Towards a Typology of Discourses in Mobility and Development Governance

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Introduction

What can we learn from *discourses* in creating new state spaces for transport governance and development? Lessons from vehicle sharing and physical infrastructure-building

- Priorities in development agenda and transport policy tools
- Understanding the role of discourses in policy
- Symbolic capital of infrastructure building
- The system of automobility and vehicle sharing
- Typology of discourses on urban/regional political economy
Development agenda and transport policy tools

Development agenda
- Economic growth
- Sustainability
- Sustainable Development
- Inclusion

Transport policy tools
- Infrastructure-building
- Pricing
- Alternative fuels and technologies
- Market segmentation
Political complexities and transport policy

- Government – structures of the state and **formal institutions**
- Governance – how governmental and nongovernmental organisations work together, and to the ways in which **political power** is distributed (Goodwin, 2009)
- Policy - a series of intentionally coherent decisions or activities taken or carried out by different public actors whose resources, institutional links and **interests** vary, with a view to resolving a problem... politically defined as collective in nature. (Knoepfel et al., 2007)
- Criticism: transport policy-making based on instrumental rationality isolating politics and policy treating **political complexity** as an exogenous factor (Macmillen, 2013)
- Governance brings together mobility politics and policy together to solve **messy** problems (Ney, 2009)
Discourses, political interests and institutions

- The normative transport policy analysis is dismissing *what is actually happening* (i.e. pricing strategies does not necessarily work towards sustainability)
- Studying only politics and economics of it is inadequate to indicate *what should be done* (i.e. the roles of Transport for London and Department for Transport)
- Emerging political constraints in addition to resource and physical constraints – technological and infrastructural innovations to be complemented by policy innovations
- Bringing together urban/regional political economy and policy analysis through discourses/ideas

*Kern (2011) Relationship between discourse, interests and institutions*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>New discourse reflects existing interests</th>
<th>New discourse and existing institutions are mutually supportive</th>
<th>New discourse challenges existing institutions</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Little of no policy change</td>
<td>Policy change in line with new discourse</td>
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<tr>
<td>Path-dependent evolution of policies</td>
<td>Radical policy changes</td>
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<td>New discourse transforms existing interests</td>
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Transport infrastructure investments and development agenda

- Transport investment necessary and/or sufficient? (Banister and Berechman, 2001)
- WB: Development should be regarded as a 3-D object comprised of distance, density and division – transport infrastructure in under-developed regions
- National Infrastructure Plans of the EU Member states – institutional support
Symbolic capital of infrastructure building

- “Politicians love roads...” (Vickerman, 2011)
- Jefferson’s Civilising Rails in 1920s and ideal-typical sequence model applied in the Middle East (Kolar, 1960)
- **Political-economic interests**: mega transport infrastructure projects may be used to symbolise political power
- Mega-transport infrastructure projects as organic phenomena, i.e. how to define success/failures and unclear objectives (OMEGA Project)
  - Long-term vision and the current discourses in the political opposition and media
  - Costs matter only in today’s world
- Political rational versus economic rationality (Flyvbjerg, 2001) – the power context – discourses change as a result of political rationality
The case of vehicle sharing

Product component (Ownership)

- Private ownership
- Car pooling
- Car leasing
- Car rental
- Car sharing

Service component (Sharing)

- London car club market is the largest in Europe
- 3-4 companies
- Marginal businesses, but growing with key players

- London cycle hire scheme in 2011
- Paris cycle scheme used as an example
- Urban design issues with the London Boroughs
### The system of automobility in London

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Political-economic actors and individual subjectivity</th>
<th>Discourse</th>
<th>London car clubs</th>
<th>London cycle hire scheme</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ownership</td>
<td>Anti-capitalism/ Neoliberalism/ Environmentalism/ Collaborative consumption</td>
<td>Practical reasons including parking space, but also social identity and subjectivity – started as a result of community-led projects</td>
<td>Practical reasons including parking space and theft</td>
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<tr>
<td>Individual convenience / Independence and autonomy</td>
<td>Rationality / Individualism</td>
<td>Car club consumers as ‘rational consumers’</td>
<td>Increased urban populations and integrated urban mobilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business models</td>
<td>Sustainable business or the long-term vision</td>
<td>Big players in the market - Mobility providers instead of car manufacturers</td>
<td>The White Bikes defines the features for the future business models (same colour/coin-operating system)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Political convenience and popularity                  | Sustainable development / Peak car argument/ urban life and congestion | CarPlus accreditation system , TfL and DfT all favour the industry, but facing parking difficulties – new laws/actors required | • Flagship policy of Boris Johnson  
• Policy mobility from Paris Velib |
Towards typology of discourses in transport governance

**Hard measures** (i.e. infrastructure building)

- Strong existing institutions
  - Political-economic interests
    - Public discourse

**Soft measures** (i.e. vehicle sharing)

- Public discourse and community-led projects
  - Business interests
    - Political/public discourse

**Physical change**

**Industrial Change**

Existing institutions struggle to adopt – need for policy mobilities and new actors
Conclusions and future research

- There is room for transport and development governance to learn from the relationships between (public and political) discourse, (political and business) interests and the formal institutions.
- The system innovations literature provide a typology of the three political economic element to inform the outcome of policies.
- But, it is also possible to bring a temporal perspective into how these three elements change given the type of political interventions.
- Policies based on public discourse have the potential to bring about more structural, i.e. industrial changes.
- Future research:
  - A detailed mega infrastructure project analysis
  - Other soft measures like awareness campaigns and social movements can be examined under the same typology.
Thank you for listening.

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