

The Swiss Integral Concept for Transport – The history of a cybernetic planning utopia

In order to match the Swiss transport policies with the changing demands of modern transport, the Swiss Federal Council decided in January 1972 to put in place an expert commission. It was to analyse the Swiss transport system and to work out a comprehensive Swiss Integral Concept for Transport (ICT). The ICT's main purpose was to coordinate the technical, economic, financial, environmental, legal, social and political aspects of traffic and transport in Switzerland, thus providing the foundations of a transport policy for the next 25 to 30 years. By choosing a system analytical approach, the experts put the ICT into the context of cybernetic planning conceptions that were developed mainly in the USA and Great Britain since the mid 1960's. The combination of their holistic planning conception with the control and decision mechanisms of cybernetics can be interpreted as a utopian attempt to implement the Swiss transport policy as cybernetic «governing machine». The main goal of this dissertation is to analyse the structures and methods of the ICT in terms of history of science, politics, economics, and society. In this analysis, the idea that ICT can be seen as a utopian «governing machine» firmly based upon cybernetic and technocratic thought are of special interest. Further questions concern the ICT's epistemological impact as well as its political and social relevance.