

Autonomous Automobiles and Shared Mobility. The Possibilities Are Endless.

With the coming of autonomous automobiles and with Uber's current exploratory steps into shared mobility, the future of the automobile is becoming interesting. From a central planner's perspective one would like encourage better productivity of capital. As it is, people who drive to work end up parking their cars for hours a day. This is inefficient use of capital.

Roads are a scarce resource and need to be rationed. Road pricing is an efficient way to ration road usage. This tax should be levied specifically on the beneficiaries of using the respective road, not bus or taxi drivers, unless the meter is running. A form of this is already in force in Singapore.

Car ownership can similarly be rationed through taxation. The stock of cars on the road should be calculated based on the expected use of cars by a given population for a given set of road infrastructure. Redundant features beyond reasonable thresholds such as excessive vehicle size, engine displacement, engine power output, noise output, and the cost of the vehicle, should also be factored into the tax. Public transport vehicles should be granted preferential treatment. A form of this is also currently in force in Singapore.

Cleaner and more energy efficient cars should be encouraged again through taxation. This is done in many countries.

Cars should be encouraged to be put in use as much as possible. With autonomous cars, car owners can rent out their cars when they are not using them. Dedicated limousine services like Uber, taxi companies and private car owners would compete in a market for private car transport. Different markets and services will evolve which will defy efforts to

predict them. Examples include using an autonomous car as a courier, as a surveillance drone, as a decoy or as a third party pick-up service.