



Ministerie van Infrastructuur en Milieu



# Life events as a window of opportunity

Jaco Berveling

12 september 2016



## Life events and mobility

- Research by the Netherlands Institute for Transport Policy Analysis (KiM)
- Quantitative (panel research: MPN) and qualitative (in-depth interviews)
- Aim of the research:
  - Understanding life events
  - Effect on mobility
  - Policy leverage (interventions)
- Life events: moving, new job, birth of a child
- This presentation:
  - life events as a "window of opportunity" for policy makers *and* research teams (ideal material for the transfer of knowledge)



## Life events

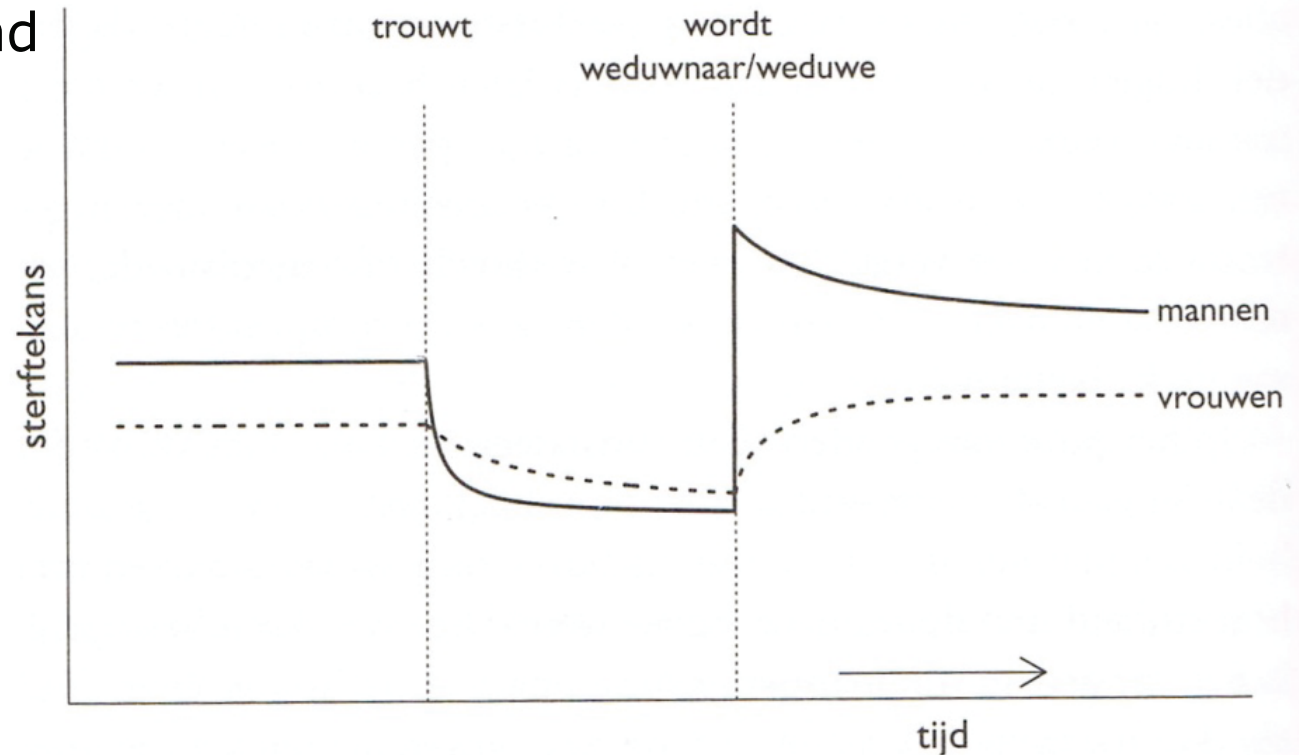
- Moving house
  - Other work location
  - Marriage
  - Death of partner
  - Child birth
  - Unemployment
  - Retirement
  - Etc.
- Can have a great (personal) impact
    - example: marriage and death of partner



