

The Field of Transport Policy: An Initial Approach

Oliver Schwedes¹

Technische Universität Berlin (Germany)

Abstract

The field of transport policy in Germany and the EU is characterized by an extraordinary discrepancy between programmatic goals and real transport development. In this article, the field of transport policy will be examined on two levels: First, the discourse of transport policy and the establishment of the central idea of an integrated transport policy will be analyzed. It can be shown that the central idea of an integrated transport policy marks a break with the former ecological discourse and its critical potential in favor of a consensus strategy. Second, the configuration of stakeholders in the field of transport and their particular understanding of an integrated transport policy will be studied. Thus, it can be explained how certain interests prevail while others succumb. By the combination of a discourse analysis and an actor-centered policy approach, an insight in the complex policy field with its different stakeholders with diverse interests is possible. As a result, the field of transport policy will become more transparent and therefore support a public debate about future transport policy.

Zusammenfassung

Das Politikfeld Verkehr in Deutschland und Europa zeichnet sich durch eine ausgeprägte Diskrepanz von Anspruch und Wirklichkeit aus. In diesem Beitrag wird das Politikfeld Verkehr auf zwei Ebenen untersucht: Zum einen wird auf der diskursiven Ebenen die Etablierung des Leitbildes einer Integrierten Verkehrspolitik analysiert. Es wird gezeigt, dass das Leitbild einer Integrierten Verkehrspolitik sich von dem vorangegangenen Umweltdiskurs unterscheidet, indem es die Konflikt- zu Gunsten einer Konsensstrategie aufgibt. Im zweiten Schritt wird die Figuration der Akteure und ihr Verständnis einer Integrierten Verkehrspolitik untersucht. Es wird gezeigt wie bestimmte Interessen mit ihrem spezifischen Verständnis sich durchsetzen, während andere nicht gehört werden. Die Kombination einer Diskursanalyse mit einem akteurszentrierten Policy Ansatz ermöglicht einen Einblick in das komplexe Politikfeld Verkehr mit den unterschiedlichen Akteuren und ihren verschiedenen Interessen. Im Ergebnis wird das Politikfeld Verkehr transpa-

¹ Born Schöller

renter, womit eine öffentliche Debatte über die zukünftige Verkehrspolitik unterstützt wird.

1 Introduction

The field of transport policy can be characterized by a strange peculiarity. On the one hand, the Ministry of Transport holds the biggest budget for investment therefore it seems to be one of the most important policy fields. This fact is reflected by the people who mainly not just judge transport policy as an important topic but are convinced to be – again compared to other policy fields – particularly familiar with it. On the other hand, in the field of transport policy we are confronted with a deep gap between programmatic goals and real transport development, which does not fit to the image of an economically potent and politically powerful ministry.

To put it clearly, it is not just a compromise like in other policy fields. Furthermore since decades the transport development, compared to the heavy demands formulated by politicians to themselves, goes in the opposite direction. This fact again is reflected by the position of the minister of transport, which is considered a less-distinguished office.

While the discipline of Political Science could well deal with the topic, transport policy has not yet been recognized as a separate policy field (Sager/Kaufmann 2002; Beyme 2007: 125). Transport policy is the domain of economists and most of what we know about the transport sector is seen from an economic perspective. Therefore, we know little about the actors in the field of transport policy and their particular interests nor how they would act in certain circumstances to push their interests. In other words the field of transport policy is very nebulous.

In this situation it is barely possible to establish collective binding decisions for transport policy. Political decisions in the field of transport policy are dominated by particular interests of more or less powerful actors.

Though transparency is a precondition of democracy, and it is the purpose of political science to support democratic conditions,

the first task must be to bring to light what has previously happened clandestinely. The result might be that transport policy will become not merely an important but also a powerful policy field.

2 On methods

Proceeding from the well-documented phenomenon of an unusually deep gap between a widely accepted programmatic goal of transport policy reflected in the central idea of an integrated transport policy on the one hand, and real transport development on the other (Schöller-Schwedes 2010), we are faced with two levels of analysis. The first is a level of discourse, where people struggle for power of definition. The second is a level of action where people struggle for competence to act. Therefore, it seems to make sense in analyzing the field of transport policy to combine two different methods: the discourse analysis and an actor-centered policy approach.

In contrasting the process of agenda setting on the level of discourse with a description of the topography of actors, it hopefully will give some hints to explain the contradiction between the convictions and actions in the field of transport policy.²

3 The discourse on an integrated transport Policy

In Germany the central idea of an integrated transport policy was first developed in the 1970s.³ In 1973, the social-liberal coalition government initiated a change of paradigm with its Kursbuch für Verkehrspolitik (Instructions for a Transport Policy). It questioned the simplistic application of the principles of market economy for all sectors of transport. Instead, it saw the necessity “to solve the growing conflict between fulfilling social needs on the one hand and satisfying private interests on the other” (BMV 1973: 11). As the profits in private economy can be accompanied

² The article is based on the study by Schöller (2006).

³ In Great Britain already in 1963 the so-called Buchanan Report talked about an “Integrated policy” (Buchanan 1963: 198).

by losses in the national economy, it was necessary to take stock of the national economy with respect to transport.

With the publishing of the report by the expert committee for problems of the environment, *Auto und Umwelt*, (the Car and the Environment), the Kursbuch obtained scientific support (Nebelung/Meyer 1974). In both studies, profound analyses of the problems of transport were presented, and transport policy was understood as a central part of social politics. According to the scientists, the development of transport cannot be observed without considering how various parts of society were influenced by it and vice versa. "The committee has to analyse all interactions of the individual motor vehicle and the areas of life. It has to take implications of legislation and social politics into account that are reflected in the campaigns put out by the car industry and by its economic interconnections" (ibid. 57). Consequently, the expert committee also saw the solution of the transport problems in "the integrated planning of transport" (ibid. 58). It did not one-sidedly oppose individual mass motorization, but rather stressed the invaluable contribution of the car to a higher quality of life by creating more possibilities for experience and social contact. Nevertheless, the committee voted for a more balanced development of public and private transport, to be guaranteed by planning strategies that integrated the various political departments and the protagonists of traffic and transport. In the context of an integrated transport policy, the expert committee particularly favored political and social integration, while the Federal Government also supported concepts for the technical integration of public and private transport. In order to enhance the attractiveness of public transport, new modes of transport were to adapt it to individual preferences and to collectivize individual transport at the same time (Schmucki 1997).

