

Unintended consequences of participatory instruments

The politics of airport planning in
Paris and Berlin during the 1990s

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Introduction:

An instrument surrounded by strong scepticism

- This type of policy instrument refers to the development of what is generally called “audience democracy” or “democracy of opinion” (Lascoumes, Le Galès, 2007: 12)
 - ➔ Their main purpose is to explain contested decisions and increase public authorities’ accountability.
 - ➔ They are never completely new and they usually draw on devices, which had been introduced in similar sectoral or institutional contexts.
 - ➔ They are characterized by their diversity in terms of legal status, objectives and constraining effects on decision-makers.

- Yet, under certain conditions, they foster the emergence of original mechanisms of interests' integration and representation
 - ➔ They disrupt existing decision-making structures through the opening of relatively autonomous public spaces in the political sphere, which are traditionally based on representation.
 - ➔ They are characterized by rules and norms, which constrain all parties involved to adapt their strategies and behaviours if they make the choice to play by the rules.

Their analysis offers an opportunity to identify the mechanisms under which public decision is produced and legitimated in a context of evolving relations between restructuring States and fragmented societies.

Theoretical Background:

Why is the notion of unintended consequences relevant for the analysis of participatory instruments?

- To consider the impact of a conflict on decision-making structure, and more specifically on the set of informal and formal rules and procedures, which frame decision-making and implementation.
- To address some methodological issues (R. Merton, 1936):
 - The integration of both formally organized and unorganized purposive actions into a coherent system of action.
 - To identify the constraints on collective action in order to analyze collective choices.

Outline

1. Research design
2. The projects developed in the 1990s to extend the French and the German national airport capacity
3. Conflicts as the result of the weakening of the territorial dimension of airport planning.
4. Participatory instruments as a way to unlock processes, which had been blocked for many years?
5. Conclusive remarks

Some elements of method:

the notion of public decision to question the relationship between policies and politics

- Public decision as the product of the relationship between institutional and political variables.
 - ➔ Objective = to take into account all actors who associate their fate with the decision-making process (policy insiders vs. policy outsiders)
- A diachronic approach to analyze the impact of social and political conflicts on decision-making structures in a long-term perspective.
 - ➔ Objectives = 1) to identify the constraining effects of wanted or unwanted irreversibilities on collective action; 2) to identify individual and collective learning processes

- A dynamic approach of public decision in order to link together the evolution of actors, institutions and representations.
- A comparative analysis of the conflicts which developed around the extension of international airports in Europe
 - Strategic infrastructures under similar territorial, sectoral and political constraints in all European States
 - Different forms of interests' integration and representation in two restructuring institutional and political systems (France / Germany) and two capital-cities (Paris / Berlin), in which tradition forms of government are weakened.

Extending the national airport system in France and Germany in the early 1990s

The incentive to extend the national airport system is based in both countries on technical and economical criteria:

- to face the rapid growth of international air traffic in a short- (2000) and a long term (2030) perspective.
- To ensure the competitiveness of the national airport system at the international and the European levels
- To support the creation of hub-and-spokes structures by national flag carriers

Table 1:
**Long term forecasts on air traffic growth in the main
 European hub airports and Berlin**

| Airports | Passengers (in millions) in 1993 | Estimations on air traffic development in a long-term perspective (passengers in millions) |
|---|---|---|
| London - Heathrow (UK) | 47,9 | 80 (2015) |
| Frankfurt a/Main (Germany) | 32,5 | 53 (2010) |
| Paris - Charles de Gaulle (France) | 26,1 | 60 (2005) |
| Amsterdam - Schiphol (the Netherlands) | 21,3 | 50 (2015) |
| Berlin (all airports) (Germany) | 9,8 | 30 (2010) |
| International air traffic | 1.250 | 2.500 (2005) |

Source: Assembled by the Author on the basis of a study presented by Berlin's Chamber of Trade and Industry (Halpern, 2006: 374)

Table 2a:

The projects' main features before the conflicts

| | Project leader | Project location | Projected features |
|---------------------------------------|--|--|---|
| French national airport system | Aéroports de Paris (with the support of Air France) | Extension of an existing airport: Paris - Charles de Gaulle | <ul style="list-style-type: none">•3 additional runways and terminals•120 millions of passengers in 2015,•no curfew |
| German national airport system | Lufthansa | Construction of a new airport | <ul style="list-style-type: none">•6 runways,•60 millions of passengers in 2030,• no curfew |

Conflicts as the result of the weakening of the territorial dimension of airport planning

In both countries, the capacity of national sectoral actors to mobilize collectively in order to design and promote their solution to all issues related to the development of air transport is weakened:

- Long-term effects of the deregulation of international air traffic, of the liberalization of the civil aviation sector, of the development of an autonomous European air transport policy.
 - National States undergoing major restructuring processes (decentralization / Reunification).
- ➔ Impact on airport planning: it increases the number of opportunities for some actors to challenge the preferences of sectoral actors and to block decision-making through politisation mechanisms.

