

PATHWAYS TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE URBAN TRANSPORT DEVELOPMENT

Investigating the transferability of Munich best practice in collaborative stakeholder dialogue to the context of Sydney

Christiane Baumann, Stuart White

Institute for Sustainable Futures; University of Technology, Sydney, Sydney, NSW, Australia

INTRODUCTION

Research and practice have produced valuable recommendations on transport infrastructure elements or programs that can contribute towards more sustainable urban transport development (see Schiller, Bruun & Kenworthy 2010 for a comprehensive overview). However, conflicting values and competing interests among stakeholders in the transport policy process often create barriers to the implementation of these policies (Baumann & White 2010a). These transport stakeholders range from community organisations through to business interest groups, infrastructure and service providers and pedestrian, cyclist and motorist associations. Problem situations like these, for which there are no solutions that completely satisfy all parties, are often referred to as *wicked problem* (Rittel & Webber 1973).

An increasing number of transport commentators have identified collaborative stakeholder dialogue (CSD) as a constructive alternative to the conventional adversarial style of policy making for establishing more sustainable forms of urban transport development in wicked problems (see for example Healey 2003; Innes & Booher 2010). In CSD, participants that represent the full diversity of interdependent organised interests in the issue at stake engage in collaborative dialogue to find a consensus on the way forward (Innes & Booher 2010). CSD is different from the public participation procedures, promoted by deliberative democrats, that engage lay citizens rather than representatives of interest groups (see for example Booth & Richardson 2001; Gastil & Levine 2005). To be clear, we do not consider these two types of procedures as mutually exclusive. In fact, as we argue elsewhere, we recommend them as complementary sources of input into transport policy development (Baumann & White, forthcoming).

There is a growing number of successful case studies in CSD, including our own case study of an ongoing transport CSD in Munich, Germany — the *Inzell-Initiative* (Baumann & White 2011). In order to improve the process and application of CSD in transport, it is important to systematically investigate the transferability of these best practice examples to other cities. We achieve this by developing and testing a framework that allows us to assess whether preconditions for implementing CSD are present in a city.

This paper starts with an introduction to collaborative stakeholder dialogue and its contribution to sustainable development, illustrated by the Munich case study. We then review existing theory on transferability, concluding that while existing guidelines provide valuable instructions for transferring individual policies they face limitations with regards to governance processes that require fundamental changes in the way stakeholders interact. To fill this gap we develop a framework of preconditions for process transferability based on lessons from Munich and other case studies. In the final section we test this framework in the context of Sydney, based on a series of discussions with key transport stakeholders.

COLLABORATIVE STAKEHOLDER DIALOGUE AS PATHWAY TO MORE SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT DEVELOPMENT

Processes of collaborative stakeholder dialogue (CSD) have been defined as:

... an array of practices in which stakeholders, selected to represent different interests, come together for face-to-face, long-term dialogue to address a policy issue of common concern. Typically they have a facilitator and they build on the experience of mediated dispute resolution (Susskind & Field, 1996). They seek consensus rather than use majority rule, and employ methods to assure that all are heard and respected and that discussions are based on stakeholder interests and not simply on arguments about predetermined positions (Innes & Booher 1999, p. 1).

Innes and Booher (2010) claim that in collaborative stakeholder dialogues, if the process is to produce socially valuable outcomes adapted to the problem situation, three conditions need to be present:

- stakeholders need to represent the full diversity of interests in a problem situation;

- they need to acknowledge the interdependence of their objectives and those of their adversaries and that they cannot meet their interests independently;
- and they need to engage in a face-to-face authentic dialogue according to Habermas's basic speech conditions (Innes & Booher 2010, p. 35).

In the collaborative process, stakeholders learn about the positions of their adversaries, so as to find ways to better accommodate their own interests within the bigger picture:

When parties learn about the specific, detailed concerns of the other parties, they find out that some of those concerns are much easier to satisfy than others. They learn, crucially, that what's important to another party may be far less important for them – and vice versa. With that understood, they discover that they can make offers that cost themselves little even as they benefit others significantly. They can then devise options that create mutual gains: not equally devastating compromises, but packages of "trades" that actually satisfy the concerns and interests the parties bring to the table (Forester 1999, p. 490).