In the 1970s, the objectives of the "Verband Öffentlicher Verkehrsbetriebe", VÖV (Association of Public Transport Companies) demonstrated how widely accepted the central idea of an integrated transport strategy had become (Walter 1995). The association developed a publicity campaign which explicitly pointed out how ideally public and individual transport can complement each another. In those days, the VÖV still advocated a

spirit of partnership, free of discriminatory comments about individual transport, quite unlike the often aggressive anti-car-campaigns that were to follow.

In the early 1970s, the persuasiveness of the central idea found its institutional expression in science and politics. Science reacted by establishing new subjects in universities, such as the subject area “integrated transport planning” at the Technical University in Berlin. Politics, on the other hand, decided in favor of a fundamental reform of the Federal Ministry of Transport (Dienel 2007). Until then, the Ministry had been divided into four sections, each representing an individual sector of transport: railways, roads, shipping and air transport. This organizational structure resulted in competition within the Ministry of Transport, but was presented to the outside world as a supposedly unified policy by the Minister. As the fragmented structure caused by the organizational structure was incompatible with the philosophy of integration now aspired to, it was to be abolished in order to make it possible to put the idea of an integrated transport policy into practice.

For this purpose, a division for basic transport policy was founded, whose task consisted in joining the individual sections in a unified concept that comprised all traffic sectors. But although by the end of the 1970s the department on basic transport policy had become the largest section, it did not succeed in overcoming the conflicting interests and pushing through a comprehensive strategy for all sectors of transport.⁴

Against the background of the energy crises in the early 1970s, the debates about transport policy reforms were followed with great interest. But a few years after the crises had been overcome, there was a dramatic swing in public opinion. From that time onwards, the worldwide recession dominated strategic considerations, also in the field of transport politics. When faced with a crisis, local governments remembered the economic significance of the car industry and adapted their politics accordingly. Not even the smallest steps of the extensive plans for an inte-

⁴ For a detailed description of the resistance caused by personnel and structures see Dienel (2007).

grated transport policy were put into action. “This shows us two facts: first, attempts for structural reform are quickly discarded when, due to drastic economic changes and crises in the production of consumer goods, the only way for politics to safeguard jobs is to unrestrainedly boost new private investment. Second, we clearly see the high costs of such politics of adaptation. Against better knowledge such short-term measures in politics have to be bought dearly, problems in society and the environment, and the needs of society as a whole, take second place to the compulsions of business economy” (Linder/Maurer/Resch 1975: 65).

At that time, due to the report for the Club of Rome ‘Constraints of Growth’ (Meadows/Meadows 1972) a controversial dispute in the field of transport policy was initiated. In pointing out the contradiction between economic growth and the limited natural resources the close link between economic und transport growth and the consequences on the natural resources was also brought up as a central theme. By asking how to close the gap between economic and transport growth on the one side, and the protection of nature on the other side, a fundamental societal issue was affected.

3.1 Sustainable development by sustainable growth

In the 1980s, the focus of the discourse on sustainability shifted. The so-called Brundtland Report ‘Our Common Future’ no longer recognized natural resources as absolute growth constraints on the capitalist society (WCED 1987). With a fundamental change in perspective it rather interpreted growth constraints as blockades of modernization in human development. From now on not absolute constraints, dependent on natural resources were discussed but relative constraints, linked with technological and social developments which could principally shift any societal constraints. „The concept of sustainable development does imply limits – not absolute limits but limitations imposed by the present state of technology and social organization on environmental resources [...]. But technology and social organization can both be

managed and improved to make way for a new era of economic growth” (WCED 1987: 8).

This different view also led to a new understanding of sustainable development. If the constraints of growth can be unsettled by technological and social innovations, an infinite economic growth is principally possible. What is more, economic growth assures societal progress. The former critical argument of the ‘constraints of growth’ shifted in the Brundtland Report to the immanent perspective of a ‘growth of constraints’. The quintessence of the new sustainable discourse is that sustainable development is the equivalent of sustainable growth (Dingler 2003: 243 ff.; Richter 2005: 267 ff.). It was a paradigmatic shift from the so-called sufficient approach which asked for the relinquishment to the so-called efficient approach with a focus on the effective use of resources and energy, deduction of emissions, closed circuits of waste. This technical-industrial pattern of thought pointed to a radical improvement in efficiency of all metabolic processes with nature (Huber 2001: 304 ff.).

The consequence of this strategy for the transport sector was denoted in the report to the Agenda 21, which was initiated 1992 at a conference in Rio de Janeiro. It starts from the assumption of further transport growth in the automotive sector which should be channeled in a sustainable way by certain technologies (BMU 1997: 70 ff.). Karl-Werner Brand and Georg Jochum (2000) see the paradigmatic shift of the sustainable discourse executed in the committee of inquiry ‘Schutz der Erdatmosphäre’ (protection of atmosphere) of the German Parliament. There the consequences of the paradigm shift of the sustainable discourse can be well studied. In the report ‘Mobility and Climate. Ways to a climate compatible transport policy’ the group of transport scientists following the old idea of sustainability were outnumbered by a majority vote (Enquete-Kommission 1994: 365 ff.).

The reformulating of the sustainability discourse expresses itself in the commitment to a mobile society which has to learn to live with transport growth. The amount of transport shall be moderated by rigorous arrangements in a climate compatible way. In contrast, the old prevention strategy of transport seemed to be outmoded. This strategic adjustment has dominated the sus-

tainable discourse until today and also causes a readjustment of transport policy (Bundesregierung 2004).

