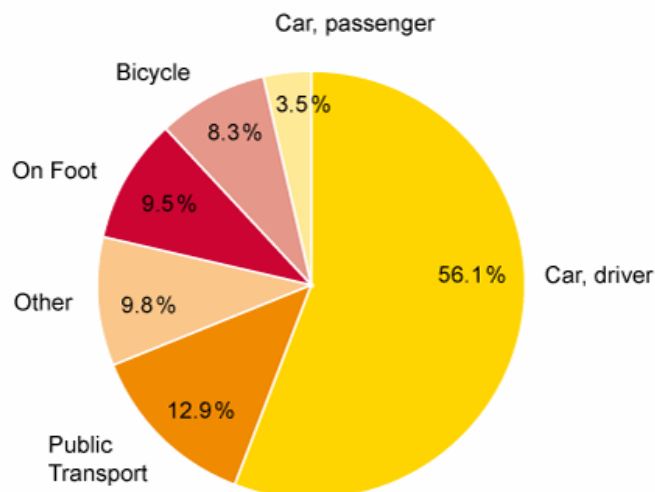
Destatis, 30 October 2009

Many commuters have to spend a lot of time on travelling to their place of work, in addition to their working hours. Are persons in employment getting more willing to be mobile as a result of the changes on the labour market? Is the preferred choice of transport changing in view of rising fuel prices? The discussion about measures to be taken against climate change is certainly one of the reasons why such questions are highly topical. Answers are given by the results of an additional programme of the microcensus on transport patterns of commuters, which is covered every four years and last time in 2008.

### Six out of ten persons in employment relying on the car

Despite all the appeals to switch to public transport, the car remains by far the most popular means of transport for people's journey to work. In 2008, 59.6% of the persons in employment used a car to cover the distance to their place of work and 3.5% of them were passengers. Compared with 1996, those shares hardly changed (1996: 60.3%, 4.0% as passengers).

**Persons commuting to their place of work, by the means of transport used for the longest part of the distance**



Results of the microcensus, 2008

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### Only 13% prefer bus or rail

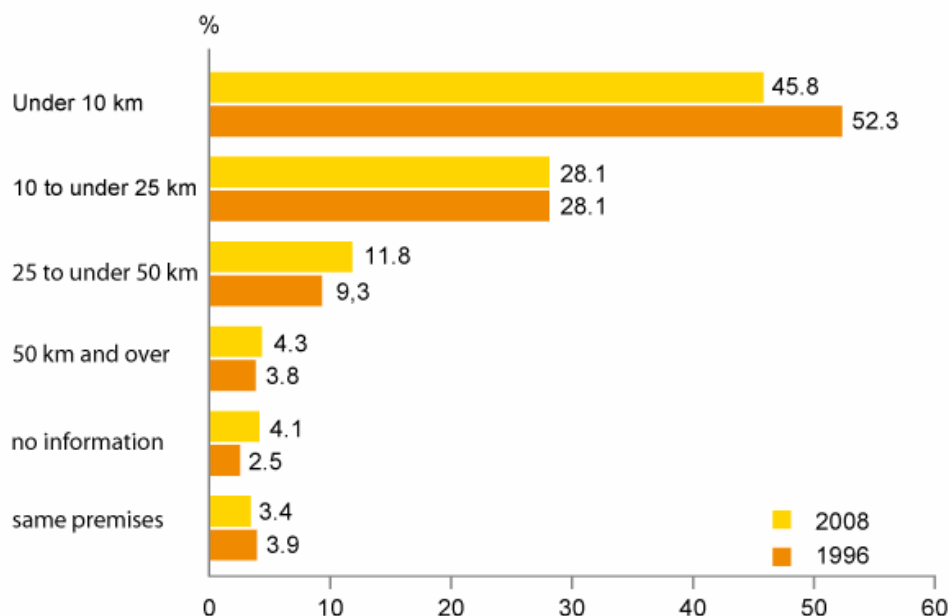
Public transport is used for their way to work by just 13% of the persons in employment. The share of those going by bus was slightly down from 1996, while rail transport recorded a slight increase. What became also slightly more popular is the bicycle. Over the same period, the share of cyclists rose by 0.9 percentage points to 8.3%. However, the share of pedestrians among persons in employment fell from 10.6% to 9.5%.

