

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION AND OPENNESS IN TRANSPORTATION PLANNING

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ABSTRACT

Recent development in transportation planning and policy indicates that citizen participation and openness may receive less emphasis in the future in favor of more closed ways of decisionmaking and control. Have the merits and drawbacks of citizen participation and openness changed significantly recently? This is hardly so. A survey reveals that the claimed pros and cons of the open format have been virtually the same since the early history of this format. But the evaluation of pros and cons has changed. Citizen participation and openness are closely related to values and power, and the very existence of the open format is dependent on which kind of power dominates societal development in a given period of time. When the open format was introduced a general commitment to social reform, environmental issues, and democratization of decisionmaking dominated societal development. The open format was a result of and well in line with this commitment, which explains its rapid development and spread. Today, a commitment to efficiency, hard-core economics, and budget cuts dominates development in many instances. The trend for openness is being reversed together with the trend for considering social, environmental, and ethical issues in transportation planning and policy.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The author is grateful for the comments and suggestions on the article of Professor Marty Wachs, the Graduate School of Architecture and Urban Planning, University of California, Los Angeles.

INTRODUCTION

When citizen participation and openness was introduced in transportation planning in the 1960's and early 1970's a strong commitment existed to social reform, environmental issues, and to democratization of decisionmaking in the public sector. The open format was claimed to result in more democratic decisionmaking, in more comprehensive, coordinated, and effective problem-solving, and in plans better adjusted to diverse and changing societal trends.

After a number of case-studies of the open format in transportation planning had been carried out, it became clear that the merits of the open format may initially have been overestimated. Open planning appeared to be more time- and money-consuming than closed planning. Participants often seemed not to be representative of the body politic. In some cases participation looked like manipulation. And in others it appeared to lead to polarization, conflict, and stalemate of programs.

In the following sections the claimed merits and drawbacks of the open format in transportation planning will be examined more closely. Furthermore, recent changes in attitudes toward public planning and policy will be described together with their impacts on citizen participation and openness.

But first a short note on what is to be understood by citizen participation.

WHAT IS CITIZEN PARTICIPATION?

What is citizen participation? One might expect that studies dealing with open, participatory planning would contain a fairly precise answer to this question. Yet, this is not the case. The what question is, if addressed at all, often answered in very vague terms. Like the concepts of democracy, freedom, equality, and others with strong ideological connotations, there seems to be, or to have been, a widespread consensus that participation is desirable, but only few specific interpretations of what participation actually means. This circumstance was already observed in 1969 by Sherry R. Arnstein:

"The idea of citizen participation is a little like eating spinach: no one is against it in principle because it is good for you. But there has been very little analysis of the content of the current controversial slogan: 'citizen participation' or 'maximum feasible participation'." (Arnstein 1969, p. 216).

Later there have been both theoretical and empirical analyses of participation. In the field of transportation planning the most well-known and best documented studies probably are the ones on the Boston Transportation Planning Review and the Metro Toronto Transportation Plan Review. (See for instance Sloan 1974, Gakenheimer 1976, and Pill 1979). But many others could be mentioned, in America as well as in Europe.¹ Still, these studies cannot be said to agree upon, or in some cases even to clarify, what participation is.

One could, of course, define citizen participation as Sloan (1974, p. 156) does:

"The operative notion of citizen participation is the direct involvement of people - people who are not part of any officially created government organization or structure, elected or appointed public officials, agency staffers or consultants in the employ of

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public bodies - in government processes normally the exclusive province of agency staffs and officials."

Or as Yukubousky (1973b, p. 2):

"Citizen participation in transportation planning is 'defined' (by this author) as the involvement in the transportation planning process of members of society who are not on the payroll of the sponsor or coordinating planning agency. Thus 'citizen participation' can, for example, refer to the involvement in systems planning, project planning or design of elected officials, other government administrators at all levels of government, members of community, religious, educational, business and local civic groups, as well as private citizens."

