

Urban Traces

February–May, 2019

As part of my PhD study and research on mobility and urban planning the BCUS fellowship gave me a perfect opportunity to get inspiration from cities abroad and specific Brussels, as the EU capitol. In addition, the fellowship provided with multiple opportunities to exchange ideas with like-minded scholars at the Vrije Universiteit in Brussel (VUB). Mainly within the MOBI research group (Mobility, Logistics and Automotive Technology), but also the Cosmopolis Centre for Urban research, Department of Geography.



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The idea of the fellowship was to compare the planning processes within urban mobility in Oslo and Brussels. To see how freight is integrated with passenger transport, and how participation of stakeholders is organised. This comparison enabled researchers both at SINTEF and Vrije to learn from each other, how sustainable mobility planning could be enhanced, and how to organise workshops engaging private and public stakeholders at an early stage in the planning process.

In general, processes of transformation and development of urban centres aim to achieve a more appropriate balance between city life, mobility and public health through attaining sustainability and climate goals. Urbanisation, densification, e-commerce and changes in land use pattern are trends that all reshape how people and goods move across the urban environment. One of the strategies the municipality in the city of Oslo has developed is a city centre without personal car-driving (car free city life¹), while increased walking, biking and public transport is facilitated. At the same time there is a need to facilitate for increased urban activities and liveability, with growing demand for goods and services as a result, while waste needs increasingly to be removed². In the city of Brussels, a new mobility plan (GOOD MOVE) is being developed, which considers freight to an important extent. This development has been in cooperation with many stakeholders³.

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Being a part of the MOBI research team I got the opportunity to investigate new sustainable ways to organise city distribution and to be aware of the importance of stakeholder involvement. In addition, knowledge about the Multi Actor Multi Criteria Analysis tool contributed to the knowledge platform to analyse the objectives of the different stakeholders and the impact the new concepts have on these objectives. Through comparisons between the cities we gained insight in the governance

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structures for urban mobility and different ways of involving stakeholders. Dialog with the team at the Cosmopolis Centre for Urban Research gave insight on theme within human geography, spatial planning and urban design combined with stakeholder assessment in order to support spatial visioning and policy recommendations. Even though Oslo and Brussel have a different context, different challenges and are organized differently, the cities can learn a lot of each other on a local level. The research focused on how local authorities govern urban areas and manage the integration of compact city development.

During my period in Brussels in the spring of 2019 there were several meetings/workshops with both public and private stakeholders, which I was a part of. To mention a lunch time seminar in March, hosted by MOBI and Cosmopolis, I made a review of Oslo's progress on how they plan to make the city sustainable. The aim of the talk was to

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summarise the policy the city of Oslo is developing towards climate friendly mobility and create a picture of how the local authorities involve stakeholders in the planning process. Three aspects of the Climate and Energy Strategy for Oslo were highlighted: Road tolling & parking, electric vehicles and city logistics. Afterwards there was a discussion about the similarities and differences between Oslo and Brussel.

In May I presented for the Commission Regionale De la Mobilité, Region de Brussels, Oslo's planning towards a sustainable city. The presentation highlighted the goals and the policy mix the city of Oslo uses, linked to the city's yearly climate budget ⁴ which show where emissions is to be reduced and who is responsible. The first move in Oslo has been to drastically reduce parking lots, preventing cars from reaching the centre, while at the same time improving

Meeting with Commission Regionale De la Mobilité (27th May 2019)



the public transport service and creating at least 60 kilometres of new bike paths added to many existing ones. The discussions after the presentation focused around challenges to develop and implement measures adjusted to the local context, in cooperation with stakeholders that want to make a change and overcome goal conflict.

From the mentioned workshops, following questions summarise the discussions:

- What are the barriers to develop sustainable mobility in Brussels?
- Is Brussel ready for a change; from planning for cars to planning for people?
So, how to create a greener city with mobility which makes the city attractive to live in without a car?
- Could parking policy be used to make it less attractive to drive the private car (differentiate private and firms)
- How will these changes affect city logistics, e-commerce and new delivery solutions?
- EV and Zero emissions vehicles are just a part of the solution, they still need space. Do the private companies need incentives to invest in new vehicles fleet?
- How to use procurement strategy to support sustainable deliveries?

We were also planning a workshop involving Pascal Smet, Minister of Mobility and Public Works of the Brussels Capital Region. Due to the election of the 26th of May he was sorry to inform us that it was not possible to fit this workshop within the proposed period. However, he supported the green transition with a statement at the Polis seminar fall 2019 ⁵: To change the car-oriented culture of Brussels, which tops the congestion index, towards a more sustainable mobility culture, cities should consider quality of urban life as the ultimate objective of mobility policy, rather than focusing on transport modes.

Climate strike with the #greenteamVUB (15th March 2019)

Urban mobility, Gare de Nord, Brussels (taken from the meeting room at 27th May, Commission Regionale De la Mobilite)



Finally, in cooperation with Cathy Macharis (MOBI) and Kobe Boussauw (Cosmopolis) we submitted an abstract to the NECTAR 2019 Conference “Towards Human Scale Cities: Open and Happy” in Helsinki, 5.-7. June 2019. The title was “Governance in urban mobility: The case of Brussels compared with Oslo”. The paper is still in progress and will be sent for publishing when finalised.

Biography

Astrid Bjørgen is working on integrated transportation and land use planning, addressing how to include city logistics and urban freight at the local level. She is working at SINTEF, a research institute in Norway and is connected to [NTNU, Norwegian University of Science and Technology, Department of Architecture and Planning](#). In the interface of mobility, urban planning and infrastructure her research focus on how to integrate freight transport into urban mobility patterns, taking into account a quest for more liveable and sustainable cities. Furthermore, how local authorities may govern urban areas and manage the integration of transport policy and land use into local planning processes.

Endnotes

- 1 <https://www.oslo.kommune.no/politics-and-administration/city-development/car-free-city/>
- 2 <https://www.oslo.kommune.no/politics-and-administration/green-oslo/best-practices/#!>
- 3 <https://goodmove.brussels/fr/>
- 4 <https://www.klimaoslo.no/2019/10/29/the-climate-budget-for-dummies/>
- 5 <https://www.polisnetwork.eu/2019-annual-polis-conference/>