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Une analyse méthodique des processus et de la communication

Transport-policy decision-taking in transport planning

A systematic process and communication analysis

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Abstract

As concerns this research project, one must keep in mind that there are many known findings on the decision-taking processes of individual transport projects, but no information on regularities and the consequences of certain constellations of factors determining success or failure, independent of the respective specific cases. In order to answer the research questions raised, a three-level approach has been taken: First, reference was made to new forms of governance and the development of a coherent model of analysis; second, systematically selected case studies were subjected to empirical analysis and comparison; third, determinants of success were derived and then translated into a communication concept.

Theoretical and methodological frame of reference

The term governance means that different forms of co-operation between governmental and non-governmental actors at different levels of government produce binding and accepted decisions, without there necessarily being a need for employing enforcement mechanisms of a governmental and hierarchical nature. The assumption is that deficits of control and enforcement can be managed better in this way as well. But effective governance requires proper communications. Using the QCA method (*Qualitative Comparative Analysis*), it was possible to analyse a broad range of substantively different projects with respect to their respective determinants of success in the decision-taking process and—despite a relatively small number of case studies—to do a quantitative assessment of them. The qualitative depth of additional case studies was increased for the purposes of analysing communications.

Empirical analysis and comparison of case studies

The case studies subjected to QCA were collected mainly from documents and studies already available. A deeper examination of the communication aspects required additional interviews with authorities and experts involved. The data of the case studies were allocated to the variables in the analysis model and encoded (binary). Generally it has been shown that the federal level is a crucial context factor, but only successful and no failed federal projects have been included in the sample. In addition, the type of administrative organisation put in place at the cantonal and municipal levels is key. The inclusion of stakeholders and societal actors in controversial projects is important, but not the type or method of inclusion. At the municipal level, the involvement of the competent politicians in the planning and decision-taking process, or in its development, is crucial to the success of the objective. At the cantonal level, however, the professionalism of administration and of experts is more important. The qualitative analyses of the issue of communications has shown that planning processes are not rigid, but instead undergo a constant maturation process, which can be accelerated only to a limited extent. Project treatment and acceptance procurement can be optimised by way of systematically grafted communications without any major disruptions.

Impact on communications in transport planning

The communication concept derived from empirical findings provides practical clues about communications throughout the planning, decision-taking and implementation processes. Central to this is the realisation that planning processes should be in close interaction with communication from the very beginning. Participation and involvement are the most effective forms of communication. Communication should not be seen merely as the passing on of information, but as a response. This way the basis of decision-taking and thus the chances of success can be improved.