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| le savoir vivant |



# motonormativity: a blind spot we all share

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THURSDAY 18 APRIL 2024 | 12h00 – 13h00  
online (ZOOM)

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Observatoire universitaire du  
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## Motonormativity: A blind spot we all share

While travelling by private car can offer benefits, there are also many costs that arise when we over-rely on this one form of travel. Defaulting to the car for short journeys has consequences for public health (lack of everyday physical activity, air pollution), social inclusion (people without cars cannot access services and opportunities) and safety. We suggest that one reason it is so difficult to change the way people make short journeys is that within our culture there is a shared “blind spot” that stops us from seeing the negative consequences of automobility. This leads people to see unimpeded, consequence-free motoring not only as normal, but also as inevitable and proper. We use data from a large-scale UK survey to demonstrate how people systematically downplay the negative consequences of motoring, and fail to apply the same moral standards when thinking about motoring that they would in other circumstances. This tendency to excuse the harms of motoring, and to see them as normal and proper, was seen in non-drivers as well as in drivers, supporting the idea that there is a cultural process at work, shaping individual people’s judgements. We suggest that this cultural blind spot is shaped by people’s environments, which support a car-centric status quo and thereby make it difficult for people to envisage change. We particularly draw attention to the problems that arise when policymakers share this blind spot, and highlight examples of how policymakers’ automatic assumptions about the primacy of car travel lead to numerous unwanted outcomes, such as the systematic exclusion of people who do not drive.

## SEMINAR SERIES

This presentation is part of the seminar series «Unpacking car-centric culture» organised by OUVEMA with the support of the Competence Centre in Sustainability, the Institute of Geography and Sustainability and the Institute of Sport Sciences of the University of Lausanne.

## REGISTRATION

To attend this event, please register here:

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