

# How co-mobility disrupts urban transport

Dr. Jörg Beckmann of the Swiss Mobility Academy prepares for the 3rd World Collaborative Mobility Congress (wocomoco)





Three major trends are currently transforming urban transport as we knew it: The decarbonisation of the motor-car and the deprivatization of traditional motorized individual transport are giving rise to a new mode of transport fuelled by a new sort of E/Co-Mobile – an electrified and collaboratively used vehicle. This merger of the electric and the shared car is further propelled by an increasing demotorization of personal mobility in urban areas with a revitalizing bicycle-culture across Europe.

The integration of this new kind of everyday mobility into the digital infrastructures and services of the global village, are bringing about a

revolutionary transformation of classic transport business models, value worlds and policies. For many established players this transformation simultaneously means the end of their old and the beginning of a new approach to transport.

Whereas a renaissance of the bicycle has long been at the heart of sustainable transport plans, the electrified and increasingly decarbonized motor car has only recently rid itself of the negative stigma of its contested cousin, the combustion engine car, and has hence become an equally strong pillar in sustainable transport policy-making.

What yet remains underexplored is the second of the aforementioned

three Ds – deprivatisation. Only with the rise of a global collaborative consumption movement, the transforming powers that evolve from taking private ownership out of individual mobility, are making their way into contemporary transport policy and planning. What emerges is a whole new world of collaborative mobility services, with four key markets: car-sharing, ride-sharing, bike-sharing and the sharing of parking spaces.

The emergence of these four new transport markets are now increasingly shaping debates on the future of urban transport, as they bring innovative players to a field formerly governed by established public transport suppliers.

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In order to provide a new and dynamic platform for all of these new “CoMo-Actors”, the Swiss Mobility Academy, together with its partners, launched the World Collaborative Mobility Congress (wocomoco) in 2013. On an annual basis, wocomoco brings together organisations and individuals from the public and private sector involved in developing, marketing and regulating collaborative mobility solutions. The Congress’s aim is to engage co-mobility leaders from across the world, get them to interact and jointly shape a new global market for collaborative mobility products, services and infrastructures. This year’s third edition of wocomoco will take place in Innsbruck, Austria on 25 and 26 June, with more than 50 speakers presenting and discussing current co-mobility policy and practice.



**A whole new world of collaborative mobility services has opened up**

### **INDIVIDUAL MOBILITY + COLLABORATIVE CONSUMPTION = CO-MOBILITY**

The success story of car-sharing, more than almost any other innovation in transport, has in recent years marked the onset of a new way of organising everyday transport, now widely referred to as “collaborative mobility”. In the market for collaborative transport, attractive new opportunities are seeing the light of day, beyond the large technological systems of classical motorised individual transport and collective public transport by rail or road: today, these new techniques have moved beyond

the status of a simple niche demand.

New Peer-to-Peer (P2P) networks are being established between collective and individual transport in which the citizen liberates his mobility from the private purchase of a mobility tool, such as an automobile (and prefers to use the vehicle without owning it), while at the same time he looks beyond just one or a few major suppliers to satisfy his mobility needs.

Private car sharers like ZipCar, car-poolers like blablacar, bike-sharing operators like nextbike, private parking-space platforms like JustPark and long distance bus transport providers, which only organize a service if a “critical mass” of users wish to travel,

are all advocates of this new kind of mobility organisation. They now complement the portfolio of B2C-services offered by stationary and free-floating car sharing operators such as mobility.ch or Car2Go. Not surprisingly, this new kind of mobility focuses on the automobile, the traditional cornerstone and hub of our routine mobility, which is being reinvented yet again as it moves into the share economy.

### **START-UP SOCIETY**

In light of these developments, transport decision-makers and suppliers are confronted with creative start-ups innovating current transport markets and challenging the

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core businesses of leading transport companies. These young “go-getters”, heavily nurtured by venture capital, are joined by an established global car-industry, that is driven by the vision to re-invent itself as a holistic mobility-provider, rather than remaining a mere original equipment manufacturer (OEM). As these powerful players are moving forward, providing new services for motorised and non-motorised individual mobility, the long-lasting market-dominance of public transport suppliers or national mobility-clubs is challenged.

Particularly, national car or mobility clubs are now waking up and seek to redefine both their leitmotif and businesses, as the club’s traditional value-proposition centred around the ownership and use of a private car is losing its appeal in the global share economy – especially to a growing number of predominantly younger city-dwellers in highly industrialised countries. Neither owning,

maintaining and paying for a private car, nor identifying with the cultural values of classical motorisation, is a key characteristic of contemporary urban life- and mobility styles in metropolitan areas. The new urban elites have moved to convenient and on-demand taxi and limousine services, flexible and floating car-sharing, ubiquitous public transport and premium bike-ownership and sharing.

As a consequence, the third edition of The World Collaborative Mobility Congress, seeks in particular to raise awareness, built capacity amongst the national mobility clubs and help expand the clubs’ core-business into the collaborative mobility market.

### **SUSTAINABLE CO-MOBILITY: BEYOND PUBLIC AND INDIVIDUAL TRANSPORT**

But co-mobility is set to become a real challenge not only for these clubs, but a new competitor for the two familiar transport models (public and individual), because they are

both having to contend with a problem which does not arise for collaborative transport, namely their cost structures. On the one hand, conventional collective public transport is becoming increasingly flexible and designed for particular target groups, while at the same time it is also becoming distinctly more expensive and requires ever more intensive use of resources. On the other hand, private individual transport with its icon, the automobile, is becoming increasingly environmentally friendly, but also more and more exclusive and expensive. With collaborative transport this problem simply does not arise. On the contrary, collaborative transport benefits in the final analysis from the capacities of its competitors that are unused today and offers a great deal of low cost and environmentally-friendly mobility with little investment.

Therefore, collaborative mobility is indeed sustainable mobility. It is economically sustainable because it makes better use of existing capacities and requires no additional investments in infrastructures. It is ecologically sustainable because, by making better use of existing capacities, it spares finite resources; then again, it is socially sustainable because it promotes new forms of communal mobility organisation. 🌱

#### **FYI**

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**Dr Joerg Beckmann speaking at the last World Collaborative Mobility Congress**