3.2 Sustainable transport development by sustainable transport growth

Because the central idea of an integrated transport policy aims for sustainable transport development, it was closely linked from the very beginning to the above-mentioned discourse about sustainability. Actually, in the transport sector, a similar paradigm change took place, as was shown for the discourse of sustainable development. At the end of the 1980s the critical approach of transport science was more and more forced to become defensive. It followed the paradigm of ‘constraints of growth’ and therefore advocated a reversal of transport development to treat resources with respect and avoid transport growth (Hesse 1993). On the other hand, the Ministry of Transport came up with the strategy of an integrated transport policy (BMV 1992a; 1992b). But like the discourse of sustainability, the proposition of an integrated transport policy initially unfolded its persuasive power during the 1990s (Beckmann 1992; 2002). A similar development took place in all member states of the European Union (Janik 2001). Until the 1990s the central idea of an integrated transport policy was advocated in nearly all member states and even implemented in national transport concepts.⁵ Finally the European Commission took over the central idea of an integrated transport policy as an action-guiding strategy in its White Paper for Transport (COM 2001).

The agenda of the European White Paper for Transport follows the central assumptions of the new discourse on sustainability. Economic and transport growth are not critically discussed but accepted and welcomed as a basis as well as a necessary con-

⁵ In 1998 the British Government released the white paper for transport ‘A New Deal for Transport: better for everyone’ (White Paper, 1998). In Germany in 2000 the Ministry of Transport released the ‘Verkehrsbericht 2000. Integrierte Verkehrspolitik, unser Konzept für eine mobile Zukunft’ (Report on Transport 2000. Integrated transport policy, our concept for a mobile future) (BMVBW 2000).

sequence of the European process of integration (COM 2001: 13 ff.). A mutual interrelation is drawn between the economic and transport growth in Europe. On the one hand, transport growth is followed by economic growth and, on the other hand, it is concluded that transport growth leads to more economic growth. Though the European White Paper asserts that in this context “we have to consider the option of gradually breaking the link between economic growth and transport growth” (COM 2001: 11), in this mutual build-up process a strategy of transport avoidance has no systematic point of contact. Rather, transport growth is expected as a necessary precondition for the desired economic growth. A sustainable transport development shall no longer be reached by transport avoidance but by the regulation of the expected growth processes. For instance, existing and expected future bottlenecks as a result of transport growth shall be extended because an overload of the transport system jeopardizes the competitiveness of the European economy (COM 2001: 12 ff.). From this point of view the job of an integrated transport policy is the mediation of transport growth in a sustainable sense of transport development. In the context of the European integration process, an integrated transport policy is concerned with the preconditions for a smooth flow of transport across all national borders to mobilize the Single European Market.⁶

3.3 Sustainable transport growth by an integrated transport policy

As was shown, the new scientific discourse of transport basically followed the paradigmatic shift of the sustainability discourse in gearing to sustainable growth. While the sustainability discourse equalized sustainable development with sustainable growth, the new scientific transport discourse put a sustainable transport development on the same level with sustainable transport growth.

⁶ The second European White Paper ‘Roadmap to a Single European Transport Area’ confirms this understanding of an integrated transport policy by no longer claiming to gradually break the link between economic growth and transport growth (COM 2011).

Moreover, the scientific transport discourse fulfills an additional function. While the sustainability discourse reconciles ecological sustainability and economic growth with the idea of sustainable growth, the central idea of an integrated transport policy further brings together the previously antagonistic principles of economic competition and political cooperation. As was demonstrated in a historical perspective, the central idea of an integrated transport policy failed again and again because of the competition between the different transport modes. A systematic link between the different transport modes was constantly thwarted by individual market and societal group interests. By adapting the logic of economic growth in the transport sector, the principal of competition again has to coalesce with procedures of political cooperation.

The study ‘Integrated Transport Policy’ ordered by the Ministry of Transport will bring together both principles of competition and cooperation in one coherent concept (Beckmann/Baum 2002). However at the starting point of the formulated strategy there are economic needs (ibid. 314). Thus, the well-known political-economic problem of the transport sector, the discrepancy between the political requirements for a sustainable transport development on the one side and the economic needs on the other side, are not clarified, but solved one-sidedly in favor of economic interests. Therefore, the integrated transport policy is linked with the new sustainability discourse. While striving for sustainable transport development with sustainable transport growth, the economy is assigned the highest importance. In consequence, other societal goals are subordinated to an industrial management point of view.

4 An intermediate summary – from slimming to beauty growth

The central idea of an integrated transport policy is the result of a paradigmatic scientific change (Kuhn 1978). The scientification of the central ideas partly explains its persuasiveness, but for a full understanding one has to situate the integrated transport poli-

cy in the context of the new sustainability discourse. The now hegemonic scientific transport discourse first follows the idea of a sustainable development through sustainable growth. By arguing for an increase in efficiency within the context of economic growth, it could appear as an ecologic path. Economic growth suddenly seemed to be able to disrupt the former growth constraints. The former external system boundaries are integrated into the system, so that they can be shifted by internal systemic innovations. Applied to the transport system, this perspective leads to a policy strategy of pursuing a sustainable transport development without restricting transport growth. An integrated transport policy shall organize a sustainable transport growth by internal system improvements.

With three arrangements an integrated transport policy will support an increased functional capability of the transport system: first, by the removal of frictions between different societal actors in the transport sector (social integration); second, by the avoidance of friction losses between the different political resorts (political integration); third, by promoting synergy effects between the different transport modes (technical integration). An integrated transport policy therefore pursues an increase of efficiency in the transport system with the objective of a sustainable transport growth: *transport policy as growth policy!*

Moreover the central idea of an integrated transport policy negates the factual contradiction between political cooperation, following from the claim of integration and economic competition, the basis of the growth paradigm. While in the conceptual context of an integrated transport policy both economics as well as policy focus on the common goal of economic growth, the virtual conflict of interests is lost in a common discursive strategy. Cooperation and Competition are forced together to form the artificial term 'Cooptition'. Therefore, it is consistent that questions of regulation which go beyond the common economic goal, like social or ecological dimensions of transport development, are usually ranked second. In other words: the strategy of sustainable transport growth of the central idea of an integrated transport policy, as core of the new hegemonic scientific trans-

port discourse, aims at the *economic integration of the transport sector*.