Semantic definitions like these are typical of the literature on citizen participation in transportation planning. Even so, the fact remains, that apart from differing, such definitions are also rather empty, cognitively speaking. They lack content in neglecting to regard citizen participation in a specific social, economic, and historical context. What the many studies of citizen participation in transportation planning - and in other fields as well - really seem to show is that citizen participation cannot be given a definition of any substance in semantical terms. Citizen participation is best understood in the social, economic, and historical context out of which it evolved.

So why not adhere to one of the few "definitions" that recognize this circumstance:

"My answer to the critical what question is simply that citizen participation is a categorical term for citizen power. In short, it is the means by which they (have-not citizens, m.r.) can induce significant social reform which enables them to share in the benefits of the affluent society." (Arnstein 1969, p. 216).

By linking participation to power this answer to the what question further has the advantage of pointing out that different degrees of citizen participation exist and must be considered when discussing the concept. Thus Arnstein's term "Ladder of Citizen Participation", ranging from manipulation over informing and consultation to citizen control.²

THREE TYPES OF OPENNESS

Despite a lack of consensus on the substance of citizen participation in transportation planning, there seems to be an agreement in both theoretical and empirical studies on an aspect of form, namely that citizen participation involves some sort of "openness" in the political-administrative system toward its environment.

Three types of openness can be distinguished. Firstly, openness toward any member of the public who is expected to be affected by or who has an interest in a program. This could be citizens in general, political parties, interest groups, or the specific target population of a program, i.e. the users. To many writers this kind of openness is identical to citizen participation, cf. the abovementioned quote from Sloan (1974).

Secondly, openness toward other kinds of planning can be distinguished. From the point of view of transportation planning this implies openness toward urban and regional planning. Some writers include this kind of openness, together with the first type, in the concept of citizen participation, cf. the quote from Yukubousky (1973b).

The third, and last, type of openness that can be identified is different in character from the first two. It is not necessarily an openness toward a specific actor but toward general societal development as this is expressed in economic, political, and ideological changes. This could for instance imply alertness in the planning process toward the impact of changes in real income, energy policy, or social values on transportation

policy and planning. Because no specific actor necessarily is involved, this type of openness is often left unconsidered. Yet, it may be of importance to the development of sound and adjusted transportation programs.³

By advocates of open planning, the employment of one or more of these types of openness is typically claimed to be an alternative to, or an improvement on, the "closed" traditional paradigm of rational-comprehensive, expert-based transportation planning. In the following paragraphs this claim will be examined through investigation of the claimed advantages of open planning as juxtaposed to some of the disadvantages said to be associated with this kind of planning. In short, the claimed pros and cons of open transportation planning will be examined.

Considering first openness toward the general public, it has already been mentioned that many writers see this kind of openness as the most important, and it is certainly the type that has received most attention in the literature. The reason may be, that this type of openness implies an actual unclosing of the total political-administrative system to the surrounding world, i.e. direct involvement in planning and politics of other groups than professionals and politicians.

Studies of this type of openness have focussed on three major pros:

- More democracy in planning.
- Less scope for dominant ideologies, e.g. the technocratic paradigm of planning.
- More comprehensive, coordinated, and effective problem-solving.

DIRECT DEMOCRACY

The argument that citizen participation results in more democracy in planning and policy-making is probably the most widely used single argument for citizen participation. In a typical formulation of this argument it is put this way:

"The purpose of citizen participation is to see that the decisions of government reflect the preferences of the people. The basic intention of citizen participation is to insure the responsiveness and accountability of government to the citizens. Secondary reasons for citizen participation are: it helps create better plans, it increases the likelihood of implementing the plan, and it generates support for the agency. In the final analysis, however, its contribution to the democratic process is the significant factor." (Jordan et al. 1976, p. 6).

To the extent that activating people is regarded as something positive in itself, citizen participation, obviously, can be claimed to be valuable. Whether planning and policymaking actually become more democratic through this involvement is another question, dependent on the degree to which citizen power actually determines the product of the planning and policy process.⁴

MORE BALANCED

Closely related to the issue of democracy one finds the claim that planning with citizen participation leaves less scope for dominant ideologies than traditional closed planning. The involvement of different groups with different sets of values and interests is argued to reduce the likelihood of any one set of values and interests dominating the process and outcome of planning. Of particular interest has been the challenge of the customary ways planners structure and solve problems. Ralph Gakenheimer touches upon this issue in referring to what he calls the "intuition" of planners:

"Every professional has rules of thumb and an intuitive sense of judgment that quickly settle the unchallenging parts of a problem and guide him without delay to the aspects of the problem which need analysis or more open judgment. In the open study he is repeatedly forced to reexamine his intuition and justify it to clients.