## Impact (example)

Death of husband  
or wife

(Lillard, Waite, Till  
death do us part,  
1995)





# A window of opportunity I (for policy makers)

Because:

- Communication campaigns have their limitations:
  - People are not “open minded”
  - Breaking old habitual behaviour (automaticity) – create new (habitual) behaviour
    - Habits = unconsciously
    - Life event -> *conscious* reconsidering of way of transport (Bamberg et al., 2003)
  - Not easy:
    - Habit formation takes time and effort
    - Difficult, people need help (Lally, et al., 2010)



## More work to be done

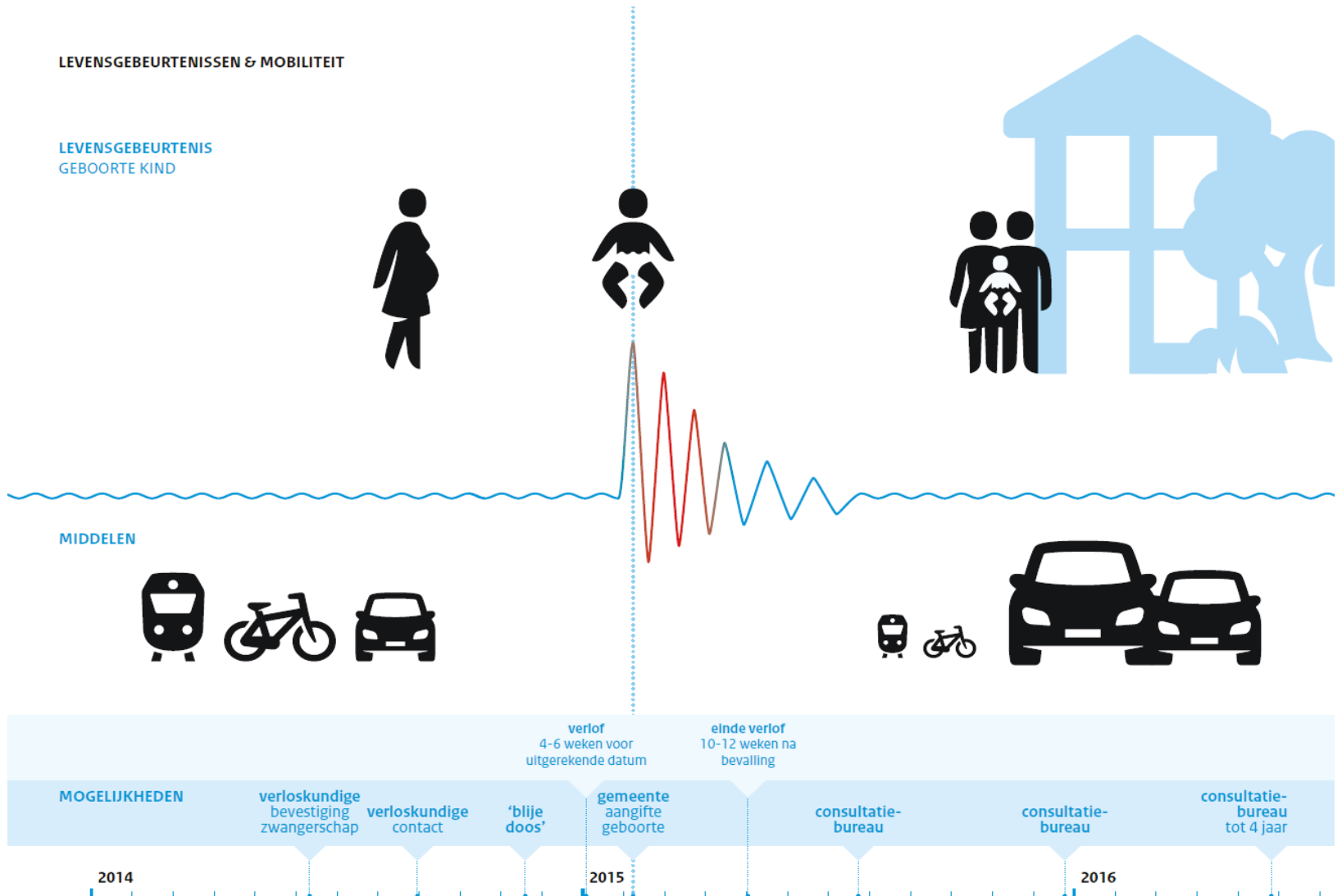
- Moving house, first job, retirement, change of job:
    - Free tickets for public transport
    - (personal) information about other ways of transport (carpooling, time tables of public transport, etcetera)
    - subsidies to promote cycling
- (Rolle et al, 2002; Bamberg, 2006; Beige, 2008; 2012; Oakil et al. 2014)

