

CLOSING REMARKS ON SUBTHEME G

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The discussions during the sessions of subtheme G were mainly concentrated on three subjects. The main points can be summarised as follows:

A. Infrastructure planning

Given the lifetime of infrastructure projects, long term planning is a necessity. However, a wide range of uncertainties about future developments makes it difficult to formulate a set of consistent scenario assumptions. These uncertainties for instance form the weak point in the infrastructure planning in the European Community.

Although the planners have reached agreement in most cases about the priorities for infrastructure projects, there is still in many countries a serious gap between the objectives of the long term planning and the short term decision making on the political level. For the decision making on investments, evaluation criteria are a necessity. However, the problem of finding an appropriate evaluation methodology is still far from solved. It is generally agreed that a simple cost-benefit analysis cannot give the desired answer.

This, because important cost and benefit components cannot be quantified and if so, they cannot be brought on one and the same nominator. Further should be kept in mind that the external costs of a project often have to be accepted by another group than the one that has the benefits.

The multi-criteria analysis give a better insight in the complexity of the case, but the final evaluation still remains rather problematic. An important part of the benefits of new infrastructure projects is formed by time-savings. Their valuation raise serious problems. For Third World countries was demonstrated that the existing valuation techniques tend to discriminate between cities and rural areas.

B. The efficiency in the use of existing infrastructure facilities

Three types of measures were presented and discussed:

- Via the introduction of sophisticated routing and scheduling systems the capacity and the quality of service can be improved at the same time. In the systems that were presented, little attention was given to cost optimising.
- The improvement of the infrastructure use, by a more flexibel price setting.
- The improvement to be achieved by influencing the human factor, for instance via education of the users.

Although slightly different in character, the influencing of the modal choice can, under circumstances, be added as a fourth form of measures that can improve the use of infrastructure.

As far as the shift to soft modes like the bicycle is concerned, it may be necessary to provide much additional facilities to stimulate a significant shift in the desired direction. This may diminish the quality of the facilities available for the hard modes, like the car. Serious trade-off problems have then to be handled. The use of simulation models can be of much help as a support for the decision maker.

C. The impact of transport facilities on the activity pattern and the structure of the activity space

The conclusions were for different parts of the world on the main points in line:

- Accessibility is a dominating factor for the location of residential areas and for the residential density.
- From the human activity pattern result many trip purposes. For each of these purposes, its accessibility is of importance in valuating the attractiveness of a certain residential area. Nevertheless, the accessibility to employment ranks at the top.
- The knowledge of the impact of transport facilities on the structure of the activity space is by now in many countries adequate, to form a reliable base for succesfull town planning.