The resources stakeholders can bring to bear in the CSD are mainly limited to the strength of their argument and their ability to co-create innovative solutions with the representatives of all relevant interests.

A number of researchers have established a connection between the consensual approach used in CSD and CSD and an increase in the quality and implementability of actual policy outcomes (see for example Innes & Booher 2010; Sidaway 2005):

Consensus building processes can change the players and their actions. They can produce new relationships, new practices, and new ideas. They can have second and third order effects years after a process is over. Consensus building may be effective even when it does not accomplish what its participants or sponsors originally intended. The most important consequences may be to change the direction of a complex, uncertain, evolving situation, and to help move a community toward higher levels of social and environmental performance because its leadership has learned how to work together better and has developed viable, flexible, long-term strategies for action (Innes & Booher 1999, p. 1).

We have investigated this connection based on an empirical case study of CSD in Munich, Germany, known as the *Inzell-Initiative* (www.inzell-initiative.de) and found connections similar to those identified by Innes and Booher (Baumann & White 2011). Innes and Booher (2010) describe additional case studies in CSD in other fields of public policy making.

The *Inzell-Initiative* – a case study in collaborative stakeholder dialogue

The Munich case study is based on a series of interviews with the representatives of 13 groups inside and outside of government. The original aim of the research was to explore successful advocacy strategies of public and active transport advocates in Munich. However, we were impressed with the way the different stakeholders all highlighted the role of the *Inzell-Initiative* in resolving a political stalemate that had blocked progress in transport development in the early 1990s, and since then fundamentally changed the ways stakeholders interacted and developed proposals for policy development. The stakeholders ranged from bicycle user groups, public servants and politicians through to the motorists association and the local car manufacturer, BMW.

The *Inzell-Initiative* was established in 1995 and is a professionally facilitated dialogue among transport stakeholders in Munich that takes place outside the formal administrative and political processes. It was initiated by the Mayor of Munich and the CEO of BMW in order to 'solve traffic problems together'. This collaborative dialogue identified and consolidated the common ground among parties who had previously seen themselves as having fundamentally incompatible or contradictory positions, and created a more stable political climate in which they were able to proceed. The *Inzell-Initiative* still exists today, with general meetings every one to two years, and more regular meetings in interdisciplinary working groups.

The effects of the *Inzell-Initiative*

The *Inzell-Initiative* created significant changes in the way transport stakeholders in Munich interacted, resulting in cooperation rather than confrontation, and in the policies that emerged from the policy process, based on the adoption of consensus views rather than extreme positions. Every stakeholder interviewed felt better off with the *Inzell-Initiative* than with the adversarial process that was in place before it was established. Although every group had to make concessions in order to achieve a consensus it was often emphasised that they had achieved a lot more progress than in the times before the *Inzell-Initiative*:

We rowed back a little bit and achieved so much more through that (Munich Interviewee #12).

In summary, there are four major effects of the *Inzell-Initiative* that illustrate how the procedural characteristics of the CSD have contributed to more sustainable policy outcomes (Baumann & White 2011). First, it produced more effective policy outcomes through the integration of stakeholder value and knowledge systems. The dialogues broadened the participants' understanding. Originally their knowledge was limited to facts and ideas specific to their own context and interests and the dialogues contributed towards each of them developing a knowledge base that allowed them to understand other stakeholders' perspectives, even if they did not share them. The increased trust and mutual understanding allowed for new ideas and technologies to gain ground faster, as it provided more room for all relevant arguments to be heard. Second, a reduction of implementation barriers to policies that challenged the status quo through enhanced mutual understanding of the values and interests involved. Third, CSD promoted a longer-term acceptance of policy solutions because they were based on the inclusiveness of the consensus building process. And fourth, the CSD created a more efficient policy process by reducing the 'friction losses' that can occur through the expansion of stakeholder conflict.

Having established the potential of CSD to contribute to sustainable transport outcomes, the following sections discuss how the concept of CSD can be transferred to other cities.

INVESTIGATING THE TRANSFERABILITY OF COLLABORATIVE STAKEHOLDER DIALOGUE

This section first provides an overview of the current state of knowledge on transferability and learning in the policy process, highlighting gaps with regards to the transferability of governance procedures. We then establish a framework outlining the incentives and preconditions for implementing a CSD from the perspectives of governmental and non-governmental stakeholders. In the next section we apply the framework to the context of Sydney, based on discussions with key transport stakeholders inside and outside of government.