Even if the new hegemonic scientific transport discourse is outlined adequately, it is important to observe that alongside the described dominant position, differing scientific contributions exist. However, they are subordinated to the hegemonic discourse. This again clearly shows that hegemony is always the result of conflicts, arguments and struggles about dominance. By recognizing these competing alternatives, the absolute claim of the hegemonic discourse is put into question. That becomes apparent by regarding the agencies of the transport policy with their quite different programmatic orientations.

5 The agencies of transport policy and their position in the policy field

After the description of the paradigm shift of the sustainability transport discourse we are now faced with the question of how that could happen. Therefore it might be useful to get an idea of the configuration in the field of transport policy. For an impression of the opinion about an integrated transport policy in the policy field, 131 agencies were interviewed. Apart from the 27% who were unfamiliar with the concept, the remaining 73% supported the central idea of an integrated transport policy.

While, as far as is noted, the central idea of an integrated transport policy is widely accepted, the agencies connect quite different objectives with it. Thereby three integration strategies can be distinguished, which basically relate to the three pillars of the sustainability concept: an economic, social and ecological integration.⁷ After a presentation of the three integration strategies by weighting the particular societal influence, finally a comprehensive picture of the present sustainable strategy in the transport sector will be drawn.

⁷ For a better overview the most important representatives of each integration strategy were identified along the criteria of economic power (annual budget), societal representation (size of membership) as well as scientific reputation (citation index).

5.1 Economic Integration

Outstanding actors focused on a strategy of economic integration are the two trade associations, the Federation of German Industry (BDI) and the German Association of Chambers of Commerce and Industry (DIHT), the German Association of the Automotive Industry (VDA), the German Automobile Association (ADAC), the German building industry, represented by the Central Association of the German Building Trade (ZDB), and the Federation of the German Construction Industry (HDB) and, finally, the Institute of the German Economy (IW).

None of these associations argues against the central idea of an integrated transport policy. In his ‘Proposals for a Future Transport Policy’ the BDI refers even positively to the concept: “Beside a high-capacity infrastructure, fast, smooth and cheap mobility needs intermodal transport and cooperation in integrated transport chains” (BDI 2004: 11). The DIHK also welcomes the integration strategy but not without combining it with the warning that an integrated transport policy has to be in line with the market in the first place (DIHK 2003). The expert for transport at the DIHK, Patrick Thiele, put it even more bluntly: The patronage of the DIHK is neither interested in the abstract idea of an integrated transport policy, so Thiele, nor in sustainable transport policy. That does not mean the DIHK is against an environment-friendly transport development, but the special focus lies on transport problems and their effects on the economic development.⁸

This perception of the transport sector is very clearly formulated in the study ‘Mobility in 2020’ by the ADAC (ADAC 2003). It starts with the assumption of further transport growth in passenger as well as freight traffic from which, in both cases, the street will benefit most. With respect to freight traffic, the ADAC presumes a close connection between economic and transport growth which cannot be revoked: “Whoever politically asks for economic growth must necessarily accept growth in freight transport” (ADAC 2003: 13). Consequentially, the ADAC and the other mentioned actors are arguing against the strategy of

⁸ Telephone interview, September the 20th 2004.

shifting transport from the street to other modes. From their point of view, an integration strategy has to focus on the most important and, for the national economy, interesting mode: road traffic. Under the slogan ‘Growth needs Mobility’ (IHK/DIHK 1999) both trade associations have for a long time favored the expansion of road networks. It dominates a single modal perspective in favor of the road infrastructure which contradicts the intermodal philosophy of the Ministry of Transport. Integration here means the development of the road networks must be as closely meshed as possible. Therefore the image of an integration strategy by the VDA is reduced on a European-wide network of the automotive industry (IHK/DIHK 1999; ADAC 2003; VDA 2004; 2008).

The economic integration strategy is traditionally shaped by a supply approach aiming to eliminate transport frictions by building infrastructures with special emphasis on the road sector (ZDB/HDB et al. 2004). For the representatives, the expansion of transport infrastructure is a contribution towards sustainable transport development. They argue that the expansion of the road networks will eliminate congestion, thereby leading to a reduction in pollution. The so-called external costs of road transport are usually set off against the economic profit in a cost-benefit analysis and get no further attention. Instead the priority is set on efficient gains by technological innovations like energy-saving motors, which would result in a reduction of the depletion of natural resources and thus support a sustainable transport development. However, this kind of sustainable transport development based on technological innovation depends on a successful economic development which is economic growth. Because economic and transport growth are mutually conditioned, a sustainable transport development is closely connected with an economic growth path. From this perspective, sustainability and economically congruent transport growth are no longer in opposition to each other. Rather, a sustainable transport development depends on a successfully induced economically analogous transport growth.

In order to reach this goal the representatives of an economic integration strategy are explicitly setting on a withdrawal of political competence in favor of the private self-organization at the

market (BDI 2000). Particularly in the transport sector, it might be necessary to reduce the degree of government intervention to an acceptable extent (Fuest/Kroker/Schatz 2001).

In this regard the agencies of a social integration strategy have quite a different position.

5.2 Social Integration

The exemplary agencies who understand the central idea of an integrated transport policy mostly as a strategy of social integration are the German Trade Union Federation (DGB), the German Federation of Consumer Associations (vzbv), the German Federation of Central Municipal Associations (BKS), the Auto Club Europe (ACE) and the Friedrich Ebert Foundation (FES). The social integration strategy deals with the quality of life and encompasses the three issues labor/healthcare/safety, the question of an adequate mobility supply, and service features by the services of public interests.