This is a healthy necessity, but it is bound to be a disturbing one."
(Gakenheimer 1976, p. 339).

MORE EFFECTIVE AND MORE COMPREHENSIVE

The challenge of customary ways and viewpoints may lead to a broader approach to planning and result in more comprehensive, coordinated, and effective problem-solving. By involving citizens in the planning process the outcome is argued to be improved by insuring that social and environmental considerations are adequately treated. Moreover, the combination of the technical skills of planners with citizen knowledge is seen as a means to develop technically sound plans that are politically feasible. (See for instance Manheim et al. 1974).

Closely related to this argument, it has been claimed that openness toward other kinds of planning - the second type of openness considered - would also add to the possibility of developing truly comprehensive programs. In both cases the claim is closely related to a critique of traditional rational-comprehensive transportation planning, which is argued to be - despite its name - narrow in its approach: The benefits of high accessibility over long distances in large one-mode transportation systems have been overrated, and the costs, which are often local and socially biased in character, have often been underrated, if rated at all. Thus, the traditional studies have been criticized for not considering in an adequate manner pollution, noise, energy, urban environment, equity, safety, and the relations between modes.

As an alternative, openness of one kind of transportation planning to other kinds has been seen as important to the balancing of modes, thus insuring that no one mode dominates the others. Similarly, openness toward other kinds of planning and government activities than transportation has been regarded as a means to insure that the many, and often complex,

interrelations between transportation and other activities would be taken into account.

In Scandinavia and Great Britain the integration of transportation planning in the overall framework of urban and regional planning has been stressed as particularly important in this respect. Also, a more rigorous integration in overall economic planning, i.e. budget planning, has been advocated, to ensure that transportation programs are economically evaluated on equal terms with other programs. Finally, the integration with environmental planning, social planning, housing, education, health etc. has been claimed to be equally important in securing a holistic view in transportation decisions.

Obviously, all these kinds of integrations have strong organizational and institutional implications. In consequence, part and parcel of advocating this kind of openness is a commitment to organization development and to changes in institutional structure. (Colcord 1974, Public Technology Inc. 1976, and Comptroller General of the United States 1978).

BETTER ADJUSTED

Finally, considering openness toward general societal development as this is expressed in economic, political, and ideological changes, it has been argued that this would help transportation planning to be better adjusted toward diverse and changing mobility needs.

Traditional expert-based transportation planning has been criticized for depending too much on simplistic forecasts and for not taking into account structural changes in societal development, even where this may be expected to have substantial impact on travel.

For instance the Danish National Highway Administration has been reluctant to change its basic forecasting assumptions concerning growth in number of cars and car-usage, despite the oil-crisis of 1973 and later

economic changes. Comparing by the end of a given year, for example, the actual increase in the car-fleet to the number assumed in the forecasts of the Highway Administration, one will find the latter substantially higher than the first. This number is assumed to apply to each year until 1990 or beyond with an obvious biasing impact on decisions for highway construction.

Even if the case of the Danish National Highway Administration may be extreme, studies from other countries suggest that it is not unique.^{5 6} And even if it can be understood in terms of an institution trying to perpetuate its own existence, it does leave the same institution open to criticism and suggestions for change.

As mentioned above one such suggestion has been the opening up of the transportation planning process to reflect societal changes, i.e. less reliance on simplistic and self-perpetuating questions and methodology, and more on broader analysis to promote discussion of changing needs and the development of adequate measures to accommodate these needs.⁷

In connection with this type of openness, and for the same purpose, it can also be observed that openness toward changing values has been stressed as a central characteristic of open transportation planning. The criticism that has been brought against traditional rational-comprehensive transportation planning in this case has been that this type of planning adheres to, with great inertness, the values of expert-based, elitist planning and social organization, while changes in society have made the demands for a more open and political planning ever stronger.

