The rationality of transport policy packages: Evidence from Trondheim

March 2013
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Two main rationality types

Instrumental rationality

• Focus on goal achievement efficiency

• Planning to provide information, correct externalities and secure the provision of public goods

• “Expert planning” has a strong foothold in transport planning

Communicative rationality

• Focus on communication unhindered by power relations

• Planning to minimize communicative distortions, enhancing community building and commitments to common tasks

• Acknowledge the intrinsic value of a “fair” planning process
Two main rationality types

Contradictory…?

• Time-consuming processes may stop implementation

• Complex assessment methods may reduce transparency

… or supplementary?

• Broad political consensus provides better possibilities for necessary project adjustments

• Extensive public involvement may improve possibilities for future support
Main issues in package planning

A package approach is needed:
- Land use policy
- Parking restrictions
- Car user fees
- Investments in different modes
- Public transport operating costs

Issues:
- The overall design and changeability
- The share of road investments vs green modes
- Introducing restrictive measures
The overall design and changeability of the package (1)

**Instrumental rationality perspective**

+ A package helps financing useful project for several modes

- Incentives to include several “non-optimal” projects into the package.

**Communicative rationality perspective**

+ Several objectives provide room for political compromise

+ Several historical projects awaiting financial opportunities

- It may be too easy to revise the scheme without proper public debate
The overall design and changeability of the package (2)

Instrumental rationality perspective

- Limited methods for selecting the projects in the package.
- Transport model limitations

Communicative rationality perspective

- Complicated studies usually required. (Choice of Concept and Quality Assurance Scheme)
A state of the art approach?

**Consultant report 2007:**

Public transport lanes not advisable, because “there is not enough capacity for the rest of the traffic volume in one lane”

**Consultants 2008:**

Strong objections to the scheme
- expected drastic increase in congestion
- motorist will choose other and longer routes
- increased overall emission
Main lessons: The share of road investments versus green modes

Instrumental rationality perspective

+ Securing a broad set of measures, even if the projects differ in specification.

Large road projects usually more specified than “green mode” projects

+ A mix attracting state funds

- Is this the right mix for goal achievement?

Communicative rationality perspective

+ The 50% agreement secures broad support form several interest groups

+ Provides some room for flexibility
More emphasis on demand management

Two dimensions of transport packages

Greener Trondheim

Trondheim 1 Stavanger 1

Oslo 1 Oslo 2

Tromsø 1 Bergen 2 Tromsø 2

Bergen 1 Kristiansand 2

Kristiansand 1

Larger part of revenue spent on public transport and the environment
Investment profile Norwegian transport packages

Figure 3.2: Investeringene fordelt på tiltakstype. (Urbanet 2012)
Main lessons: Introducing restrictive measures

Instrumental rationality perspective

+ A crude scheme, but still working..
- Location of tolling booths far from “optimal” (especially phase 1)
+ Opening up for revising the scheme

Communicative rationality perspective

+ Opening up for revising the scheme
- Limited citizen participation
+ Improving public transport
+ Information campaigns
Information

• Prepare for change
• PR, events
• Visible results
Land use:

New plan proposal 2012-24

- Higher density, e.g. alongside the main public transport lines
- Stricter parking regulations
- Some expansion in land use
A regional perspective?

Instrumental rationality perspective:
+ Guidelines for land use in the region
- Consensus-based decisions let the latecomer set the pace...

Communicative rationality perspective:
+ Placate opposition with regional public transport improvements
+ Make some concessions by revising the tolling system
Conclusions Trondheim

Striking the balance between communicative and instrumental rationality

**Communicative rationality perspective:**

+ Accepting overlapping goals
+ Information
+ Room for flexibility
+ Organizing for political decision-making

**Instrumental rationality perspective:**

+ Evaluation and adjustments
+ “Good enough” (without a complete conceptual study)
- Institutional barriers: Still biased towards large road projects