

The governance of smart mobility services:
Early insights on issues of accountability in Stockholm,
Seattle, and Greater Manchester

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What are smart mobility services?



Smart mobility services are private sector services that combine innovative technologies and business models promising to **transform** individual and collective mobility.

A debate with two sides?

Arguments in favour of smart mobility

- What is promised (reduced car ownership, seamless mobility, personalised solutions, on-demand mobility, cleaner vehicles...)
- We shouldn't stifle innovation
- Attracting businesses is good for the local economy
- We need to give people as many choices as possible (and they'll make the right one)
- We can't exclude any options when the future is so uncertain
- The market will find its own equilibrium
- We don't have enough data to understand how services are used so we can't reject them

A debate with two sides?

Arguments *in favour of a cautious approach* towards smart mobility

- Existing evidence that ridesharing increases congestion, allows gender and racial inequalities, and is not safe; electric scooters replace walking trips and create clutter...
- The market is very volatile
- Many services are still car-based
- Data and information asymmetries
- Services appeal to certain demographics, equity implications and the 'digital divide'
- We don't have enough data to understand how services are used so we can't support them
- Not really affordable (a 9-min trip with Uber in Birmingham costs ~ £4.50, a 60-min trip with Jump costs \$10, a 10-min trip with a Lime scooter in Lund costs ~ £4.50)

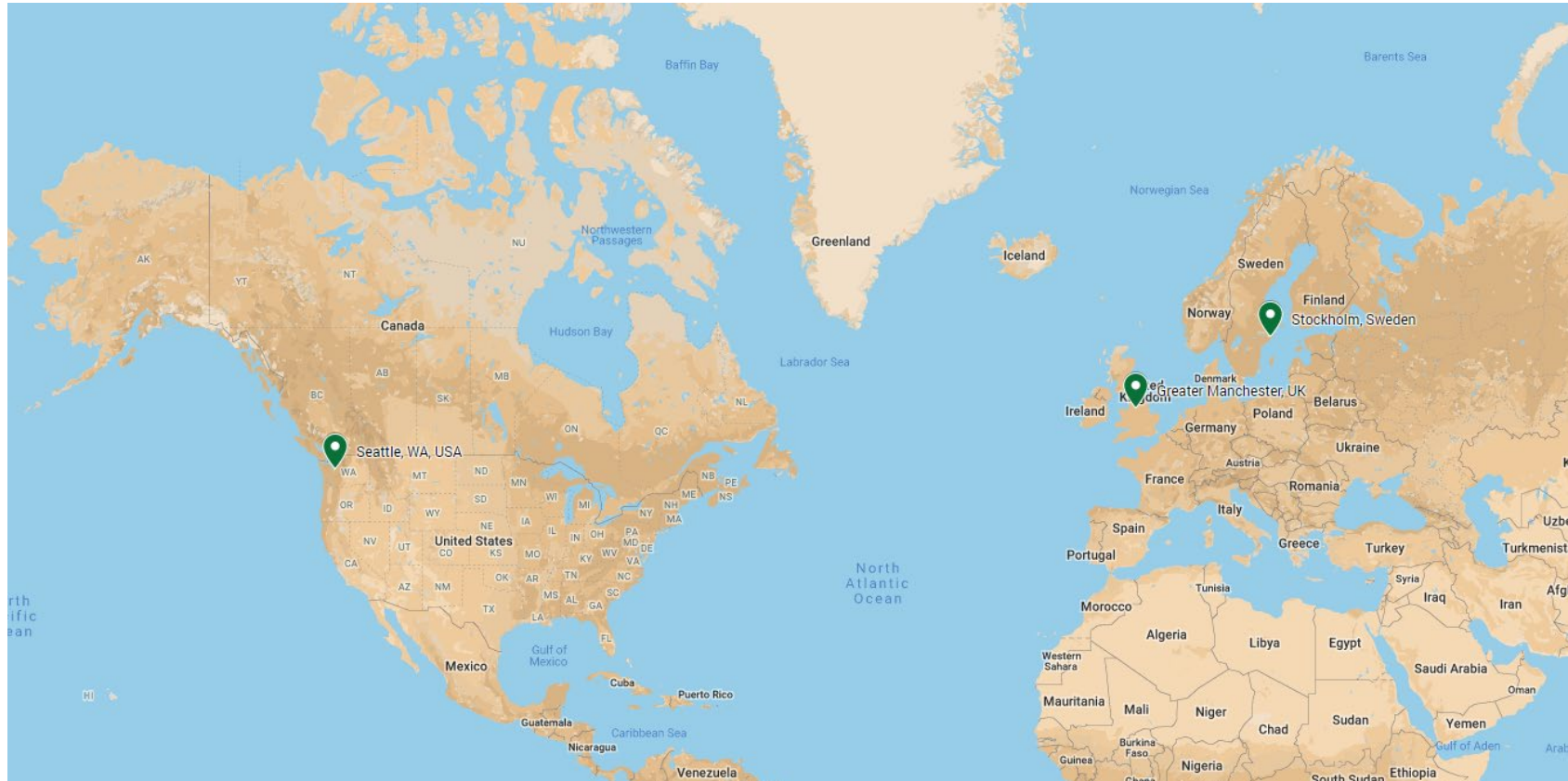
Three research questions

- How are local governments dealing with smart mobility at the moment?
- What are the challenges in governing smart mobility?
- How can local authorities make sure that smart mobility is contributing to the delivery of sustainable transport goals?

