

NEW ENERGY FORUM

19 juni 2025 | Groningen

Breaking Barriers

Rural Rides, Shared Ties

The Role of Midstream Audiences in Building Strong Communities
for Shared Rural Mobility

Presentation

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New Energy Forum 2025



Sustainable Shared Rural Mobility

- Transport = almost ¼ energy-related GHG emissions and projected to grow
→ creative sustainable mobility solutions increasingly important
- Technological and economic incentives for sustainable mobility mostly studied in urban contexts, less applicable in rural areas
- Different system for rural areas needed, focused on:
 - the role of social capital
 - community building
 - peer-to-peer sharing
- Challenge: steady decline in community engagement and social capital
- Potential solution: *midstream audiences*

Research Questions & Aim



What are the drivers and barriers of community participation in shared mobility solutions?



What role do midstream audiences play in influencing community members in adapting long-term sustainable mobility habits?

Aim: provide insights for (designing) effective, community-driven mobility systems.

Theoretical Lens

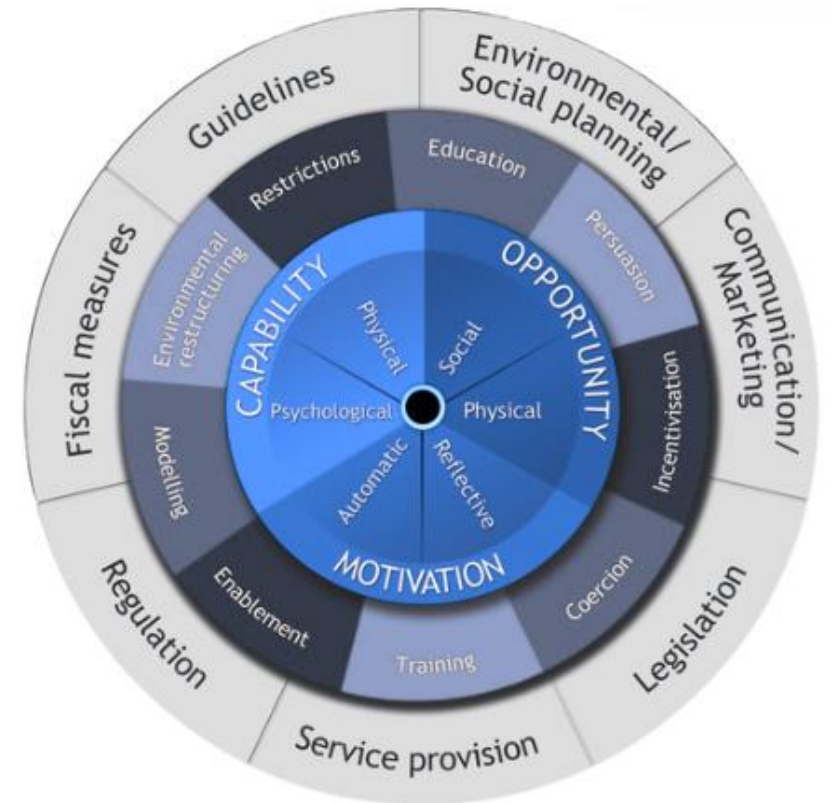
Social Capital (Putnam, Bourdieu)

Trust and reciprocity increase collective action.

Behavior Change Models (COM-B, Behavior Change Wheel):
Motivation, opportunity, and capability must align for change.

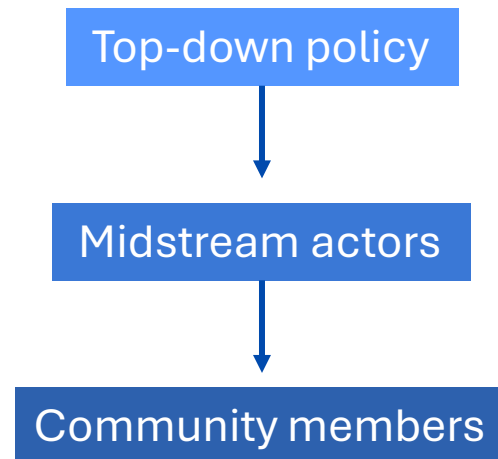
Midstream Audiences:

Local figures (e.g., church leaders, sports coaches, small business owners) can influence community behavior through trust.



Why Midstream Audiences Matter

- Trusted local figures (e.g., church leaders, club organizers, sports coaches):
 - Bridge between policy and people
 - Reduce scepticism
 - Model behaviors
- Prior research and pilots suggests when community engagement is missing, shared mobility schemes often fail



Study Design

Study 1: Survey (200 rural residents Northern Netherlands)

- Topics: Mobility habits, trust in community, perceived barriers, and openness to shared solutions
- Framework: COM-B model, social capital theory
- Method: Structured questionnaire using validated scales
- Goal: Identify key barriers and potential midstream actors

Study 2: Interviews (~30 midstream actors)

- Topics: Community engagement, trust-building, and leadership roles
- Framework: Hyman's Community Building Model
- Methods: Qualitative content analysis & network mapping
- Goal: Explore network trust and influence flows, and how midstream actors help build trust and community structures that support long-term shared mobility use.

Expected Findings

- Stronger community trust and cohesion = greater shared mobility uptake.
- Midstream audiences reduce risk perceptions and motivate adoption through local credibility.
- Sociodemographic variables (e.g., age, income, values) moderate participation levels.



Contributions



Theory

Extends social capital theory into the realm of rural sustainable mobility and behavior change.



Practice

Offers community-centered insights to design more effective shared mobility solutions.



Policy

Suggests leveraging midstream audiences to align top-down policy with grassroots adoption.

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Thank You!



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