

How Autonomous Vehicles Transform Urban Policies and Cities

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Abstract : Autonomous vehicles have already transformed urban policies and cities. This is the main assumption of our research, which aims to understand how the representations of the possible arrival of autonomous vehicles already transform priorities or actions in transport and more largely, urban policies. This research is done within the framework of a Ph.D. doctorate directed by Professor Xavier Desjardins at the Sorbonne University of Paris. Our hypotheses are: (i) the perspectives, representations, and imaginaries on autonomous vehicles already affect the stakeholders of urban policies; (ii) the discourses on the opportunities or threats of autonomous vehicles reflect the current strategies of the stakeholders. Each stakeholder tries to integrate a discourse on autonomous vehicles that allows them to change as little as possible their current tactics and strategies. The objective is to eventually make a comparison between three different cases: Paris, United Arab Emirates, and Bogota. We chose those territories because their contexts are very different, but they all have important interests in mobility and innovation, and they all have started to reflect on the subject of self-driving mobility. The main methodology used is to interview actors of the metropolitan area (local officials, leading urban and transport planners, influent experts, and private companies). This work is supplemented with conferences, official documents, press articles, and websites. The objective is to understand: 1) What they know about autonomous vehicles and where does their knowledge come from; 2) What they expect from autonomous vehicles; 3) How their ideas about autonomous vehicles are transforming their action and strategy in managing daily mobility, investing in transport, designing public spaces and urban planning. We are going to present the research and some preliminary results; we will show that autonomous vehicles are often viewed by public authorities as a lever to reach something else. We will also present that speeches are very influenced by local context (political, geographical, economic, etc.), creating an interesting balance between global and local influences. We will analyze the differences and similarities between the three cases and will try to understand which are the causes.

Keywords : autonomous vehicles, self-driving mobility, urban planning, urban mobility, transport, public policies

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