Changing Stakeholder Constellations in Cycling Policy
The Example of the Berlin Bicycle Referendum
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Historical Development of Cycling Advocacy in Germany

- from 1970‘s/80‘s: first cycling activists, establishment of Cycling Associations, continuous campaigning
- from 2000‘s: development of Round Tables with representatives from administration and civil society
- last 10 years: „Cycling Culture“ – active cycling scene but little political impact
Cycling in Berlin – Dates and Figures

- more than 1,000 km cycling infrastructure
- Cycling Strategy: goal of 18 – 20% modal split for cycle traffic
- funding: ca. 3.5 Euro / person / year

Modal Split in Berlin (2008)

- Car: 32%
- Walk: 29%
- Public Transport: 26%
- Bike: 13%

Source: Senatsverwaltung für Stadtentwicklung und Umwelt, 2014
Berlin Bicycle Referendum

- started in summer of 2015
- uses political instrument of referendum to make Berlin more bicycle friendly
- November 2015: identification of 10 Goals
- „Law hackathon“: draft of bicycle traffic law for Berlin
Berlin Bicycle Referendum – 10 Goals

- 350 km safe cycling streets
- 2 m wide bike lanes on all main roads
- 200,000 parking spaces for bikes
- 100 km cycle highways for commuters
- Green lights for cyclists
- More staff for implementation of measures
- Making 75 dangerous crossroads safe every year
- Marketing measures for cycling promotion
- …

550 Mio Euro investment programme into bicycle infrastructure
(13 Euro / person / year)
Berlin Bicycle Referendum

• June 2016: First step of referendum, collection of more than 100,000 signatures
• September 2016: Regional Elections with change of government
• currently: negotiations for the first „Cycle Law“ in Germany with legally binding infrastructure measures and investments of 50 Mio Euro / year

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Berlin Bicycle Referendum – Factors for success

- creative campaigning, creating powerful images and messages; attractive for gaining fellow campaigners
Berlin Bicycle Referendum – Successful campaigning

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Berlin Bicycle Referendum – Factors for success

• creative campaigning, creating powerful images and messages; attractive for gaining fellow campaigners
• professional team and well organized management
• highly flexible and fast
• decisions taken by small core group
• aggressive wording, provocative actions demanding political responsibility for casualties
• Berlin Senate as political opponent
• convincing arguments, use of data and facts
• networking and personal contacts to the media and other players
Changing Stakeholder Constellations in Cycling Policy – The Cycling Advocacy Perspective

• Berlin Bicycle Referendum as new player in cycling advocacy
• Referendum is a powerful strategic instrument
• especially in the beginning: serious friction with established local cycling associations,
  → different political strategies and attitudes
  → differences in terms of content
  → personal feelings
• lately: cooperation and common mandate in negotiations with Senate
• in future: joint achievements of goals, distribution of tasks or competitors?
Changing Stakeholder Constellations in Cycling Policy – The local Polity Perspective

- new challenge for local governments and administrations
- initially scepticism and refusal prevailing, only later willingness for a dialogue
- now negotiations of first Bicycle Traffic Law with all parties
- opportunity to use cycling campaigns’ influence on opinion-forming processes
  → can cycling initiatives prepare the ground for cycling friendly policies?
- threat for local governments and administrations: loss of security; constant confrontation with organized interest groups
  → how to prepare and respond to this development?
Changing Stakeholder Constellations in Cycling Policy – Open Questions

• How do grassroots cycling initiatives change bicycle politics in your town?
• Can the Berlin Bicycle Referendum serve as a model for other cities?
• democratic legitimation
• limits to direct democracy
• Does the end justify the means?
• …
Thank you for your attention

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