Accountability arrangements

- Who is accountable;
- to whom;
- **what are they liable to be called to account for;**
- through what processes accountability is to be assured;
- by what standards; and
- what are the potential effects of finding that those standards have been breached.

Three case studies



Early insights – Seattle

- A smart mobility strategy developed by the last administration: New Mobility Playbook
- First city in the USA to develop a dockless bikesharing pilot
- Regulatory frameworks in place for dockless bikes, TNCs, carsharing, electric scooters...

Data collection: Oct 19, 6 interviews with local and regional authorities

- Good understanding of the market's financial models and volatility
- Actions led by the city although the county is the public transport operator
- Multi-level efforts to govern TNCs
- 'We cannot have the services do what they want them to when they are free'

Early insights – Greater Manchester

- MaaS and AV trials and projects
- Lessons learned from launch and withdrawal of Mobike
- Proactive action to smart mobility linked to bus reform

Data collection: May-Nov 19, interviews with regional authority and some providers

- Want to be seen as a MaaS leader in the UK
- Have applied for government funding to develop new MaaS ideas
- Action heavily led by the region which is made up of very diverse councils
- Still unclear links between innovation and end goals

Early insights – Stockholm

- MaaS and AV trials and projects in the region
- Multiple scooter operators in the city
- National drive for innovation that includes mobility

- Data collection: Aug and Dec 19, 10 interviews with national, local and regional authorities
- Distinction between actions led by the city and the region
- Lack of data and clear understanding of impacts
- Siloes within and between organisations
- Multilevel governance reaches the national level

A preliminary assessment of regulatory efforts to steer smart mobility in London and Seattle (Moscholidou and Pangbourne, 2019)

- We used London and Seattle as case studies
- Both have strategies on smart mobility
- Can current regulation hold smart mobility providers accountable for their impacts on the urban environment?
- Can the accountability arrangements in each city help local governments achieve their strategic goals for smart mobility?



Comparative results

Contribution of regulation to London's strategic goals.

	No more car	First last mile	No divides	Low emission	Healthy streets	Efficient space	Data sharing
Bikesharing	+	+	+/-	+	+/-	+/-	+
Carsharing	+	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+
Ridesharing	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+

Key: + potentially positive, - potentially negative, +/- potentially positive or negative, ++ positive, - negative.

Contribution of regulations to Seattle's strategic goals.

	People and safety first	Dignity and happiness	Race and social justice	Clean mobility	Even playing field
Bikesharing	+	+	++	+	++
Carsharing	+	+	+	+	++
Ridesharing	+	+	+	+/-	++

Conclusions

Three key features of regulations are essential:

- Regulations should be directed to specific types of smart mobility
 - They should set out providers' responsibilities and what happens if they fail to fulfil them;
 - They should align the smart mobility offer with the cities' long-term strategies.
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- BUT we also highlight that regulation is only one element of smart mobility governance
 - Still need to consider whether smart mobility has a role in the sustainable mobility transition.

Steering smart mobility services: Governance and accountability challenges for English transport authorities (Hedegaard Sørensen and Paulsson (eds), ?)

- Exploratory interviews with 5 English transport authorities (outside London)
- Present accountability
- Future accountability and barriers

- Methodology: participants were asked to identify with a type of city

- Results: A range of positions between hands-on and hands-off
- High uncertainty

The problems in the discourse

- Smart mobility is often discussed in isolation from the rest of the transport system
- Future of transport largely focused on innovation
- Assumption that everyone will have access to new services
- Technological optimism: tinkering around the edges of the problem
- Lack of understanding of providers' business models
- Uncertainty and unclear accountability a reason for inaction

The problems in practice

- Fragmented regulatory system
- Old regulations used to address new challenges
- Lack of regulations that are linked to specific types of services
- Status quo acts as a barrier
- Messy approach across the country
- Awaiting clear direction from the government

Rebalanced narrative and focused action

- Innovation is not an end goal
- Smart mobility is a means to an end
- An opportunity that needs to be steered appropriately
- Risk of lock-in in unmanageable situations such as monopolies
- Conflicting principles between providers and the state
- Question our faith in the market: likely to leave people behind, illusion of no investment in first and last mile, understand the competition with other modes

- Clear links to public policy outcomes
- Accountability: Who does what? Clarity over regulatory positions and responsibilities
- Accountability: How do providers pay for their negative impacts?
- Who pays for the infrastructure?

Thank you!

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