A STRONG CASE FOR OPEN PLANNING?

The preceding sections focused on claimed pros of open transportation planning. A first impression from the many studies pointing out these pros, and explaining how to organize and implement the open format, inevitably

is that the case for open transportation planning is a strong one. This impression is sustained by the fact that studies arguing the case for the open format outnumber studies arguing against or evaluating the merits and drawbacks of this format.

Yet, a close look at the latter kind of studies reveals an interesting fact: for each claimed pro of open transportation planning one seems to be able to find at least one claimed con (and visa versa). The following sections point out the cons and contrast them with the pros in order to come up with tentative conclusions regarding the conditions under which the different claims hold true.

NON-REPRESENTATIVE

One very fundamental criticism of planning with citizen participation has been that often the participants have not been representative of the body politic. Empirical studies reveal that people with low incomes and few years of education are less likely to be participants than people with higher incomes and more years of education. Moreover, women are less likely to participate than men, and older people less than younger. In short, a participant most likely is a young middle class male professional, implying that citizen participation is not very successful in meeting the claim of strengthening direct democracy in planning.⁸ Another argument used against this claim, and against the claim of less scope for dominant ideologies, has been that small, but highly vocal pressure groups tend to dominate the process and outcome of participation.⁹

MANIPULATION

Also weakening the argument of direct democracy is the circumstance that case-studies have shown that the established political-administrative system may be unwilling to give away power in determining the outcome of

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planning. A detailed study of citizen participation in the Downtown People Mover Project in Los Angeles concludes that the interest of local government in obtaining Federal funding for the project overrode the intentions and obligations for citizen participation. Citizens were able to affect the planning process, but not the planning product:

"....., CRA's (the Community Redevelopment Agency of the City of Los Angeles) orientation toward obtaining DPM (Downtown People Mover) funding did not leave the agency open to making program changes that would be responsive to citizen input. Herein lies the strongest basis of CAP's (Citizen Advisory Panel) inability to affect the product of the C/DS (Central Business District Circulation/Distribution System) Program." (Haas 1977, p. 57).

Other studies have come up with similar conclusions, leaving the overall impression that citizen participation is sometimes used to justify decisions already made. In such cases what is named citizen participation would more properly be called consultation, informing, or even manipulation, if one were to use Arnstein's (1969) interpretation of the concept.

At a certain level evidence like this clearly weakens the argument for citizen participation: if the two main parties involved - the citizens and the political-administrative system - act in ways to hinder successful participation, why bother about participation at all?

OR.....?

The question is posed too simplistically, however. Firstly, the behaviour of the citizens and the political-administrative system may be inter-related, i.e. citizens may not participate because they expect not to gain influence on decisions, or the political-administrative system may not take seriously the involvement of citizens because participants are expected to be non-representative.

Secondly, there have actually been examples of successful citizen participation, i.e. cases where the participants have reaped some of the claimed advantages of citizen participation. Examples have been reported of, for instance, local experience influencing programs to make them more reflective of local needs and thus easier to implement. Studies of these examples indicate that the claimed pros of citizen participation are most likely to occur where the program at issue is specific in character, where it concerns a relatively homogenous population in a small geographical area, and where the major parts of both benefits and costs fall on the population involved.¹⁰ Furthermore, given the fact that participation is often institutionalized by law and carried out on the initiative of the political-administrative system, this system clearly has a very strong influence on the success of participation. A substantial degree of commitment to the participatory process on the side of the political-administrative system seems, therefore, to be a prerequisite for successful citizen participation. At least if participation is to be carried out as an integrated part of institutionalized planning. Lack of commitment may result in counter-planning, i.e. "participation" outside and against government programs.