### Journey to work is getting longer, taking more time

More and more persons in employment accept longer distances for their way to work, demonstrating their increasing occupational mobility. While in 1996 the distance to the place of work was less than 10 kilometres (single journey) for 52.3% of the persons in employment, that was the case for just 45.8% in 2008. Between 10 and 25 kilometres had to be covered by 28.1% in 2008, which is the same percentage as twelve years earlier. The place of work was 25 kilometres or more from home for 16.2% of the persons in employment in 2008, while in 1996 the figure was just 13.1%. 3.4% lived and worked on the same premises (1996: 3.9%) and 2.4% of the persons in employment had changing places of work in 2008.

Along with the increasing distance covered, the travel time rose, too. While 72.8% of the persons in employment had to spend less than 30 minutes on getting to work in 1996, the percentage was just 68.2% in 2008. The data do not show whether the longer time needed is only due the generally longer distances or also to the increasing traffic density.

#### Persons commuting to their place of work, by distance between home and place of work



Results of the microcensus 1996 and 2008  
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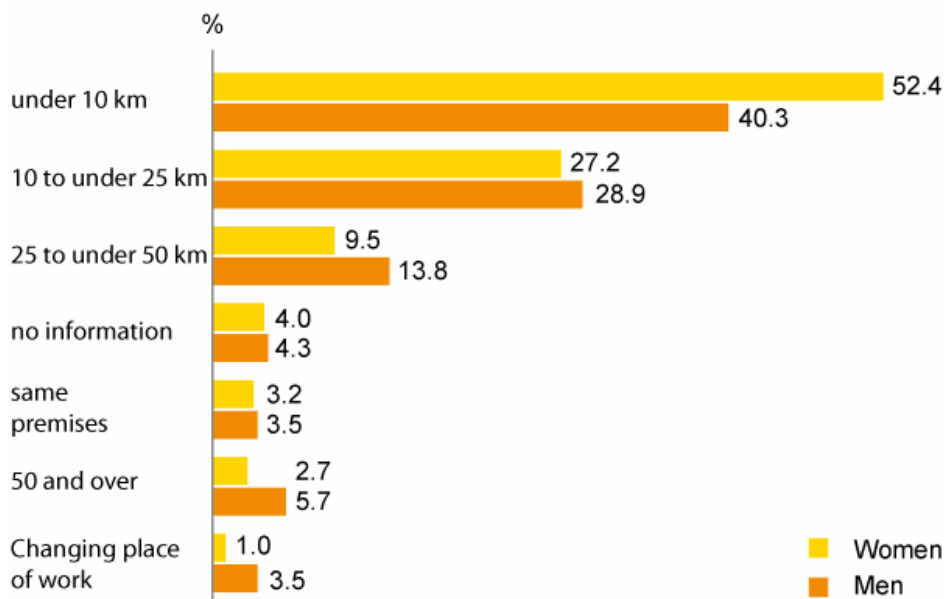
### Short distances covered more often by bicycle, longer ones by rail

The choice of transport in different distance classes shows changing patterns among persons commuting to their place of work. For distances of less than ten kilometres, especially the bicycle became more popular (2008: 17.0%, 1996: 13.5%). For that distance, a slightly larger share was recorded also for persons in employment walking, going by underground, commuter rail (S-Bahn), tram, motorcycle, motor scooter, moped or motor-assisted bicycle in 2008 (27.9%) than in 1996 (27.2%). However, downward trends for short distances were recorded for bus utilisation (-0.9%) and car utilisation as drivers or passengers (2008: 47.8%, 1996: 50.6%). While hardly any changes in use patterns were observed for the distance class between 10 and 25 kilometres, rail transport (railway, underground, commuter rail, tram) was used by a markedly larger share of persons in employment for distances between 25 and 50 kilometres in 2008 (14.0%) than in 1996 (11.6%), which was at the expense of bus use (-1.1%) and car use (-0.9%). For distances of 50 kilometres and more a downward trend especially for buses (-0.8% to 1.1%) and cars (-4.0% to 77.5%) was contrasted by a marked increase in train use (+5.4% to 16.3%).

