

I would like to thank the organisers of this seminar and COST Actions for the opportunity to be here and to engage with you in the fascinating topic of urban form and mobility behavior. Thanks for professor Newman and Leo Kosonen for their inspiring talks. There are so many things I would like to address, but time is limited

I am Marco te Brömmelstroet, assistant professor in Urban Planning at the University of Amsterdam. My research focuses on usability of knowledge for planning practice (for instance accessibility instruments in the COST Action) and on integration of urban form and mobility behavior. Next to that I own a bicycle shop (I will come back to that).

I was invited to give some critical feedback on the discussion today.

I really appreciate the model in general and especially the the way in which it makes a body of academic research on urban form and

mobility behavior usable for planning practices. I particularly like its ambition to steer cities and citizens away from highly problematic and increasing car dependency. I admire the underlying data and theories. I especially support the call to abandon the flawed four step transportation models. Also, I am quite optimistic and, next to the many failures and mistakes see already many examples of cities that offer good practices.

HOWEVER, in the remaining time I will perform the role of Devil's Advocate by focussing on some issues that can be raised. I will leave the country right after this talk anyway,

One point is that the elegance for practice comes from simplifying complex theories. There is a danger however that this simplicity can be misunderstood for confidence in our understanding of the urban and mobility system. There are several potential problems with this. A selection:

- It might overestimate the power we have to steer urban form into ideal types. Reality is much more messy as is for instance shown by the lack of success of the ABC location policy in the Netherlands. Companies and citizens made different choices than anticipated, resulting in counterproductive mobility trends. It might even be argued that since then (1980s), the power to influence urban form has decreased even further
- It might ignore future transport modes that thrive in a particular urban form and are unsustainable: Amsterdam has seen the explosive rise of scooters that are threatening the ecosystem of cyclists and pedestrians and profit from great infrastructure and relatively large distances. Did we create a Scooter City?
- It might ignore the great potential of combining modes. A system based on bus+bikes requires a distinct urban form.
- It might ignore the fact that elements of the three cities are conflicting (as shown by Leo Kosonen). Money (both public and private) can only be spent once and once a Public

Transport land use and transport system is promoted, this will limit changes for other, arguably more optimal, city forms. This is most notably so for public transit and cycling. For instance; If activities are concentrated around transit locations, changes of cycling decreases.

- It might create new urban dilemmas: what to do where the cities meet? Choosing public transport speed often means limiting space and place for cyclists and pedestrians
- It might support a goals-means confusion where policy makers are focussing on creating a certain city form, while the goal (less car dependency, sustainability) and easier solutions towards it are ignored. Think about the discussion of how to get TOD from the ground in the Netherlands: in many cases though, when introduced this will mainly get people from bikes into trams: less instead of more sustainability.

Before I will come to my concluding remark I want to make one obvious point. The three ideal

types ignore one proven and important, if not crucial, mode for sustainable urban mobility. The bicycle cannot be put under one of the three others because it requires distinct and exclusive infra and land use characteristics. See for instance Delft (as referred to by professor Newman), Amsterdam and Groningen. Places with over 50% of cycling mode share. Recent studies show that (electric supported) cargobikes can take over most urban logistics if this is supported with the right land use and infrastructure. Cities around the world (London, Paris, New York etc) are eager to copy this. Should we introduce and study the bicycle city? It's transitional potential seems largely ignored now. I saw some in the pictures, but mostly in problematic situations (in general many pictures had no people at all!).

My final point relates to the balance between developing constructive models and a critical analytical attitude towards these models. History has taught us that overconfidence in interventions in the urban and mobility system

are often followed by disappointing results due to complicating factors (think Park & Ride, Stockholm's (also referred to in the keynote) increase in car dependency, New Urbanism in Perth). There is an important role for a deconstructing view, a Devils Advocate if you will. I agree with the introductory speaker in that our research should be solution oriented, which society indeed desperately needs. But to develop useful knowledge, requires both constructive and destructive forces.

Therefore, I invite you to embrace the urban fabrics models but ask you if we, as an academic community, shouldn't ask more deconstructive critical questions about it?

- Which type of city is most favourable and which is suboptimal in terms of achieving goals of sustainable mobility?
- What to do with conflicts?
- Which other urban goals does it hinder?
- What are the limits of contexts in which the model can be applied? Delft?

- Did the model always perfectly work, what are places and conditions it didn't?
- Who wins and...who loses?
- Is public transit dependency better than car dependency?
- Isn't mobility deprivation in general a problem?
- How can we escape possibly dangerous path dependencies and keep or increase optionality?

Asking these critical, destructive questions allows us to not fight, but embrace the intrinsic complexity and uncertainty of the urban system and to not decrease but foster 'organized doubts'. Without such a role our good intentions might result in devastating failures (as again history has shown us). Think about the overconfidence of similar conferences and models in the 60s, such as CIAM, that underly the problems that many cities are now in. Can we assume that we now know better?

Thank you for your kind attention!