Current knowledge on transfer and learning in the policy process

In the early 1990s researchers started to discuss concepts and develop guidelines for *policy learning*, *lesson drawing* or *policy transfer* from other cities (Bennett & Howlett 1992; Dolowitz & Marsh 1996; Rose 1991; Wolman 1992). But it is only more recently that they applied these ideas to the context of transport policy development (see for example Baumann & White 2010b; Ison, Marsden & May 2011; Marsden et al. 2011; Marsden & Stead 2011; NICHES+ 2008; Timms 2011).

The concept of lesson drawing is based on the idea that 'when routines stop providing "solutions" is it necessary to search for lessons' (Rose 2001, p. 10), and the idea that 'problems that are unique to one country are abnormal [but] the concerns for which ordinary people turn to government ... are common on many continents' (Rose 1991, p. 4). Accordingly, responses that have proven successful in one place can — to a certain extent — be generalised and transferred to other places. It has thus become a common approach for interest groups, planning practitioners and politicians to seek guidance from cities that have managed to deal with the challenges of sustainable transport development in an exemplary way.

However, it has been claimed that the process of lesson drawing is not very different from routine planning processes. According to this view 'it is hard to think of any form of rational policymaking that does not, in some way, involve using knowledge about policies in another time or place to draw positive or negative lessons' (James & Lodge 2003, p. 182). James and Lodge argue that 'even rational policy-makers' preference for the status quo in their own jurisdiction could be seen as implicitly involving negative lessons about alternatives in other countries or in other times' (p. 182).

In order to identify guidelines for how to transfer the concept of CSD to other cities we investigated the literature on lesson drawing, which Dolowitz and Marsh (1996) define as voluntary activity of 'political actors or decision-makers in one country [who] draw lessons from one or more other countries, which they then apply to their own political system' (p. 344). They identify seven possible areas of lesson drawing: 'policy goals, structure and content; policy instruments or administrative techniques; institutions; ideology; ideas, attitudes and concepts; and negative lessons' (p. 350). They do not, however, identify governance procedures such as CSD as a potential subject of transfer.

Looking at the nature of the different lesson-drawing areas, we propose that in the case of CSD the spectrum of participants that need to undergo a learning process is a lot wider than in the areas outlined by Dolowitz and Marsh. CSD is not only about policy makers advocating a new program, policy, or structure; it's about changing the fundamentals of stakeholder interaction. Such a change requires that all potential participants perceive participation as being worth investing resources in, and moving away from extreme

positions. This is a sensitive process. The implementation of the CSD in Munich, for example, was preceded by numerous one-on-one discussions between supporters of the collaborative idea and its sceptics.

Given the overarching nature of the change required, we argue that guidelines for transferring CSD must be different from the existing guidelines for policy learning – Rose (2001), for example, suggests ten steps for learning lessons from abroad – in that they need to focus more on achieving stakeholder willingness to participate rather than on addressing aspects of technical feasibility. In doing so we assume that once the relevant participants support this procedural change, the actual process success factors (Baumann & White 2011) are largely generalisable and transferable. Forester (1999), for example, points out that ‘many facilitators and mediators take pains to point out that these [consensus building] processes involve nothing magical at all; they take hard work, skill, sensitive exploration of issues, persistence, and creativity’ (p. 464).

To develop guidelines for transferring CSD that align more with its procedural character, the following section introduces preconditions for implementing CSD that emerged from our own and other case studies.

Incentives for stakeholders to participate in a collaborative process

In summary, incentives for policy makers and organised interests to participate in CSD are related to both the nature of the problem situation and the nature of the process (see Table 1). These incentives can be based on:

- a political stalemate between stakeholders that are interconnected in a problem situation. This leaves participants no choice but to cooperate because of a lack of alternative avenues through which to further their interests
- high-level leadership and commitment so that participants don’t want to miss out
- a perception that participation can increase influence on policy outcomes, and
- previous positive experience with collaboration.

