

The Influence of Planning Support Systems on Planning Practice

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Abstract

While the PSS debate tended to have a chiefly technological and instrumental focus, more attention is now being paid to conceptualizing and studying the experiences of practitioners. The aim of this contribution is to critically appraise these recent studies and identify research gaps and, consequently, avenues for future research.

Three key research questions can be identified in studies about the usage and adaptation of PSS:

- 1.) Why are PSS not used more frequently? (i.e. the ‘implementation gap’)
- 2.) What is and what should be the influence of PSS on planning practice? (i.e. the ‘added value’)
- 3.) How can this influence be explained?

Recent research conducted by the author and a reading of the PSS debate will be used to formulate answers to these questions. Subsequently, an attempt will be done to identify the most important gaps in the answers to these questions, leading to a set of recommendations for future research. The most important ones are:

- