



Sustainability, sharing mobility, expansion of public services, digital platforms. The interlocking of these four trends will determine how we and the goods we consume will move. With one goal: to increase spatial equity and equity between generations

by Marco Percoco @

Perhaps never as in recent years have we had such a clear perception of how mobility and transport services are a blessing and a bane of contemporary society.

On the one hand, the restrictions on the movement of people imposed by almost all governments have made us appreciate how important proximity is, which often implies the possibility of social, personal, and professional relationships. On the other hand, the explosion of e-commerce, with its long-haul and last-mile logistics, has made us better understand how much our lives as modern consumers depend crucially on one type of service, that of freight transport, often invisible to our eyes and not appreciated enough.

This renewed attention comes at a time of great turmoil in the sector, which is responding to important demands of an economic and social nature, related to two objectives above all: improving accessibility and ensuring environmental sustainability.

As for accessibility, there is no doubt that one of the most pressing issues for contemporary cities is to ensure greater spatial equity, or a reduction in inequality of accessibility to the many opportunities that cities offer. And it is precisely in this area that the integration between the different modes of transport (private, public, sharing) are making the first timid attempts at integration, albeit in a space



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defined by a bloated regulatory system.

Globally, transport is responsible for about 20% of climate-altering emissions and, through the emission of particulate matter and ozone, for about 400,000 premature deaths. These are the reasons, expressed in their crudeness, why a considerable effort is now required from mobility services to contribute to the achievement of those objectives of environmental sustainability that the international community is successfully imposing. The transport sector is responding to this challenge by supporting or trying to change mobility habits, but also, and perhaps most significantly, through radical technological innovations, in fuels, as well as in traction.

With an extreme effort of synthesis, it is possible, however, to identify four basic trends that would seem to be driving the innovative ferment of the sector.

The strongest push in the last decade has been that relating to sustainability, which has led to a growing penetration of hybrid and electric cars, to the point of discussing, today, the potential of hydrogen, especially for the transport of goods.

The propensity to own cars has decreased considerably, especially among the young. This change was accompanied by a strong growth in sharing mobility services, now present in almost all medium and large cities.

In recent years, there has been a slight expansion of the offer of public transport services, with a timid, but important, tendency towards integration, at least from the point of view of the organization.

Finally, the advent of digital platforms, while on the one hand has raised serious issues related to the world of work, on the other has ensured greater accessibility to the most disadvantaged neighborhoods, ensuring greater spatial equity. Ultimately, the mobility sector is experiencing a moment of great vitality and it is useful to think of its dynamics as a series of actions aimed at ensuring greater equity not only over time, between generations, but also in space, or between individuals who belong to the same generation but live in different places. ■



THE BOOK

The bicycle is a critical driver of economic development and tourism, but it is also the means of transport around which we can rethink our cities to improve local mobility. It has become an irreplaceable pillar of a new economy, with an annual turnover in Italy of almost 8 billion euros. This is discussed in *Bikeconomy* (Egea, 2021, 216 pp. €20, in Italian), the new edition of which includes a chapter on future cities and new urban planning.