Table 1: Incentives for stakeholders to participate in collaborative stakeholder dialogue related to both the nature of the problem situation and the nature of the process (Source: created for this research based on Innes & Booher 2010 (a); Sabatier & Weible 2007, pp. 206-7 (b); Forester 1999 (c); and our own research (d))

	Success factor	Rationale
Nature of the problem situation	(1) Hurting stalemate and lack of alternative avenues (a, b, d)	The incentive to negotiate seriously originates from a deadlock in which none of the stakeholders is able to emerge victorious and all parties find the status quo unacceptable. None of the participating groups sees alternative means of advancing their interests.
	(2) Perceived interconnectedness of actors (a, c)	‘Once parties begin to recognize that they [...] have complex histories and real problems that worry them, then and only then can they begin to work together to solve their problems effectively’ (c).
Nature of the process	(3) Perceived influence (a, d)	Participants need to have the impression that investing their resources will be rewarded in terms of policy outcomes.
	(4) High level initiative and commitment (b, d)	Commitment of organisers and participants at a senior level so that forum is prestigious enough to force professionals from different coalitions to participate.
	(5) Previous positive experience with collaboration (c, d)	Participants are impressed by previous positive experiences with collaborations; perceive them as ‘almost magical’ (c).

The problem situation needs to resemble a hurting stalemate (Success factor 1 in Table 1 below), characterised by an absence of alternative avenues through which stakeholders can further their objectives, so that participants see no better alternative to engaging with their political opponents:

At the point of stalemate, the prospect of negotiating becomes more attractive, and thus there is an opportunity to change the system of decision-making. If this is taken, it is possible to collaborate ...

‘Only when the politics of power have been exhausted can the politics of co-operation become a viable possibility’ (Sidaway 2005, p. 200; quoting Amy, 1987, p. 92).

To realise the benefits of CSD participants also need to see the interconnectedness of their objectives with those of other stakeholders (Success factor 2):

Once parties begin to recognize that they both have complex histories and real problems that worry them, then and only then can they begin to work together to solve their problems effectively (Forester 1999, p. 491).

Another precondition that emerged from the Munich case study is that all participants need to feel they have a real opportunity to influence the outcomes of the process. That is, that their arguments will be heard and taken into account (Success factor 3):

This has a lot to do with power. Every participant of the forum knows that it is all about the power of definition, that is, which problem definition, solution perspective, pathway will be ultimately selected? Everyone knows that, everyone is accomplished in that game. But a framework has been found that creates an arena for the better argument to grasp hold in the sense of Habermas, where it gets the space to articulate itself and then eventually find recognition, regardless of whether someone is in the right party or argues from the right institution. This is a great achievement that had been accomplished in Munich (Munich Interviewee #1)!

With regards to the process the initiative and commitment of officials on a senior level (Success factor 4) is important to attract participants. As one of the interviewees in Munich stated:

If the process had been initiated by the third Mayor or other senior officials rather than by the first Mayor it would by far not have had the success story it had in this case (Munich Interviewee #11).

Finally, in order to get participants motivated and engaged in the CSD, or to keep them motivated and engaged, they need ongoing positive experience with the process and its outcomes. This serves as confirmation that the collaborative pathway helps them to promote their interests more effectively than they could expect to do within an adversarial framework, for example, by producing high quality solutions to a conflict or positive experiences in collaborating with people “from the other side” (Success factor 5). Forester (1999) reports that:

Efforts to build consensus between those with differing values can produce unexpected results that seem almost magical to the parties involved. Although they begin with the presumptions that the other “will never talk to us” and that their value systems are so radically different that “we’ll never be able to work something out with them”, parties are often astonished to find themselves crafting real, productive, satisfying agreements (p. 464).

Disappointment with the collaborative process can, on the other hand, destroy possibilities for future collaborations and enhance cynicism and adversarial strategies. Bickerstaff and Walker (2005) for example document two cases of citizen engagement in British transport planning where uneven power relations meant some participants lacked influence throughout the deliberative process. This led to their becoming disillusioned.

The process of shared learning and consensus building is therefore strongly interlinked with its effects and outcomes. In this way, processes and outcomes are mutually reinforcing, either in a positive or negative way.

A framework to assess the preconditions for transferability

The incentives in Table 1 are largely different for decision makers and non-governmental actors. Table 2 illustrates the different incentives or preconditions for decision makers and non-government interest groups to support and engage in a CSD. This builds a framework that enables us to test the preconditions for CSD transferability to other cities.

Table 2: Incentives or preconditions for decision makers and non-government organized interests to support and engage in collaborative stakeholder dialogue (Source: created for this research)

	Decision makers	Non-government interest groups
Hurting stalemate and lack of alternative avenues	No alternative avenues through which to deliver on political promises (strong and competing stakeholder interests).	No alternative avenues through which to pursue political interests; advocacy/ lobbying not effective in existing context.
Perceived interconnectedness	Decision makers realise that they need to get everyone on board in order to achieve progress.	Stakeholders realise that that they all need the process to work.
High level leadership and commitment	Decision makers realise that in order to better bring people along with them they need to bring the main actors together to deliberate on contested issues and to reconcile stakeholder interests.	Stakeholders don't want to miss out on information and relationship building.
Perceived influence	Decision makers expect that participants will develop a better understanding of decision makers'	Stakeholders believe their arguments will be better taken into account in a CSD than in other strategies. They

	plans and projects and thus be more supportive. This will facilitate implementation.	don't want to miss out on discussions and risk missing a chance to co-define issues and solutions.
Previous positive experience	Previous positive experience with collaborative procedures and consensus building.	Previous positive experience with collaborative procedures and consensus building.

We suggest, however, that the factors in Table 2 are dependent on the cultural inclinations of the relevant stakeholders towards a more collaborative policy style. The framework is therefore not universally applicable but should be used within the context of cultural differences. Hendriks (2004) for example concludes, as a result of a comparative case study of Germany and Australia, that:

What tends to dominate [in Germany] is rational and consensual debate amongst representatives of different interests, though pluralist activities also exist at the edges. Australia's policy style is much more adversarial and combative. Apart from some minor attempts with corporatist structures, policy making is generally the result of decision makers juggling the competing claims of different interest organisations (p. 294).

To test the transferability framework in Table 2 we conclude with applying it to the context of Sydney in the following section, based on discussions with key transport stakeholders inside and outside of government.

TESTING THE TRANSFERABILITY FRAMEWORK IN SYDNEY: ARE THE PRECONDITIONS GIVEN?

We tested the transferability framework in Sydney in two different ways. First, the researchers adopted the role of 'observer-as-participants' (Gold 1958, p. 221) in a series of discussions with interest groups and senior decision makers. In the role of 'observer-as-participant' a researcher has only minimal involvement in the social setting being studied and is not normally an active participant. Second, we conducted a series of formal interviews with government and non-government stakeholders.

The conclusion from these discussions and interviews is that it is not yet clear whether a CSD could be successfully implemented in Sydney. The non-government participants did meet the preconditions in Table 2 in terms of perceived influence and previous positive experience. However support from industry NGOs was weaker than support from environmental NGOs. Two government decision makers saw potential benefits in using a CSD process, but one of them did not believe the level of conflict was high enough to justify the implementation of a CSD. Finally, a planning official suggested CSD could improve the planning process by taking the heat out of policy debates.

We initially preferred the 'observer-as-participant' approach over interviews because we assumed — based on feedback from a number of transport commentators in Sydney to whom we had explained the Munich case study — that there could be a realistic chance for CSD to be implemented in Sydney. A new state government had come to power in March 2011, and transport was described as 'the emblematic issue of the election' (Andrew West at SMH 2011), due to the long-standing problems and shortcomings of Sydney's public transport system that the previous government could not resolve. Many observers had hoped that the incoming government would deal with these issues more effectively. We therefore saw a window of opportunity for CSD to effectively gain ground in Sydney, and to contribute to better transport outcomes.

In our role as 'observer-as-participant' we accompanied two representatives of environmental NGOs to meetings with other interest groups and senior decision makers. Our task was to present the Munich case study and provide academic background on CSD. The NGOs advocated CSD as a viable option for Sydney. They did so because they believed it would make their work easier in terms of getting the arguments used by environmental NGOs heard by the right people and thereby increase their influence on transport development. Another argument was that a CSD type of forum would be potentially more effective than previous collaborative procedures they had been involved in. These procedures had lacked the power to influence decisions. Finally, the support of the environmental NGOs was based on positive experiences with the South Sydney Transport Forum, a stakeholder dialogue that was initiated before the NSW state elections in 2011 in a local area to identify common ground on specific issues. One environmental NGO interviewee had been impressed with the extent of common ground that could be found among stakeholders, and that it was an inspiring experience to collaborate with people 'from the other side'.