### More and more women switching to cars

There are marked differences in commuter patterns between men and women. In 2008, 60% of the men used their own car. A good half of the women drove to work by car. However, the difference between the sexes diminished a little over time. While for men the share of drivers was down by 3.5 percentage points compared with 1996, more and more women go by their own car (1996: 45.8%, 2008: 51.1%). Similarly, the differences in using other means of transport are decreasing, too. However, still more women than men use public short-distance transport (13.6% versus 8.4% for men), hop on a bicycle (9.3% versus 7.4%) or are on foot (11.8% versus 7.5%). It should be noted here that, altogether, women cover shorter distances to work. 52.4% of the women lived within ten kilometres from their place of work in 2008, which was the case for just 40.3% of the men.

#### Persons commuting to their place of work, by distance between home and place of work



Results of the microcensus, 2008

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### Longer distances also to school and university

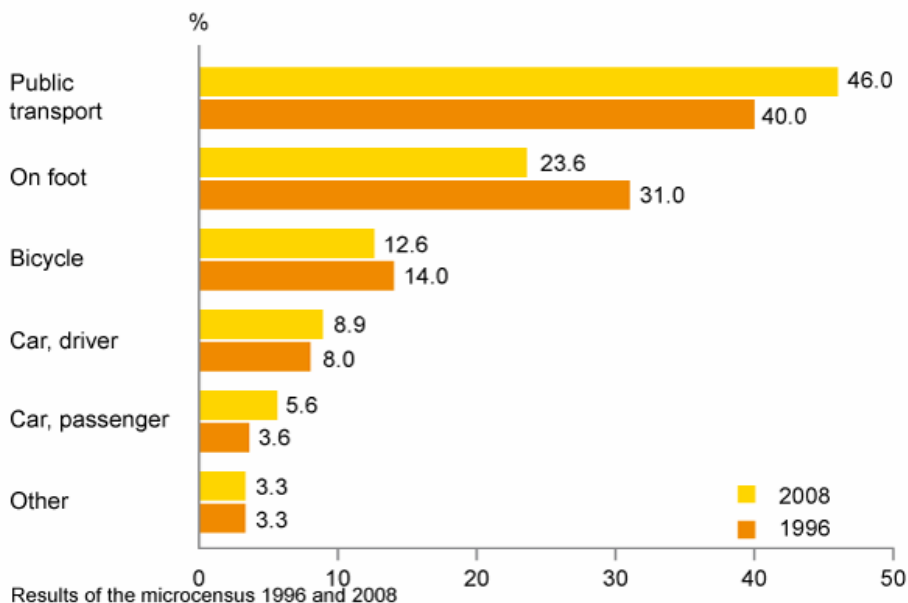
Pupils and students, too, covered altogether longer distances to their educational establishment in 2008 compared with 1996. Only for 67.6% of them the school/university was less than ten kilometres away (1996: 76.2%).

The longer distances are also reflected by longer travel times. With 77.7%, compared to 82.7% in 1996, a considerably smaller share of persons commuting to their place of education reached the school/university in less than 30 minutes.

### Bicycle and walking are getting less popular among pupils and students

The growth in distances to be covered involves a decrease in the share of pedestrians among those commuting to their school/university from 31% in 1996 to 23.6% in 2008. Bicycles, too, were used less often for the longest part of the distance. 12.6% of the pupils and students – compared with 14.0% in 1996 – indicated to have used the bicycle. By contrast, 41.3% used buses, underground, commuter rail and trams (1996: 37.1%). 14.5% of the pupils and students used cars as drivers or passengers in 2008 (1996: 11.6%).

**Pupils and students, by the means of transport used for the longest part of the distance**



Results of the microcensus 1996 and 2008  
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### Conclusion

Despite rising fuel prices and the public discussion about the consequences of climate change, there is altogether little change in the patterns of those commuting to their place of work or education. Although the bicycle has become more popular for short distances and the increase in long distances resulted in growing utilisation of rail transport, there is an altogether large majority of persons in employment still covering their way to work by car. Consequently, persons in employment spend more and more time on the road.