The political-administrative system may also hold measures to make up for apparent biases in participation such as lack of representativeness among participants. One such measure could be local ballots as they have been practiced in Switzerland and other parts of Europe. In this connection it is interesting to notice that the claimed biased character of environmental groups has been challenged by recent research. Nordkolt, the hitherto most comprehensive research project on urban transportation in the Nordic countries, sponsored by the Nordic Council of Ministers (1972-1978), strongly implies that the role of environmental groups should be reconsidered. What these groups have been pointing out since the early 1960's - that urban transportation policy has been narrow and one-sided, in favor

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of the car - is demonstrated to hold true: on the basis of detailed studies of 8 medium sized towns in Sweden, Norway, Denmark, and Finland it is demonstrated that the social and environmental costs of the current urban transportation system, as compared to two more balanced alternatives, are too high to justify the higher mobility (by car) in the current system. It is demonstrated that traditional transportation planning has contributed significantly to this state of affairs. (Nordkolt 1978a-c). Seen in this light, the viewpoints of environmental groups should have been allowed for in policymaking and planning at an early stage. There are very real reasons why this has not happened, however, as the following paragraphs will show.

POLARIZATION, CONFLICT, AND STALEMATE OF PROGRAMS

It has been argued that openness may lead to polarization and conflict, which could be unpleasant to established politicians and planners, and which could also lead to a stalemate of programs.

Conflict may arise between citizen groups and the administration, between different citizen groups, and between different parts of the administration. This is likely to be unpleasant to politicians, who typically benefit from the impression that their decisions have positive impacts for a majority and negative for few. It could also be unpleasant to planners, because conflict often reveals there is no objective problem-conception and solution.

Yet, it has been argued, that real conflicts should not be glossed over by planners with artificial compromises. Conflict may in fact be necessary to obtain some of the claimed advantages of open transportation planning: more democratic decisions and more comprehensive, coordinated, and efficient problem-solving. (Gakenheimer 1976, p. 340 ff.).

In some instances it could be, of course, that the political-administrative system and certain interest groups are not interested in actual-

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izing these advantages. That the "advantages" are not seen as advantages, but instead as obstacles to the attainment of the goals of a specific agency in the administration or a specific interest group. It is likely, indeed, that resistance to open planning is often caused by the fear of established agencies that they may lose power. The fear certainly may be well-founded, too, as the outcome of planning is less predictable in an open process, just as the likelihood is smaller that specific interests are attended to.

If the open format leads to polarization and conflict and this in turn leads to a stalemate of programs, one could say that the open format only achieves negative results:

"It could be said of the participatory process in Boston that it achieved only negative results - to block a program that was quickly falling out of favor. The question is whether a participatory process can produce positive results. Can decisions be made to do something, rather than to block something? On this evidence the evidence from Boston is scanty." (Sloan 1974, p. 162).

Again, a stalemate could be seen as real progress in comparison to proposed action from the point of view of some interest groups. For example from the point of view of the local citizen group that is going to have heavy rail or a freeway run through its neighborhood.

In any case, the impact of participation on decisionmaking is strongly related to the specific organizational structure of the political-administrative system. For instance, a comparative study of 12 cities in the United States, Canada, and Europe indicates, that the lack of a single political entity in U.S. cities has made it difficult to organize and implement successful citizen participation, and has resulted in the "Boston Experience" as quoted from Sloan above. In cities with a single powerful government, on the other hand, the decisionmaking process was found to be

much more sensitive to citizen input and to allow for not only stopping projects, but also for formulating and carrying out alternative policies. (Colcord 1974, p. 97-99).¹¹

MORE TIME- AND MONEY-CONSUMING

Finally, it has been argued that open planning is more time- and money-consuming than traditional planning and, in this sense, less efficient.

Evidently, it does take time and money to arrange and implement citizen participation, collaboration with other planning agencies, and surveys of general societal development. In addition the planning process may develop less linearly with citizens and other agencies involved; some issues may have to be iterated over and over in the process, and participants may raise new issues for consideration, that were not originally planned for.

It should be mentioned in this connection, however, that participation could take, and have taken, forms under which participants carry out a major part of the work involved, for instance in data collection. In extreme cases one might find institutionalized "planning" replaced by the work of volunteers.¹²

It is difficult to come up with definite conclusions on the resource-demands of open vs. non-open planning as it would take controlled experiments, the conditions of which would be very difficult to establish in practice. A Norwegian study of 16 cases of open transportation and land use planning tentatively concludes that the planning process tends to be more time- and money-consuming when organized in accordance with the open format, but that this very well may be offset by smoother implementation and less need for revision of the outcome. (Institute of Transportation Economics, the Norwegian Institute of Urban and Regional Research 1980).