The meetings, however, revealed that stakeholders had differing views on the idea of CSD in Sydney. One senior decision maker did not think the level of conflict in Sydney was intense or polarised enough to create a stalemate as was the case in Munich. Rather, the decision maker saw the situation as involving 'different shades of gray', and therefore believed CSD was unlikely to bring any benefits to the current situation. Another sceptical comment this decision maker made was that unless there was major conflict, the public

would expect the government to make decisions themselves rather than putting them out to the public. A final comment was that the CSD would need a clear purpose or rationale and have a regional reference rather than operating on the macro level for the whole of Sydney; otherwise it would be seen as just another 'talkfest'.

Another governmental decision maker was more supportive of the idea, suggesting it could help actors to move away from a focus on individual projects towards systems or network thinking, by developing principles for development very early on. Another potential benefit this observer acknowledged was the potential of a CSD to 'depoliticise' transport.

Our overall impression from the meetings with the two government representatives was that they were busy with restructuring the bureaucracy after the elections, and that the idea of engagement had not been addressed in detail yet. As one of them said, 'things have to settle first'.

One industry NGO considered CSD as a good way to identify the 'low-hanging fruit', to better understand the 'pulse of what's going on', and to reconcile stakeholder interests for projects that cover a broad spectrum of issues.

Given that the findings of the 'observer-as-participants' stakeholder meetings were quite indefinite we complemented the data with individual interviews with the two environmental NGOs as well as one senior planning official.

The environmental NGOs were divided in their conclusions after the meetings: while both still see great benefits that a CSD could bring to the Sydney context, one doubted that such a process could be meaningfully implemented on the State level due to the distribution of power across several institutions.

The planning official considered CSD as a valuable forum outside the media spotlight to get lobbyists to open up their thinking and to see beyond their sectional or modal interests, and to build relationships that contribute to taking the heat out of policy debates. This enhanced public debate would improve the planning process by 'keeping it out of the petty politics' and by reducing the 'angst' of decision makers to implement progressive policies. In terms of implementation the official considered it crucial to find a neutral and well-respected individual to facilitate the CSD. That way the forum would not be considered as endorsing government policy; rather, it would allow discussions at a deeper level.

Discussion

In conclusion, the stakeholder incentives for supporting and implementing a CSD process in Sydney are largely different from the preconditions that were in place in Munich.

In Munich the mayor was the main driving force behind the *Inzell-Initiative* while environmental NGOs had been rather sceptical of the idea because they feared they would be co-opted. In Sydney, the situation seems to be the other way round: environmental NGOs see CSD as an opportunity for gaining greater influence while one Government decision maker appeared sceptical with regard to the benefits.

These indefinite findings are no doubt influenced by the fact that New South Wales had just had a change of government after 16 years and the transport bureaucracy is currently undergoing a fundamental restructure. Consequently, roles, tasks and processes are not yet completely clear. This might also be a reason why there is less apparent conflict on transport issues.

A possible conclusion is that unlike Munich, where the mayor was under strong pressure to find a solution to the 'hurting stalemate' and deliver results, Sydney needs or has more time to implement a meaningful non-reactive stakeholder engagement procedure. It may even be that in Sydney such a procedure could go beyond the *Inzell-Initiative* by integrating lay citizen and organised interest collaboration as an input to government.

The findings in Sydney also align with findings by Hendriks (2004) who investigates under what conditions interest groups support processes of lay citizen deliberation. Similar to our findings, she finds that 'weaker interest organisations are more willing to engage in public deliberation than stronger interest organisations', and that 'public deliberation also appears to be more appealing for those organisations that support the issue on the agenda and those interested in shifting the debate beyond the status quo.' She therefore concludes that interest groups 'participate in public deliberation opportunistically when there are strategic reasons for doing so' (p.33).

With regards to guidelines for transferring a CSD to other city contexts we suggest that the framework in Table 2 provides a valuable foundation for assessing the presence of incentives and motivations of stakeholders to support and engage in CSD. However, further applications are needed to test and refine the framework.

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