In its 'Comprehensive Transportation Plan' of 1994 the DGB already argued for an integrated transport system and has confirmed this political strategy until today (DGB 1994; 2002). The social dimension of transport development is a special concern: "By setting the points in transport policy attention should be paid to the effects on labor conditions, employment and the social situation of employees" (DGB 1994: 40). Different to the agencies of an economic integration strategy, the representatives of a social integration strategy in pursuing social goals with transport development do not primarily count on dynamic market forces. In the transport sector, traditionally influenced by economical considerations, a regulatory policy has to be introduced in order to enable a reversal in transport policy. Otherwise a transport development with negative effects is expected: "By continuing the long lasting guiding principle in transport policy not to intervene and to accept transport growth as a direct consequence of economic growth as well as the choice of transport by the economy, and the people, would be totally irresponsible because of the to be expected disastrous development" (DGB 1994: 70; DGB 2002: 95). In contrast to the representatives of an economic inte-

gration strategy, sticking to transport growth prognoses, in this regard the agencies of a social integration strategy assume a self-fulfilling-prophecy. Therefore the DGB claims no longer to accept growth prognoses in the transport sector as an independent factor and accordingly expanding the road networks: “In the place of adjusting the road networks to the growing traffic flow, the principles of traffic reduction, relocation and optimization have to be implemented” (DGB 1994: 46).

The objections to one-sided economic cost-benefit-analyses of single enterprises are formulated with reference to recent negative experiences. In many cases in the past such a strategy not only led to a significant decline in working standards. Furthermore, beside punctual improvement in quality, the service of the transport enterprises was consistently affected. In analyzing the reform of the German railway from a consumer perspective, the vzbv to a large extent comes up with a negative performance (vzbv 2004: 42).⁹

In order to avoid this kind of quality loss, especially the Central Municipal Associations emphasize the necessity of political regulation in the transport sector (BKS 2001). Against the one-sided economic competitive strategy exhibited by the trade associations, political representatives on the local level argue in favor of political intervention in due consideration of general public interest (Städtetag 2001a: 12). Whoever guarantees a spatially inclusive and comprehensive basic transport offer, with high quality and secure social services, so the central argument, does not have the same capacity to compete as a private enterprise just pursuing a strategy of profit-making (BKS 2001: 4). Finally, municipalities warn against a restriction of sociopolitical arrangements in the transport sector in the course of economic deregulation (Städtetag 2001b: 4). Contrary to the economy arguing for a far-reaching market integration, municipalities, as consequence, fear social hardships.

⁹ In the meantime several incidences with the German railway Deutsche Bahn widely confirmed the problematic action of an enterprise which is solely focused on an initial public offering (Engartner 2008).

Accordingly, the agencies of a social integration strategy are all in agreement that transport policy must consider not only the economic integration but also the social dimension in the sense of providing a certain mobility standard for everyone to guarantee overall societal participation: “Mobility always needs social responsibility. Transport science and practice have to consider the needs of children, elderly and handicapped people much more. A general improvement and harmonization of the social standards in the transport sector have to be the political goal on the national and international level” (FES 2002: 5).

With respect to the argument of the representatives of a social integration strategy, a social point of view is not the quasi inevitable product of the economic integration of the transport sector. In fact, a future national accounting has to include not only the benefit of transport but also the so-called externalized costs, which have to be paid by society as a whole (DGB 1994; 1996; 1998; 2002). Not until the social (and ecological) dimension as a central theme is recognized will the externalized costs be noticed. Therefore, the agencies are calling for cost transparency in the transport sector to achieve fair prices (DGB 2002: 15). In this context special attention is paid to the working conditions of the employees in the transport sector. The economic restructuring of the transport sector under commercial criteria must not take place at the expense of the social standards from employees.

In circumscribing oneself from the strategy of the pure market integration, the agencies of a social integration strategy might come into conflict with the representatives of an ecological integration strategy. Because increased environmental costs must not be passed on at the expense of social conditions of the employees: “An internalization strategy of environmental costs has in any case to include as an inherent part of a comprehensive strategy the competitive conditions as well as safety and social regulations” (DGB 2002: 17).

The agencies of an ecological integration strategy in the transport sector are setting different priorities.

5.3 Ecological Integration

The following organizations can be considered as important representatives of an ecological integration strategy: Alliance for Environment and Nature Conservation (BUND), the environmental and conservation organizations Greenpeace, Robin Wood, the World Wildlife Found (WWF), the Research Facility Protestant Studies Community (FEST), the Transport Club Germany (VCD), as well as the Ecological Institute Fribourg and the Heinrich-Böll-Foundation (HBS). The starting point of the agencies is the transport related external costs (BUND 2000). In Germany alone they cover about 130 billion EURO per annum, respectively 8% of the GDP (INFRAS/IWW 2007). There the main polluter is road traffic (ifeu 1999).

Against this background, the agencies of an ecological integration strategy are pursuing an agenda of about four points which partially differ fundamentally from the economic integration strategy, while they correspond to a large extent with the propositions of the camp of a social integration strategy. *First*, they ask for an optimization of the transport system. At that point the economic and the ecological integration strategy are most similar. Both aim at a more environmentally protective usage of natural resources by technological innovations to decrease the polluting emissions. *Second*, the representatives of an ecological integration strategy are asking for a modal shift, which appears unrealistic from the perspective of an economic integration strategy. Passenger transport as well as freight transport on the road should be restricted in favor of rail- and waterways. *Third*, in the context of an ecological integration strategy a transport reduction is envisaged. In contrast to the economic integration philosophy of an inseparable connection between economic and transport growth, which makes transport restrictions inconceivable, the agencies of an ecological integration strategy claim to uncouple economic and transport growth analogous to the partly successful uncoupling of economic and energy growth. *Fourth*, finally the ecologic integration philosophy questions economic growth in itself (Greenpeace/DIW 1999). With respect to past experience showing efficiency gains consumed by economic growth, the

central insight is that a sustainable transport development on the basis of a growth economy is not possible.

