

Deliberation and Participation



Global
Urban
Research
Unit

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Current practice

- ‘instrumental’ i.e. ‘box-ticking’, approach to public involvement dominant?
 - *governance of transport systems remains in many instances a technocratic exercise that is strongly driven by technical expertise, exclusionary in that only a subset of stakeholders is involved, and organized in a top-down manner. As a result, the structural bias toward determinism, instrumental rationality, and technology push continues to be reproduced continually.*” (Banister et al 2011: 265)
- Why?
 - Jon Ploger’s ‘ignorance of potential’?
 - Path dependence?
 - Cynicism as to possibilities of participation [based on past experience of poorly designed practice]?

Engagement types [Bishop 2013]

- Information giving
- Information gathering
- Consultation
- Bounded dialogue
- Open dialogue

Why encourage participation?

- [Re]invigorate local democracy
- Input local knowledge
- Garner and shape opinions and **values** => agenda setting
- Closing implementation deficits through engagement in policy aims, problem setting and problem solving, and actions.
- Can be quicker to implementation!?

How best to do it

- No recipe book
- A skill in itself- where is it learnt- for planners, for engineers? Education and/ or on the job? To what extent can the 'how to' knowledge be codified?
- Need to match engagement methods [of which there are an infinite number!] to stage of the process and what aims for the exercise i.e. wide and shallow; narrow and deep [deliberation]

Pitfalls

- Done badly worse than not at all?
- Matching methods to what is required and when requires a degree of experience and judgement to identify wide and shallow or deep and narrow
- The difficulties for many, citizens especially, of seeing beyond 'business as usual' [can be overcome but requires committed engagement and thus resources]

Ways forward

- Broadening / reframing the question through deliberation is often useful as this:
 - unites problem-setting and problem solving [Schon]
 - Can allow for a focus on the needs of places as well as flows
 - Open up discussion of the [unequal] politics of time
 - Allows for the emotive and affectual to be considered alongside technical knowledge
- More practically: deliberate with community 'nodes, look for early wins, experiential knowledge useful
- A multiple epistemology of knowledge forms, not integration? Think NATA not BCA?!
- In turn requires changes in officer and politician attitudes [they are there to allow the best decision to emerge; not take the best decision]