



Describing and Understanding the Differences in Metropolitan Transport Systems, in Terms of Politics and Governance

Discussion based on papers by Måns Lönnroth and Jeffrey Kenworthy

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Outline

- The roots of the governance differences
- Organization of Competences
- Funding Public Transport (vs Urban Mobility)
- Radical Change underway
- Nudging Power of Governance

The roots...

Two fundamental issues for political positioning:

- 1) Who are the design clients of public transport : all social groups or the low and middle-low income segments?
- 2) What is the political weight balance between equitable efficient access across society (and thus social inclusion) vs fluid and convenient access by private car?

These positions reflect themselves on the number of yearly boardings on public transport per capita in different cities across the world

And one of them corresponds to the (probably apocryphal) statement of Margaret Thatcher in 1986: “A man who, beyond the age of 26, finds himself on a bus can count himself a failure.” [cited in The Economist in 2006]



Organization of competences (I)

- Fragmentation of competences across the field of Urban Mobility inhibits a systems approach and favors modal perspectives
- The high level of complexity of Urban Mobility Systems suggests that fair, efficient and lasting solutions can only be achieved with high levels of ***consistency***
 - across policy areas (horizontal consistency),
 - across administration levels (vertical consistency),
 - across geographical space (spatial consistency)
 - along time (longitudinal consistency)



Organization of competences (II)

- It is self-defeating to discuss governance of public transport systems: the object must be the urban mobility system as a whole, given the interdependencies (partly complementarity, partly rivalry) of its components
- Consistency is difficult without clarity of purpose:
 - A key element of good governance must be centralization of **strategic** competences over all aspects of mobility in an urban agglomeration in a single political authority, with possible branching by smaller geographical units (municipalities) and by modes



Funding Public Transport as part of the Urban Mobility system (I)

- Funding options are a ***strategic*** decision and should be oriented and justified by policy goals.
 - But quite often their contours and enactment are ***purely tactical***, based on size and urgency of the funding gaps, and political feasibility of the next step
- Many cities are trying to acquire some funding from indirect beneficiaries of public transport i.e. beyond users (direct beneficiaries).
 - Most frequent target is land value capture (or internalisation), road-user charging emerging
 - Opportunistic exploration of local circumstances in search of political approval seems to be the dominant pattern



Funding Public Transport as part of the Urban Mobility system (II)

- Contributions from general taxpayers must also be addressed:
 - Are those contributions
 - justifiable in lieu of proper charging private cars for consumption of road space and negative externalities?
 - financially sustainable at a time when costs with pensions and health systems will go visibly up in ageing societies?
 - Shouldn't we be searching for solutions in which the ***Urban Mobility system could cover all its operational costs*** without recourse to the general taxpayer?



Constitutional geometry and governance effectiveness

- Independent of constitutional division of powers across territorial levels, Metropolitan agglomeration is always the adequate geographical scale to address these problems
- Common positions on the root issues should facilitate consistency across administration levels, preferably leading to structured alliances (agencies), with representation and firm commitments from all levels
 - Insertion of such agencies in the structure of power will differ, but their mission should not: urban mobility systems
 - Inclusive political leadership is a necessary ingredient for launching and sustaining such alliances – seize the opportunity!
- Legitimacy and value of innovative (unorthodox) solutions with regard to the constitutional traditions of geometry of power can be supported with periodic data showing the effectiveness of those solutions



Radical change underway (I)

- Some new components of the Urban Public Transport system, integrating with the old ones in a quite fast way:
- Demand-responsive, shared rides emerging as
 - last-mile feeders of high-performance PT systems (mostly rail for the moment) and
 - as providers of direct links in areas where demand density is too low for scheduled PT
- Shared pedal scooters and bikes, especially electric assisted ones, getting a very positive reception in urban areas,
 - for quick response to personal mobility needs (replacing private cars and scheduled public transport) and
 - for feeding into suburban public transport
- These modes are not the enemies of public transport:
 - they are the new shapes of public transport
 - very efficient usage of public space
 - possibly with greater potential for modal shift from private car than traditional public transport



Radical change underway (II)

- MaaS platforms emerging in multiple cities, with good integration of information but service packaging still in exploratory phase
- New modes still operating in very different regulatory and financial frameworks from traditional public transport:
 - Market access is very open
 - Prices are (mostly) freely established by operators, public subsidy only involved in a few shared-ride feeding of rail services (replacing traditional bus services)
 - High levels of private investment are present, accepting to operate temporarily with operational losses while hoping to conquer a stable and advantageous position in terms of market share
 - People are using them accepting to pay much higher fares than in the traditional public transport, and no protest is audible
- Governance models must evolve towards integration of these modes in a coherent and value-added way

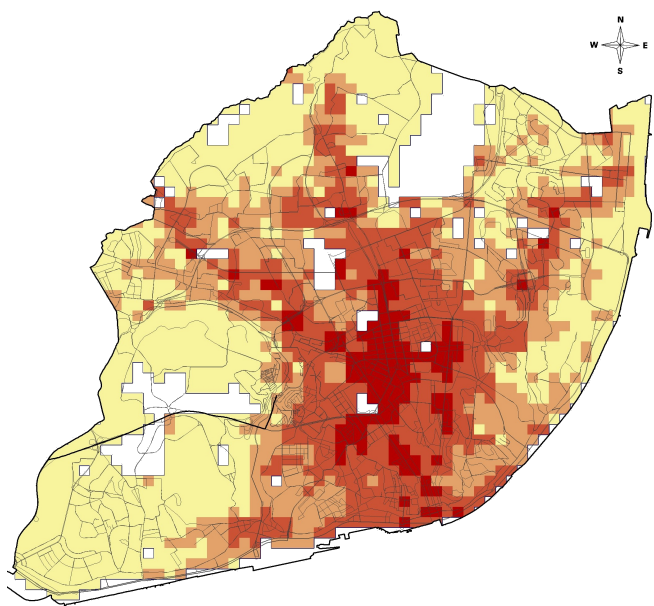


Nudging power of Governance

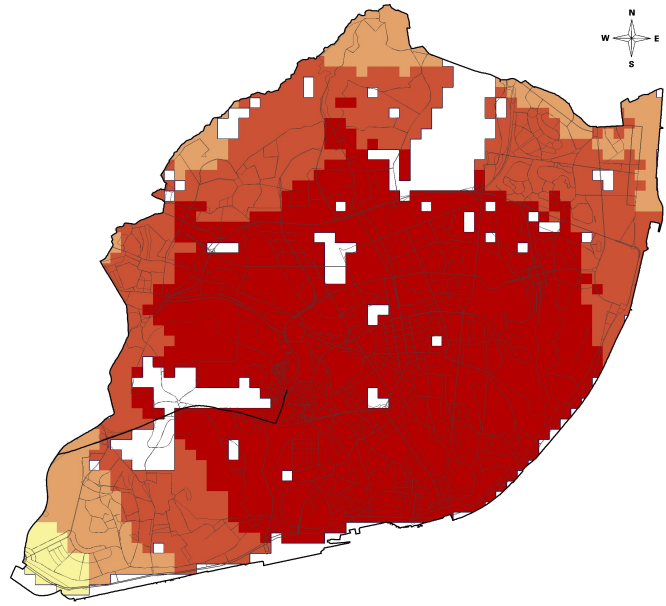
- **How can governance induce that**
 - the availability of demand-responsive public transport services leads to a significant ***reduction of the asymmetry of accessibility*** levels in our urban areas?
 - the emergence of driverless public transport systems (possibly within the next decade or so) leads to a significant cost (and price) reduction and with it a more “normal” (i.e. ***non subsidised) business model?***

Percentage of jobs within 30 min by public transport

Current public transport + walking



Taxibus + Metro + walking



Inequity Indicator	Current PT + Walk	Taxibus + Metro + Walk
P90/P10	17.3	1.8
Gini coeff.	0.27	0.11

Legend

Classes of access by percentage of total jobs

- 0% to 25%
- 25% to 50%
- 50% to 75%
- 75% to 100%



Thank You !