Participatory instruments as a way to unlock processes, which had been blocked for many years?

| | Paris – Charles de Gaulle | Berlin Brandenburg International |
|--|--|---|
| Legal status | Informal (based on the experience developed in the rail and the road sectors) | Formal (public inquiry, environmental impact assessment procedure) |
| Objective | To channel various territorially-based interests | To confer a legal status to a decision based on political criteria |
| Resources (financial, knowledge, staff) | Extraordinary | Scarce |
| Coercive dimension | Non-binding | Binding |
| Impact on actors' behaviours | Commitment to the debates among a majority of actors | Boycott of the debates by a majority of actors |
| Impact on the project | Political solution ➔ Close to initial project | Judicial decision ➔ Remote from the initial project |

Table 2b:

The projects' main features after the conflicts

| | Project leader | Project location | Projected features |
|--------------------------------|---|--|--|
| French national airport system | Aéroports de Paris (with the support of Air France) | Extension of an existing airport: Paris - Charles de Gaulle | <ul style="list-style-type: none">•2 additional runways and terminals•80 millions of passengers in 2015,•no curfew |
| German national airport system | The German federal government, the Länder of Berlin and Brandenburg | Extension of an existing airport: Berlin - Schönefeld | <ul style="list-style-type: none">•1 additional runway,•30 millions of passengers in 2030,• extended night curfew |

Conclusive remarks (1)

- Specific combinations of participatory instruments and formal planning procedures foster conflict resolution.
- Participatory instruments are never completely new, and their origin matters, especially in regards with the level of politisation of the conflict.
- Their main features structure the strategy developed by interested parties (Commitment / Boycott).
- They influence the parameters of undergoing processes of change within the civil aviation sector (engineers vs. managers).

Conclusive remarks (2)

- Measuring the consequences of participatory instruments on decision-making processes, which had been blocked for many years:
 - In view of the objectives initially assigned by public authorities?
 - ➔ Compensate for the project's negative side effects or question its legitimacy?
 - In view of their capacity to channel all mobilizations ?
 - ➔ Never completely successful, since other action repertoires (protest, lobbying) are simultaneously mobilized in order to influence the final decision.
 - In view of their legal formalization?
 - In view of their impact on sectoral institutional arrangements and on decision-making structures?

Chronology 1:

The development of the Paris - Charles de Gaulle Airport

- 1945 Creation of Aéroports de Paris, a state-owned organization responsible for all civil aerodromes located in the Ile-de-France Region.
- 1957 Launching of the Paris – Charles de Gaulle Airport project by Aéroports de Paris.
- 1965 Publication of the Strategic Plan for the Paris Region
- 1974 The Paris – Charles de Gaulle Airport is brought into operation, a second runway is added in 1982.
- 1985 Law restricting the development of areas surrounding aerodromes.
- 1991 Launching of the extension project of the Paris – Charles de Gaulle Airport by Aéroports de Paris.
- 1993 First phase of the public enquiry, which involves municipal governments.
- 1994 Publication of the Strategic Plan for the Ile-de-France Region; First *ad hoc* consultation procedure (Mission Fève).
- 1995 Second *ad hoc* consultation procedure (Mission Douffiagues).
- 1997 Public decision on the extension of the Paris – Charles de Gaulle Airport.

Chronology 2:

The development of the Berlin - Schönefeld Airport

- 1955 The Berlin – Schönefeld Airport is opened to civil air traffic by the Soviet authorities. It becomes the GDR's major airport.
- 1971 Federal Law on protection against aircraft noise.
- 1990 German Reunification.
- 1991 Launching of the Berlin Brandenburg International Airport project by Lufthansa.
- 1994 Environmental Impact Assessment Procedure on the location of the Berlin Brandenburg International Airport: Berlin – Schönefeld is not considered as a suitable location.
- 1996 The German federal Government and the Governments of the Länder of Berlin and Brandenburg publish the so-called consensual decision: the future airport will be built through the extension of the Berlin – Schönefeld Airport.
- 1998 First phase of the public enquiry, which involves municipal governments.
- 2001 Second phase of the public enquiry, which involves public auditions.
- 2004 Public decision on the extension of the Berlin – Schönefeld Airport.
- 2006 Judicial decision on the extension of the Berlin – Schönefeld Airport: no agreement on a financial scheme, Lufthansa has opted-out and negotiations are currently taking place in order to extend the Frankfurt am Main Airport.