ON BALANCE HISTORY DECIDES

The examination of claimed pros and cons of open transportation planning reveals one thing quite clearly: there is no simple bottomline to the question, whether the open format is desirable or not. The question is too fundamental in character, regarding for instance classical (direct) democracy vs. representative democracy and equity vs. efficiency. Thus, the question concerns ethics, values, and vested interests, i.e. it is a political question.

With the ideal of classical (direct) democracy as measuring-rod it is difficult to get a case against open planning. This type of planning is better in accordance with the classical ideal than closed, expert-based planning is. In retrospect it is easy to understand, therefore, that the open format appeared on the planning scene in a historical era, the 1960's, when democratization and equity movements were very strong. It is equally easy to understand that the open format is vulnerable today, where the main trend demands more efficiency, more reliance on market mechanisms, and less public involvement in societal development. In referring back to Arnstein's (1969) linkage between citizen participation and power, it can be observed that the very existence of citizen participation is dependent on which kind of power dominates societal development in a given era.

REFORMISM

During the 1960's it became increasingly clear that economic growth resulted in substantial negative impacts and that growth was not unequivocally to the benefit of all citizens. Representative democracy was endangered by conflict, protest movements, and in some cases by outright riots assembling civil war. In the bottlenecks of Western civilization, the big cities of the United States and Great Britain, openness and participation

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were actually introduced as a kind of "social engineering" aimed at dampening conflict and urban crisis.

Open planning spread from these cities geographically and sectorwise. The diffusion happened rapidly and with an impact that, for a while, made the open format an established part of the dominant paradigm in transportation planning and also in other forms of planning. Thus, in the mid-1970's an American transportation researcher could write with confidence:

"Is it here to stay? I believe the answer is that in its essentials the open study is clearly here to stay. Abandonment of the open format would require the substantial change or reversal of the major national trends that have given rise to it." (Gakenheimer 1976, p. 330).

This conviction, which is typical for the late 1960's and the beginning of the 1970's, is closely related to the abovementioned problems for representative democracy and to a belief that these problems could be solved by supplementing representative democracy with elements of classical democracy. In a larger context the conviction is related to a then general belief in social and other reform, a belief in public involvement in the regulation of spontaneous development, with the aim of controlling economic growth and obtaining a more equitable distribution of the social product.

In the field of transportation this Reformism has manifested itself in regulations for more equality in the distribution of services, geographically and socially. The supply and pricing of public transportation has been used as an important means in this connection, for instance to create better services for the transportation disadvantaged. Other regulations are traffic management schemes, standards for air quality, safety, and - since 1973 - energy preservation measures.

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In this author's view the open format is best understood as an integrated part of Reformism, developed to increase equality and democratization in the planning process.

NEW LIBERALISM*

Today, the mainstream attitude toward Reformism has changed. Regulations and other public involvement in societal development are exposed to severe attacks. What could be called a New Liberal* trend is gaining force in the political-administrative system and in society in general. Until now this development has been most pronounced in, first Great Britain, and later in the United States. In these countries one could ask, with reason, if the "major national trends", referred to by Ralph Gakenheimer in 1976 as the sound basis for open planning, have not, exactly, been reversed, even if this may have seemed unlikely to ever happen in the mid 1970's.

Generally speaking, the content of New Liberalism is the reestablishment of market mechanisms and private initiative in the capitalist economy. The background for this must be seen in the breakdown of Keynesian interventionist macroeconomic policy in a situation with simultaneous high inflation, unemployment, and deficits on the balance of payments. Macroeconomic policy has seemed to fail on its own assumptions.

*) The term "liberalism" is used in the original sense of the word, i.e. meaning reliance on private initiative, competition, and the free market in the allocation of scarce resources. This is the sense in which Adam Smith used the term, and it is the sense in which the term has been used in Europe since then. In the United States, however, the term has come to stand for something close to the opposite of its original meaning, namely the same as what is named "reformism" above.