Therefore the amount of the GDP can no longer be the only criteria for societal wealth because it does not integrate the ecological damages resulting from economic and transport growth (Bode 1999: 167).¹⁰ For this reason, the FEST developed an alternative indication system for a national sustainability strategy which intends to further develop economic and environmental accounting (FEST 2004). In contrast to the national sustainability strategy of the German Government which takes an increasing amount of passenger-kilometers as a positive indicator for the GDP and, therefore, a contribution to an economically sustainable development, FEST proposes a different calculation. The idea is to take the passenger cars per 1,000 inhabitants as an indicator for an environmentally and socially compatible transport development. The permanent increase in passenger cars would no longer be valued positively as part of the gross value, but as a permanent increase of ecological damage. The same applies with respect to freight transport which in an overall estimation will no longer appear as a mere contribution to economic growth. Instead, one would have to distinguish for instance between freight transport on the road, which is the most damaging, and on the rail (FEST 2004: 32). From this perspective the representatives of an ecological integration strategy come to an overall negative judgment of recent transport developments (Presseerklärung 16.09.2004).¹¹

In a study, the Ecological Institute Freiburg and the VCD developed a positive future scenario (Cames et al. 1998; Cames et al. 2004). The so-called MOVE-scenario is based on the assumption of a fundamental shift in transport policy and includes different measures like technological innovations, a modal shift from road to rail and the prevention of transport. A special focus

¹⁰ In 2011 the Enquete Commission on “Growth, Welfare, Lifequality – Ways to a Sustainable Economy and Social Progress in the Social Market Economy” of the German Bundestag started its work to find better growth indicators for the future calculation of societal wealth.

¹¹ To a similar statement with respect to the European transport development, see (COM 2007).

lies on the public transport which should be systematically encouraged (Bölke 2005; HBF 2009). Apart from positive environmental effects, the representatives of an ecological integration strategy also expect new jobs in the public transport service sector. Hence, a certain affinity with the representatives of a social integration strategy exists.

5.4 Topography of the stakeholder configuration

The above described agencies in the field of transport policy with their different positions can be situated in a policy field spanned between two axes. On a horizontal axis, two fundamentally different strategic orientations can be distinguished on both-ends, a techno-oriented and an eco-oriented. On a vertical axis again, one can distinguish between two extreme positions, a liberal economic orientation on the one side, and an orientation at an egalitarian society on the other. At the point of intersection, the central idea of an integrated transport policy with its procedural-integrative concept can be located. It is virtually the centre of gravitation from where the agencies with their specific interests and strategic orientations circling around more or less distant.¹²

First of all, the agencies allocation makes clear that the representatives of an economic integration strategy concentrate in the top left-hand corner of the diagram, which is defined by an orientation at market-driven technological innovations. On the other side, bottom right-hand corner the representatives of the social and ecological integration strategy are allocated. This field of activity is characterized by a politically strategic alignment at the idea of an equitable and ecological society. The Ministry of Transport, Housing and Urban Development (BMVBS) as the representative of the central idea of an integrated transport policy is situated in the center of this area of conflict. On the one hand, it has the task of balancing the centrifugal forces generated by the different interests. On the other hand the Ministry itself is an ex-

¹² Please note: this is a representative selection, the whole sample covers 131 agencies in the field of transport policy. See the complete list in (Schöller 2006: 123 ff.)

pression of the configuration of social power structures in the policy field of transport.

A weighting of the presented actors gives a first hint why the integrated transport policy followed programmatically by the BMVBS, is dominated by a technologically-economic viewpoint. It is obvious that the agencies of the particular integration strategy have very different resources at their disposal. For instance, the trade associations (BDI/DIHT) are represent about 100,000 companies with approximately 3 Mio. entrepreneurs.¹³ The BDI has an environment division with nine employees working on nearly every aspect of environmental policy. A special transport division is staffed with three employees. In contrast, the DGB, as representative of the social integration strategy, has 7 Mio. members.¹⁴ The topic of environmental policy lies in the hands of one person. A special transport division does not exist. Even more modest is the standing of the central representative of an ecological integration strategy BUND with 390,000 members and an annual return of 13 Mio. EUR. A similar picture appears with respect to the car/transport clubs of the particular integration strategy. With the ADAC the economic integration strategy also dominates the field of transport policy. With roughly 15 Mio. members and an annual return of about 1.5 Bn. EUR it possesses more resources than the ACE (550,000 members and 75 Mio. annual return) and the VCD (65,000 members and 2.5 Mio. annual return) together.

In addition to the obvious imbalance of power between the representatives of the economic integration strategy, which are directing significantly more resources than the representatives of the social and ecological integration strategy together, the latter do not represent a unified position in contrast to the economic integration philosophy. Moreover, there are certain reservations between the agencies of the social and the ecologic integration perspective. Because of the different emphasis on the social conditions on the one side and the careful exposure to nature on the

¹³ The business volume is even on multiple requests not available.

¹⁴ As in the case of the trade associations the business volume is not available.

other side, a structural stress ratio results, which asserts itself in the political workaday life. That is the reason why a collaboration is difficult. Therefore, we have to accept three fractions dominated by one of them.

What makes it even more problematic is the relative weak standing of the Confederation of German Trade Unions (DGB) particular in the transport sector. As consequence of a mostly nonexistent organizational co-operation between the single unions in the field of transport policy in combination with the divergence in substance, the DGB is not really able to act as a strong corrective to the economic fraction. Whereas between the single unions at best a sporadic communication about the activities in the field of transport policy takes place, with respect to important topics like railway reform, commuter compensation, and home-owner credit, to some extent serious deviations exist. To date, this has prevented a common transport strategy. Also the attempt of an inner union integration to increase the strategic power by the foundation of the United Services Union (Ver.di), was of limited success. By means of single unions with divergent standpoints particularly in the transport sector and a union reform oriented on traditional industries, an inner union fragmentation dominates and becomes notable in labor policy conflicts (Plehwe 2001).

What follows from this constellation is a power imbalance in favor of the economic integration strategy, corresponding with a missing public resonance of the social and ecologic dimension in the field of transport policy. What is worse, the inner union situation in the area of public relations is as unclear as the field of transport policy. "The organizational confusion characterizing the integration of editorial office, advertising and press office attests, that an inner logic of action in public relations either is not seen or not followed" (Arlt 1998, 194; also Prott 2003). This is demonstrated in the membership of the Deutsches Verkehrsforum, which for many years has been one of the most important committees in the field of transport policy, and where the unions are not yet represented.

