

## Instrumentation, illegal strategies and bus tickets in the urban governance of bus services in Sao Paulo

Marcos Vinicius Lopes Campos

Address: Avenida Pedroso de Moraes, 344 apto. 3 – Pinheiros – São Paulo – Brasil – CEP 05420-000; m.lopescampos@gmail.com

The delivery of bus services in cities involves the production of three types of quite interconnected circuits: vehicles, information and economic value. To carry these processes, the State has chosen a variety of policy instruments, such as mechanic and electronic turnstiles, electronic validators, GPS, odometers, paper tickets, magnetic tickets and contactless cards. In the global south, such as the case of Brazilian cities, the choices and uses of these instruments take a particular relevance due to the fact that private bus companies have always been the main service providers in a context of scarce regulatory state capacities and principal-agent political relations in the urban governance of the bus services. Public policy instrumentation, understood here as the set of problems posed by the choice and use of instruments that allow government policy to be made material and operational, has been a major issue.

Though an in-depth case study of the governance of bus services in Sao Paulo between 1970s and 1990s, I address two main questions in this article. Firstly, who governs what and how in the circuits of information and economic value in the bus services? Secondly, what were the roles of policy instruments, such as bus paper tickets and mechanic turnstiles, and their use through formal, informal and illegal practices in the structuring of power relations and profitability in the urban governance?

I argue for the existence of principal-agent political relations between state and non-state actors based on trust in the reliability of the reported results about the delivery of the bus services. In these processes, actors, procedures, policy instruments, formal, informal and illegal practices encompassed in the circuits of information and economic value structure a set in which the State is subject to a particular type of information asymmetry in relation to private companies. Moreover, the State does not have significant control over the behavior of the private companies in the quantification processes.

Here, I assess that these principal-agent relations were mainly the result of policy instruments autonomous effects on the bus services. The use of mechanic turnstiles, paper tickets and odometers were compulsory in the quantification processes. By their specific characteristics, these structured a particular method of learning of the delivery of bus services performance as a mandatory passage, responsible for organizing degrees of information asymmetry and limited possibilities of state regulation.

Furthermore, the economic value and information circuits positioned the circulation and

production of information and economic value as a potential locus in the political economy of the sector in which it was produced illegal types of profit through illegal strategies of withholding information and manipulation of bus paper tickets. Illegal and informal practices to attain profitability around paper tickets in the formal and informal bus sector actually contributed to the emergence of an overlapping economy of interception, distribution and even production of bus paper tickets outside the formal circuits.

The article is organized in three sections and a final remark. Firstly, I present the theoretical background around the conceptual framework put forward here. Secondly, I analyze the sets of the information and economic value circuits and the policy instruments autonomous effects. The third section discusses the illegal strategies put forward by private bus companies to attain profitability through the uses of policy instruments. Finally, in the final remarks, I summarize the main arguments suggested by this paper.

© by the author(s)

Paper presented at the RC21 International Conference on “The transgressive city: Comparative perspectives on governance and the possibilities of everyday life in the emerging global city” Mexico City, 21-23 July 2016. <http://rc21-mexico16.colmex.mx/index.php>