

Title

Public Participation in Sustainable Mobility Policy-Making: A Scoping Review of Approaches.

Abstract (600 words: 559)

To address challenges of global climate change, most researchers and policy-makers recognize the need for a transition of our current mobility system towards a more sustainable system. Increasingly, it becomes apparent that this transition needs to address social complexity and uncertainty and not only include technological uncertainty. In this light, user adoption of sustainable innovations and behavioral changes in demand-side mobility management have been gaining popularity among policy-makers. Participatory approaches have been suggested as a way to address social complexity and uncertainty, by directly involving the public in the policy-making process for sustainable mobility.

Public participation initiatives describe structured interactions between policy-makers and affected members of the public. While public participation has several potential benefits such as better fitting policies, increased public engagement and democratic legitimacy, empirical support for these benefits is scarce, notably in relation to policy-making for sustainable mobility. A major hurdle in gathering empirical support for public participation initiatives is formed by the variety of different goals they aim to achieve and ways they are conducted, as well as unclear definitions of indicators for successful participation. This study aims to explore the differences and commonalities between empirical studies that investigate public participation processes in policy-making for sustainable mobility and formulate a framework to measure success in these participatory processes.

A scoping literature review is conducted to systematically search and analyze the available studies across domains and disciplines. We queried popular academic databases Web of Science, Scopus and Greenfile with a predetermined search string, using search terms such as: public participation, mobility, sustainability and their synonyms. Further, selection filters in these databases were used to select only English language and peer-reviewed studies, resulting in a total of 981 papers. Then, we used a systematic selection procedure of several selection rounds, reviewing titles, abstracts and finally full-text papers for relevant empirical studies describing public participation in policy-making for sustainable mobility. For example, papers were excluded that only mention adding public participation to policy-making as a venue for future research, or papers describing participatory processes unrelated to policy-making. Ultimately, 21 papers met the selection criteria and were included in the analyses of the review.

The analysis of selected papers consists of a categorization of the reported goals for using participation, level of impact of adopted participation methods and evaluation criteria used in the participation process/study. Reported reasons to include participation in the policy-making process are mostly instrumental (e.g., participation is mandatory) or substantive (e.g., participation leads to policy that is supported by stakeholders) in nature. Examples of studied participation methods range from low-impact participation through preference surveys and one-time focus groups, to high-impact participation in the form of citizen assemblies and citizen juries. The majority of papers reporting public participation procedures do not explicitly state evaluation criteria, only observing general trends in increased consensus among stakeholders. The few papers reporting evaluation criteria include for

example the impact of local knowledge on policy (novelty of solutions), participant evaluation and civic learning.

The conclusions from this study provide suggestions for future research on how to define what successful participation is and how it can be achieved. The results of this study can provide action perspectives to support policy-makers in designing, structuring and systematically evaluating their public participation initiatives in sustainable mobility policy-making. This paper recognizes the existing challenges and thereby contributes to the required transition towards a more sustainable mobility system.