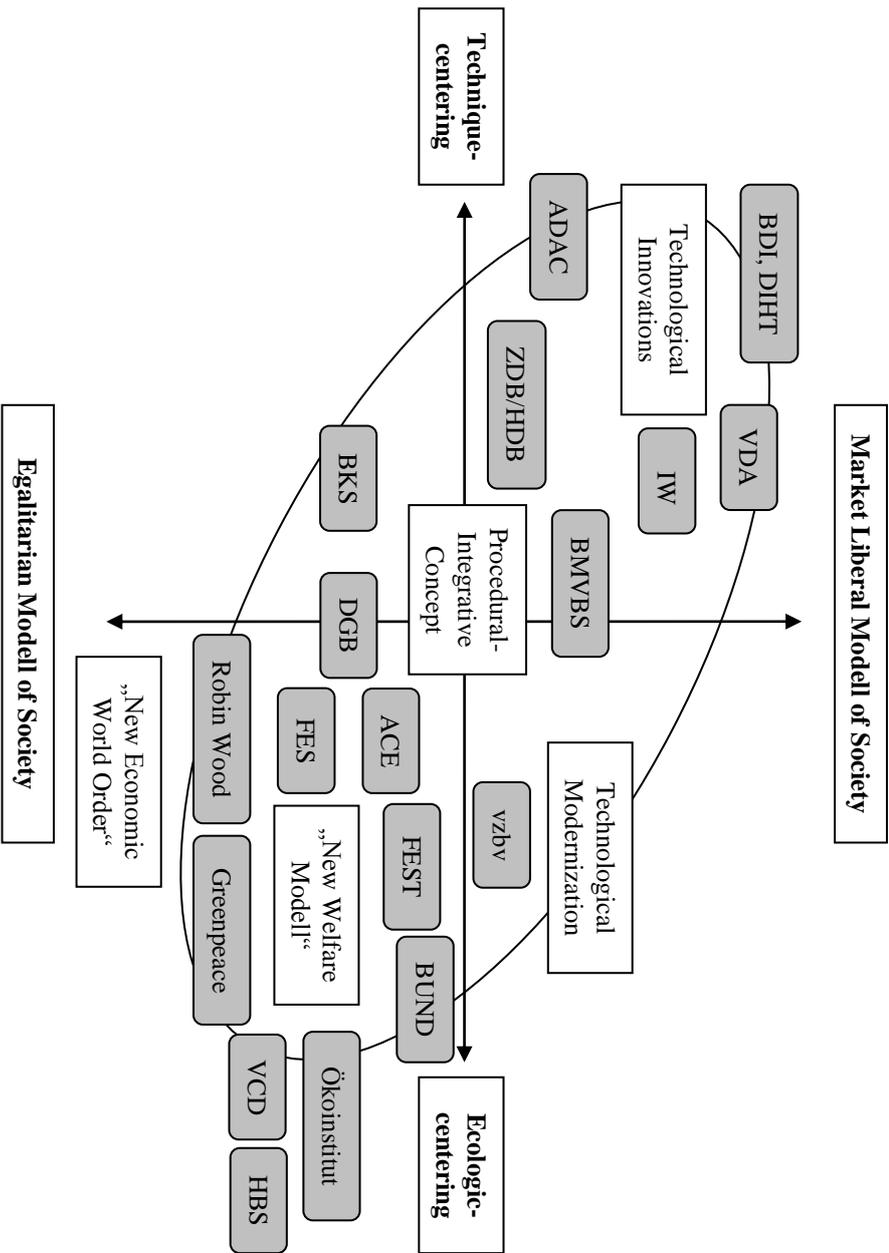


Fig. 1: The configuration of actors in the transport policy sphere of influence

Federation of German Industry (BDI), German Association of Chambers of Commerce and Industry (DIHT), German Association of the Automotive Industry (VDA), German Automobile Association (ADAC), German building industry, represented by the Central Association of the German Building Trade (ZDB), and the Federation of the German Construction Industry (HDB), Institute of the German Economy (IW), German Trade Union Federation (DGB), German Federation of Consumer Associations (vzbv), German Federation of Central Municipal Associations (BKS), Auto Club Europe (ACE), Friedrich Ebert Foundation (FES), Alliance for Environment and Nature Conservation (BUND), the environmental and conservation organizations Greenpeace, Robin Wood, the World Wildlife Fund (WWF), Research Facility Protestant Studies Community (FEST), Transport Club Germany (VCD), Ecological Institute Fribourg, Heinrich-Böll-Foundation (HBS).

Source: Own illustration according to *Bryand/Joachim 2000*

6 Conclusion – From central idea to puzzle picture

The debates in the field of transport policy in the first half of the 1990s were characterized by an all societal actors encompassing atmosphere of departure. The political ecology criticized the negative ecological and social effects of a one-sided transport development in favor of the car. A far reaching societal consensus could be established, questioning this unsustainable transport development. It seemed that the car had reached its limit of acceptance and the end of the automobile age was widely postulated (Canzler/Knie 1994). Even the German automotive industry was captured by this wave of protest and questioned their own role as solely being car manufacturers. They were reflecting a change to a mobility provider and discussed this even with their strongest critics (Vester 1990; Berger/Servatius 1994).¹⁵

The intention was a reorientation to the public transport and a shift from the street to the rail. Increasingly, the societal benefit of further transport growth was questioned and resulted in a plea for a reduction in traffic. The close connection between economic and transport growth was no longer accepted but claimed a decoupling. It was distinguished between mobility and traffic whereas nobody wanted to be the first to quit. Finally the growth paradigm as such was questioned. Because even a decoupling of economic and transport growth would not lead to a sustainable transport development without a real break with transport growth. This political debate in the transport sector culminated in the first half of the 1990s in the claim for a so-called ‘transport turn’ (Hesse 1993).

