

One Policy for Two Problems: The Controversy Surrounding the Parisian Tramway

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ABSTRACT *The debate about the installation of a tramway in Paris stretched out over a decade. Two rival projects were put forward, each one focusing on a different aspect of the problem: town-planning on the one hand, transport on the other. The present article looks at the decision-making process, and the accompanying techno-political controversies. This form of analysis makes it possible to understand the different actors' viewpoints, and to make sense of their "policy statements". Our primary concern is to show how the decision-making process in question depended on the different protagonists' ability to provide convincing arguments, transforming the tramway issue into a problem solving exercise.*

Keywords: Policy statement; tramway; decision; policy analysis; urban transport

Introduction

Is a new tramway necessarily just a solution to an urban transport problem, or can it be a town-planning problem in its own right? Is a new tramway to be seen, first and foremost, as an instrument of transport policy, or one of town-planning policy? These questions are far from insignificant. If we look at a tramway as a solution to a transport problem, we might suppose that it should transport a maximum number of people in a minimum amount of time. If we see it as an object of town-planning policy, we might suppose that it should contribute to urban transformation. Behind these questions, there are others. Who defines the policy? Who makes the decision to integrate a tramway into a town-planning policy, or a transport policy? Who connects up the problem to the solution?

In policy analysis, there are three ways of looking at the link between a problem and a solution. One is to suppose that policy change is a response to a problem (Easton, 1965; Jones, 1984). In this case, there is a rational link between the problem and the decision-making process. Another is to assume that, in fact, there is no link between the problem and the solution, and that change is a result of external factors, or is conditioned by previous policy (Lindblom, 1958; Sabatier, 1999). The third is to consider that the relationship between the problem and the solution is in a sense a matter of chance (Cohen *et al.*, 1972; Kingdon, 1995).

In the present article, rather than arguing that a solution derives rationally from a problem, or taking the opposite stance, that a link between a problem and a solution

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