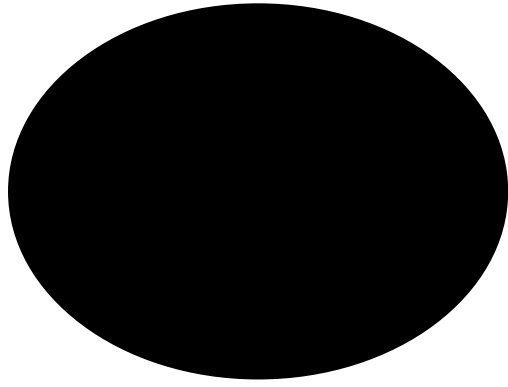


TOWARDS A NEW PATTERN OF GROWTH - URBAN TRANSPORT AS AN EXAMPLE

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The great economic crisis makes us reflect on how we have been able to reach such excesses in the economy. Hardly any economy in the world has escaped recession, and almost all of them have questioned their models in a more or less severe way: the Anglo-Saxon system, the more interventionist European system, the state capitalism practiced in Asia...



However, I think the debate should not lose much the time in which system is the best or the least bad, each country will have its optimal model that can best be adapted to its society (some will not have found it yet). On the other hand, the debate should be about seeking another kind of progress, leaving behind the way of thinking that gave rise to the systems that are now obsolete and trying to change some practices through decisive impulses. It is about achieving a decisive change, which provides a current look, that is, innovative, critical, technological, and sustainable to today's reality.

My example is the Paris Metro. I advocate that it be free. The Paris Region is one of the locomotives of the world economy, and an exemplary city in the social and cultural field. There are infinite things to visit and to get around the inhabitants usually go by subway; it is faster, cheaper and more ecological. No less than 16 lines cover 216 km reaching 384 stations; 4.5 million users per day make this urban transport an essential system for the operation of this city.

RATP is the company that ensures efficient management of the metro. It is in charge of the management of the barriers, the ticket sellers at the counters, the vending machines and their maintenance, the ink and paper of the tickets as well as their printing, the cleaning of the tickets when leaving the metro, thousands of tons of aluminum to build the hermetic barriers, the installers of the barriers, the counters, the commissions to the banks for those who pay with a credit card... the money flows.

Everything is paid with a single euro per ticket. Sure, the economies of scale of 4.5 million travelers a day ensure millions of euros of revenue. Although they do not generate greater capital gains, and even generate losses in some years. But, it generates economic activity. RATP ensures efficient management of the money that runs through its hands, the extruders manufacture the aluminum for the barriers, the computer scientists program the machines, and much more. that generates an endless number of industries.

But does everyone really win? Well, everyone except the user and the environment, for whom the ticketing system entails high costs. I wonder if all that effort to run an awesome pay-as-you-go system is worth it, if there's no other way to look. When the first line opened during the Expo, in 1900, it surely made sense, but the passage of time and technological advancement should not be ignored. Paris has 2.1 million inhabitants and the Paris metro today is an essential part of the economic and social functioning of the city, as can banks for capitalism.

I consider as an alternative to all this mess of the ticket, if not the canon system would be more practical, where the entire population contributes to the financing through a monthly fee. A Parisian fee for using the metro would eliminate an entire inefficient system of payment control. The canon could be paid as personal income tax, deducted from the payroll, or it could be collected from the account of each citizen residing in Paris at the end of the month. Tourists could pay for it through the hotel bill, and discounts could be made for certain groups. In this way, resources would be freed up for more useful functions - the aluminum barriers would be recycled (without wasting energy), the use of machines, paper, ink, scans, maintenance, everything would be saved - improving not only the impact on the environment, but also raising the welfare of society.

Thus, those who use the car pay the metro fee as a tax on the cost generated by third parties, encouraging them to use the metro and being able to eliminate any tax created for that purpose.

The subway user would find a much more comfortable way to pay. In addition, an uncontrolled system would reduce costs, favor mobility, reduce travel time, reduce the frequent robberies suffered by tourists when taking out their wallets in front of the machines, and, in general, would help the general operation of the metro by raising its attractive even more.

It is not a matter of producing more, of raising GDP with systems that have reached their ceiling, but quite the opposite, reducing GDP, freeing up resources, reducing the ecological footprint, growing where it makes sense and in a sustainable way, and questioning systems that with the use of technology or the passage of time have become obsolete. In free urban transport, and in all other areas.

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