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After a period in which economic policy was paralysed by, on the one hand, inability to stimulate demand due to inflation and the balance of payments, and on the other by incapacity to tighten up fiscal and monetary policies due to the social and political effects this would have, the outline of New Liberalism has become increasingly clear and powerful. Fighting inflation, dampening rising costs, and securing a sufficient profit level is at the heart of the new paradigm for economic policy. In consequence growth in the public sector must be limited and the use of public funds made more efficient. Hard-core economics, i.e. economic efficiency becomes sovereign again after a period of economic policy based on both efficiency and equity considerations. This line of development is taking place more or less parallel and more or less pronounced in all developed capitalist societies with strong support in policy recommendations from international organisations such as OECD, IMF, GATT, and the World Bank. (Johnson 1980, Wolin 1981).

Like macro-economic policy, transportation policy has been weak and incoherent. Public transportation has been planned and operated in economically inefficient ways in many cities and has not lived up to expectations of increases in ridership, reductions in urban automobile use, or more equity in the availability and price of transportation. Programs for transportation handicapped have proved to be very cost-ineffective, just as programs for safety, air quality, energy, and - as mentioned above - citizen participation have been criticized for low degrees of goals-achievement. (Altshuler et al. 1981, Meyer & Gomez-Ibanez 1981).

This state of affairs is very well suited, of course, to argue for cuts in public involvement in transportation. And they are, indeed, used in this way with the result that social, environmental, and democratization considerations get less emphasis in transportation policy and planning. A Danish transportation researcher thus reports from Great Britain,

until now the country where the new liberal trend has had the greatest impact:

"The Buchanan-like comprehensive town and traffic plans are things of the past. The traffic planners work persistently with traffic planning techniques, that by and large focus on bringing as many cars as possible, as safely as possible through the road network. And the town planners are occupied with the individual land-parcel, where regard to private profit interests of individual land owners carries great weight. In this game long-range goals are left unconsidered, and what is more, the collaboration with citizens, that was one of the important goals of planning, cannot be carried out." (Kofoed 1981, p. 84-85).

In this connection it is interesting to recall, that citizen participation was introduced in the 1960's partly with the purpose of dampening conflict and riots in big cities, and it is discouraging to note that riots have reappeared in Great Britain in 1981 a few years after New Liberalism was introduced as the dominant policy-paradigm in this country.¹³

If the price for greater efficiency and increased reliance on market mechanisms is an increase in social and economic inequality, further strain on the environment, and the possible reoccurrence of riots, the policy paradigm of New Liberalism should, in this author's view, be critically reassessed. The concept of efficiency may, in this case, turn out to be too narrow and too related to specific interest groups to justify its use in the public domain.

In the field of transportation there have been very real reasons for the trend of the 1960's and 1970's to enlarge the scope of the traditional paradigm of policy and planning to include the relations between modes, social and environmental considerations, participation, and ethical issues. Maybe the attempts to include these issues in transportation policy and

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planning have not always been particularly successful. This does not mean, however, that the need for a holistic view no longer exists, or that a more narrow view will be more successful in solving the problems. To break or reverse a trend, developed through so many years, may backfire, and the question must be raised if it would not be a more sound line of development to learn from mistakes as well as from successes in the past in order to improve programs instead of giving up programs altogether. In this author's view current development in Europe as well as in the United States indicates that the holistic paradigm of transportation policy and planning is a simple necessity if the transportation sector is going to solve the mobility problem of society in the long run.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Transportation planning with citizen participation and openness has been introduced as an alternative to traditional, expert-based and closed transportation planning. The advantages that have been claimed to be associated with the open format can be summarized in a number of partly overlapping points: (1) More democratic decision-making, (2) Less scope for dominant ideologies, (3) More comprehensive, coordinated, and effective problem-solving, and (4) Plans better adjusted to diverse and changing societal trends.

Contrary to these claims transportation planning with citizen participation and openness has been criticized for: (1) Participants are not representative of the body politic, (2) Citizen participation can be used to manipulate the public, (3) Open planning may lead to polarization, conflict, and a stalemate of programs, and (4) Open planning is more time- and money-consuming than closed planning.