In the second half of the 1990s the ambitious project of a transport turn adopted the central idea of an integrated transport policy. A crucial role in this strategic reorientation of the transport policy debate was played by the sustainability discourse which had already started with the programmatic of the Brundtland-Report 1987. The opponents of the political ecology ap-

¹⁵ The most famous example was the CEO of Ford Germany, Daniel Goeudevert, who charged the futurologist Frederic Vester developing a scenario of future transport development and the role of the automotive industry (Vester 1995: 9).

proach realized its relevance for a strategic shift of the sustainability discourse. Particularly for economic scientists supporting a liberal market, the Brundtland-Report opened up new perspectives: “The widening of the target field of the Brundtland-Report and the consensus concepts picking it up, like the three-pillow-model of the Committee of Enquiry (1998), enabled a break with the arrogant and totally inflexible ecological dictates” (Willeke 2000: 22). Accordingly the breakthrough of a neoliberal reformulation of sustainable development was reconstructed by Jörg Tremmel: “With the publication of the concepts of the Committee of Enquiry 1998, the ecological fraction began to lose its discourse dominance” (Tremmel 2003: 149).

It was shown, that in the policy field of transport a similar shift of power relations took place. In the transport sector the situation with respect to the central idea of an integrated transport policy appears quite similar as Holger Rogall (2003) described it for the central idea of sustainable development. All agencies are basically in favor, but with a more precise view to the particular goals, considerable differences come to light: “In considering the threat of the natural resources, the majority of the actor groups are not willing to draw adequate conclusions. It is obvious that the indirect as well as the direct actors are concentrating more on making a symbol-policy rather than a solving-policy. Partially (e.g. parts of the economy) sustainability is defined thus the quintessence of sustainability is turned upside down. Accordingly, the economic development should not be carried out within the constraints of the environmental realm but rather, the protection of the environment within the economic compatible” (Rogall 2003: 295).

The discrepancy between the convictions and actions with respect to the sustainability discourse, as well as to the integrated transport policy, can be explained by the actors’ understanding of the necessity to cultivate the image by symbol-policy (Cheney et al. 2004). This practice does not even particularly cover the camouflage of real interests. What is interesting in this regard, is that certain agencies like the automotive industry, are convinced that they do not need this kind of symbol-policy with respect to

an integrated transport policy.¹⁶ The reason might be that they do not feel under public pressure.¹⁷ That again illustrates the societal function of the central idea of an integrated transport policy. Following Eblinghaus and Stickler (1996) a formal and a substantial level can be distinguished: On the one hand, in the diffuse formal concept of the central idea, everyone can find themselves again. On the other hand, with regard to contents, the substantial definition of the concept integrated transport policy by the involved actors, imparted considerably with the disposal of societal power resources. Quintessentially, it manifests a struggle for interpretative authority.

In pursuing a strategy of harmony, by negating factual conflicts of interest and therefore existing unequal power relations, the central idea of an integrated transport policy performs an ideological function. What Hartwig Berger stated about the sustainability discourse as such, is particularly true for the integrated transport policy, aiming at a sustainable transport development: “The recent sustainability discourse compared to the former ecological movement does not differ in a broader scope, but in postponing the radical challenges and weakening the strong impulses for structural societal change the ecological movement once brought on the agenda. Not criticism and conflict but consensus and communication are central terms of the sustainability discourse. The postulation to initiate change by and in consensus with all participants – an axiom of the most Agenda 21 activities – quickly leads to a down play of different allocations of power and social prestige and even more conflicts of interests. Therefore the sustainability discourse is a comfortable impertinence to power elites” (Berger 2003: 19). In other words, the central idea of an integrated transport policy serves as an instrument for the subordination of competing discourses in favor of a neoliberal transport strategy. This is reflected in the central message of the ruling discourse, transport growth drives economic growth.

¹⁶ Neither the three questioned automobile companies (VW, BMW, Daimler AG) nor the German Association of the Automotive Industry would or could say something to the central idea.

¹⁷ Some observers believe that is changing right now because of the crises in the automotive industry. The author is more skeptical about it.

Apart from the unequal power relations in the field of transport policy, the dilemma of sustainable transport development is characteristically considered as a “publicly, indivisible property”, which barely is recognized. Such general interests, concerning everybody, lack the motivation of organization. “That is why in a highly organized society just these unorganizable and conflict resolute interests are hard to politicize” (Vieler 1986: 191). If however one would stick to the idea of an integrated transport policy committed to the public weal of a sustainable transport development, to date underestimated transport policy would have to be enhanced. Transport policy should no longer remain a playing field of economic vicissitudes, but be understood as an important dimension of societal policy and therefore get a stronger voice in the political chorus (Schöllner 2007).

To achieve this objective, finally, three constitutive steps are proposed.

First, a political-economic foundation of the sustainability theory has to be established. The sustainability discourse, often criticized as being vague, should for the transport sector be specified in the sense of a coequality of economic, social and ecologic goals. A prior goal could be to commemorate basic scientific insights in the transport sector which have gotten lost in the neoliberal backlash during the last 20 years. These could include fundamental comprehensives which would revoke the plausibility of a transport policy, fixed on eliminating congestion and the traffic flow philosophy. Still on the agenda is a politicization of the transport sector, which for decades was ineffectively pursued by the central idea of an integrated transport policy. In fact, such a project is contradictory to the actual main tendency in societal development and particularly in the transport sector, the commodification of politics.

Second, after the first step of scientific inventory and self-assurance, a clearly defined transport policy has to be developed. To start with the political-economic illuminated social configurations of power in the field of transport policy, the central challenge will be to address and announce the conflicts with a clear strategy of transport policy. Because, if the future task is an understanding of sustainable transport development as “publicly,

indivisible property”, transport policy has to be more negotiated in public than has been the case up to now, in order to achieve a new significance in public opinion.

Third, at that point and against the background of the unequally distributed resources of power in the transport sector, the question arises, how another discourse shift can be reached in favor of a sustainable transport development. In this regard it should be stressed that at no time should economic power be transferred into political power. Rather, economic power is always more or less breached by politics. It depends on the societal balance of power how far the political influence reaches. Thus, after the scientific self-assurance and development of a consistent transport policy program, one has to think about a strategic alliance to win hegemony in transport policy. Although the relevance of an integrated transport policy for a sustainable transport development can be scientifically justified, the political will is decisive.

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