# The case of child birth



## LEVENSGEBEURTENISSEN & MOBILITEIT

### LEVENSGEBEURTENIS GEBORTE KIND





## A window of opportunity II (for research teams)

- Compelling results that “stick”
  - Life events are “compelling” (Davies, 2014)
    - Compelling foundations theory:
      - We are interested in people and love to learn about them
      - We pay attention to things we hope or fear are true
        - » High impact of life events: death, marriage, child birth, ...
  - Life events are “made to stick” (Heath et al., 2008)

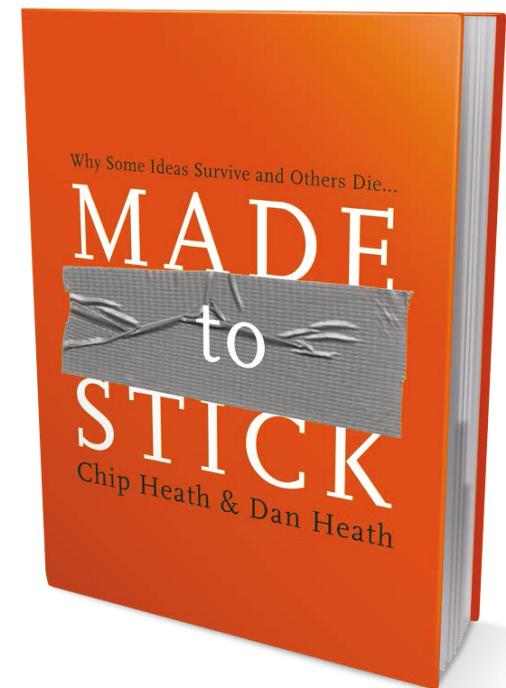






## Findings that “stick”

- Simple: easy to explain (elevator pitch)
- Concrete: we are all familiar with life events (more memorable)
- Credible:
  - Sender. We believe authorities, but also stories of *real* people and testable credentials (familiar with life events)
  - Message. Vivid details make a claim more real, more believable
- Emotional: feelings inspire people to act (pity, regret, ...)
- Stories: a story we can sympathize with





# Story telling: a fundamental human instinct

- Life events?
  - No “lack of drama” (great impact: “Till death do us part”)
  - KiM deliberately opted for conducting interviews
    - Ten short “stories”
    - Use it for conveying the results (simple, credible, emotional, etc.)
  - Is not a disqualification of statistical analysis, on the contrary
  - Quantitative and qualitative research should complement each other here: “statistics and stories”



What is your story?





# The case of child birth

Impact of child birth on mobility in 2014 en 2015 (Source: MPN)

	2014 (n=96)	2015 (n=118)
Mobility behaviour has changed	49%	46%
Travel at other times	8%	11%
Travel at other days	6%	8%
Other destinations	14%	13%
More trips	16%	8%
Less trips	15%	21%
More kilometres	9%	12%
Less kilometres	14%	17%
Travel with other vehicle	6%	5%
Bought other vehicle	6%	3%
Other transport subscription	0%	0%
Disposed car	0%	0%

## Story of “Marieke” and others

- What happened?
- When ...?
- How ...?
- Impact?
- What did you feel?



To conclude : the windows are wide open!



1. Breaking habits ->  
policy interventions

2. Results that "stick"  
-> Statistics and stories