The examination of claimed pros and cons makes it clear, there is no simple bottomline to the question, whether citizen participation and

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openness is desirable in transportation planning or not. Each claim holds true under its own specific circumstances. It does appear to be clear, however, that citizen participation and openness is desirable when evaluated with the classical (direct) ideal of democracy as measuring rod.

It seems equally clear that the benefits of citizen participation can best be reaped where the program at issue is specific in character, where it concerns a relatively homogenous population in a small geographical area, and where the major parts of both benefits and costs fall on the population involved. Moreover, a strong commitment on the side of the political-administrative system to the open format is an important prerequisite for successful citizen participation.

When the open format was introduced in the 1960's and early 1970's this commitment existed together with a strong, general commitment to social reform, environmental issues, and to democratization of decision-making in the public sector.

Today, the commitment is often absent or weaker than previously, exposed to a commitment to efficiency, hard-core economics, cuts, and more closed ways of decisionmaking and control. The trend laid down in the development of transportation planning and policy during the 1960's and 1970's - including citizen participation and openness - is being reversed in ways that to this author often appear as retrogression. To break a longstanding trend like this may backfire, and the question must be raised if it would not be a more sound line of development to learn from past mistakes and successes in order to improve programs, instead of giving them up altogether or cutting them back to a state in which the likelihood of malfunction is very high.

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NOTES

- 1) See Yukubousky (1973a, b and c), Department of the Environment (1973), Jordan et al. (1974), Wellman (1977), and Institute of Transportation Economics & the Norwegian Institute of Urban and Regional Research (1980).
- 2) See Flyvbjerg & Petersen (1982) for a more general and comprehensive account for the social, economic, and historical context of citizen participation.
- 3) It can be argued that a fourth type of openness ought to be considered: openness toward prospective operators of a planned program. In bus transit planning, for example, it may be of crucial importance to the success of a program, that bus drivers are involved in the planning process at an early stage. This can be said to be an internal matter, however, as prospective operators often will be on the payroll of the planning agency. In reality, this type of openness may still be as external to the planning staff and the planning process as any other type of openness.
- 4) In this connection it becomes particularly clear how important the distinction between different types of participation is, cf. Arnstein's (1969) "Ladder of Citizen Participation".
- 5) A comparative study of highway planning methods in the Nordic countries conducted by the Nordic Highway Technical Board (1980) concluded that Denmark has been the most orthodox country in the development of highway planning methods. Highway planning in Denmark is based on an

expanded version of the traditional transportation model/cost-benefit analysis approach to highway planning. The other Nordic countries have developed more flexible and equity/environmental-orientated methods in the goals-achievement/cost-effectiveness format.

- 6) Studies by the Independent Commission on Transport (1974), Gakenheimer (1976), and Pill (1979) indicate that the same kind of considerations apply to at least Great Britain, the United States, and Canada. With special reference to forecasting, see Wachs (1981a and b).
- 7) For a more fully developed critique of transportation planning methods, see Lee (1973), Starkie (1974), Goodwin (1980).
- 8) See for instance Yukubousky (1973a), Sloan (1974), Haas (1977), Schary et al. (1977), Tonboe et al. (1977), and Lerstang & Mydske (1978).
- 9) It is not clear to what extent this argument holds true even though studies by Sloan (1974), Gakenheimer (1976), and Steiner (1979) lends it some credibility.
- 10) Susskind (1977), Susskind et al. (1978), Lerstang & Mydske (1978), and Institute of Transportation Economics & the Norwegian Institute of Urban and Regional Research (1980).
- 11) The cities included in the study were Atlanta, Minneapolis/St. Paul, Miami, Seattle, Toronto, Montreal, Hamburg, Manchester, Leeds, Stockholm, Gothenburg, and Amsterdam.

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12) It is interesting to notice that recently this replacement of planning by the work of volunteers has become a deliberate policy of the central governments in Great Britain and the United States.

13) It is also interesting to note the concern in the United States among pro-participation groups with the consequences of New Liberalism in this country. (Citizen Participation Vol. 3, NO. 2 1981: "Maximum Feasible Dismantlement").

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