

Economical and social – economical efficiency of public transports: Bus and Railway in inter – city transport in Catalonia.

Author: Pedro Malavia Cuevas
Directors: Francesc Magrinyà Torner
David Prat i Soto

Abstract

In economical and social terms, territorial polarization has been increased in the last years by the progressive liberalization of markets and also, why not, by apathy and lack of foresight of the government over what rural areas do need in view of the current rising of the economy tertiary sector. This background becomes a big lack of balance on the subject of transports, showed by the paralysation of the greatest part of the territory beside huge congestion in those most lively comercial and so economical zones. Nowadays, european transport system runs into a group of important obstacles before its optimum evolution, such as the unbalanced rise of the different means of transport, the congestion in many communication axis, the accidents and the damages to the environment and human health. So it is necessary to plan an strategy in order to relieve these problems arriving at a sustainable development. The point in issue is achieving a reasonable behavior of communication networks resulting in an homogeneous profit of transport framework, identified with a progressive increase of territory connectivity and a substantial decrease of congestion, harmful gases emissions and accidents.

In field of passenger transport it is a priority to attain to an increment of public transport market share to the detriment of the massive use of private vehicle. The development of a strong public passengers transport network in terms of connectivity, frequency of services, fares and quality levels would provide a competitive alternative becoming an essential tool to manage the targets of cohesion and sustainability. Accordingly, governments must watch over the highest exploit of the existing network resorts and the creation of new public transport lines.

This research tries, therefore, to identify all costs that road or railway transport of passengers involves to be able to find out in broad outline those mobility thresholds that allow, in the area of Catalonia, the introduction of new public transport lines so that pre-existing expenses can be reduced. According to this, new public passenger transport lines will qualify when the total costs they generate to society are less than those which already exist due to the former means of transport satisfying the same daily demand. In the total amount of costs taken into account to set up the comparison there will be therefore included fixed and operative costs of the different means of transport considered – private vehicle, bus and train – as well as time cost, public investments and external costs, so that they become internal in order to state the whole social expenses due to passanger transport.

The total amount of parameters on which the considered costs depend obstructs the task of joining these costs in order to stablish a general corridor model in Catalonia. That's why this study must be used as a reference in first stages of transport investments analysis to provide the government with orientative numbers about those mobility thresholds to be guaranteed by new transport lines to further and more concrete studies. The prime target, as showed, is providing the territory with a competitive public passenger transport network. Materializing it is not only its enlargement, but the promotion of its value and the restriction to private vehicle by the government.