

Concluding Remarks

To conclude transport infrastructure develops over time, space and scale in patterns that seem to revolve over time. Shifts between organizations in the public sector and by private sector actors are a recurring theme. As the scale and scope of transport infrastructure changes it is also the case that ownership-control and financing (and planning) takes new forms but mostly in waves between centralization/governmentalization as altered by decentralization/privatization. Over time there is an alternative to strategic infrastructure planning, that is being organized as public-sector activities (only).

Openings for decentralized spontaneous market orderings is an alternative that has been discussed in the literature and of which there are numerous examples in reality, based on proprietary rights. These alternatives seem to offer a variety of local solutions and learning processes at many different levels in society. Ideas and themes from the discussion on multi-level governance seem to come close to these alternatives. The knowledge problem, which is inherent in centralized decision structures, perhaps particularly in the public sector, also seems likely to handle with measures like these to some extent. Reforms within the public sector primarily focused on reorganization at new spatial levels might

though, without an understanding of the planning potentials at different spatial levels, result in new government failures.

The two current different development strategies in the EU and the US seem primarily to represent the public-sector variants of centralization and decentralization. Some measures conforming to market practices are apparent but could probably be strengthened compared to the present policies.

The success of actually having the Interstate Highway System in the US built was partly due to the stronger coordination powers that the federal government was given in the 1950s. Without arguing that all the decisions taken in relation to this system were necessarily justified or well informed from a coordination and knowledge perspective, it seems likely that the centralization of powers during this period was decisive for the success of the construction program. This could be a message to the EU in the current situation. Stronger strategic coordination might be called for if missing links in the EU transport infrastructure system should be realized. Another important message from the point of view might be that market orderings, to the extent possible, should be utilized. These orderings seem to produce knowledge as an end result. Strategic transport infrastructure planning could possibly favor a combination of both measures.

Mainstream literature, while partly discussing institutional aspects on transport infrastructure planning and acknowledging information and agency-related phenomena, seems surprisingly disconnected from the discussion around how coordination in the economy actually can arise. This is true also for the limited (at least explicit) interest in the knowledge problem in public sector planning. All in all, the perspectives of time, scope, and scale tells us something additional about transport infrastructure in comparison to the main stream paradigms of neoclassical and centralized government responsibility for transport infrastructure systems. It is important that we continue to learn more about these alternative perspectives in order to understand transport infrastructure and its development over time.

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Index

A

Altschuler, A. 58
Andersson-Skog, L. 10, 11, 48, 83

B

Blaug, M. 33
Bogart, D. 4, 10, 48, 83
Bohm, P. 99

C

Chandler, A.D. 2, 10, 43, 47–49
Coase, R.H. 29, 38, 42, 65, 73, 75,
91–97, 101, 103
co-evolution xiii, 46, 79
co-evolutionary approach xiii–xv, 11,
14, 15, 25, 46, 47, 49, 50, 79,
80, 85, 90

concatenate coordination 61, 63
coordination xii, 3, 6, 11, 28, 49, 51,
57, 59–63, 67, 69–72, 74, 83,
84, 108
Core Network Corridors (CNSs) 3
cost responsibility principle 85, 97

D

deregulation xiv, 2, 11, 45, 48, 87,
88, 100

E

economics xiv, 3, 11, 12, 14, 18, 25,
26, 32, 34–36, 38, 40, 46, 50,
51, 58, 61, 65, 79, 80, 82, 87,
89, 92, 94, 96, 98–100

F

Flyvbjerg, B. 58
 full cost coverage 50, 86, 90, 91, 93,
 94, 96, 97, 99

G

government ownership xiii, xiv, 1–4,
 79, 86, 88

H

Hayek, F.A. 28, 39, 40, 60, 65, 70,
 73, 86, 93
 Hotelling, H. 32, 33, 92, 94, 95

I

incentives 25, 41, 42, 47, 58, 92–94,
 96, 101–103

K

Kaijser, A. 10, 47, 51
 Klein, D.B. 5, 6, 29, 61–63, 73

L

Langlois, R.N. 43, 44, 46, 47, 60
 liberalization 2, 11, 14, 88
 Luberoff, D. 58, 72

M

marginal cost controversies 90, 92,
 97, 102
 Medema, S.G. 27, 29, 39
 Millward, R. 2, 10, 12, 48, 49, 82, 83
 Mokyr, J. 41

mutual coordination 61, 63

N

nationalization 2, 10, 13, 15, 26, 33,
 39, 48, 65, 66, 79, 81–85, 88,
 91, 92, 98
 North, D.C. 40, 47, 66

O

Ottosson, J. 10, 11, 48, 51

P

Pigou 32, 33, 92, 95
 planning xiv–xv, 3, 11–13, 16, 20,
 21, 28, 29, 32, 51, 57–65,
 67–74, 85, 87, 98–100,
 107–108
 politics and socio-culture 50, 84
 Public Private Partnerships (PPP) 41,
 45

R

regional growth 3, 4, 6
 roads and railroads xii–xiv, 1, 10,
 15–18, 26, 29, 33, 34, 46, 50,
 59, 69, 82, 90, 91, 96, 100
 Ruggles, N. 32, 36

S

Schumpeter, J.A. 28, 39, 40, 82, 86
 social marginal cost 87, 91, 96–99,
 101
 spontaneous ordering 28, 63, 64, 66,
 72–75

T

technology xii, 1, 3–6, 11, 17, 36, 39, 44, 46, 47, 49–51, 59, 69, 79, 80, 82, 84, 85, 89

TEN-T. *See* Trans-European Networks for Transport (TEN-T)

transaction cost xiv, 12, 27, 40–47, 49, 50, 66, 75

Trans-European Networks for Transport (TEN-T) 67, 69, 71, 89

transport infrastructure policy xi, xiv, 4, 6, 12, 13, 57, 58, 85, 86, 89, 91, 97, 98, 102

transport infrastructure systems 1, 3, 10–15, 17–19, 22, 32–34, 42, 43, 46, 48, 49, 57, 59, 64, 67, 68, 83, 84, 91, 101, 103, 108

W

Wagner, R.E. 26, 28, 31, 35, 38, 51, 103

Williamson, O.E. 25–26, 32, 41–43, 66

Winston, C. 37, 72, 74, 95, 96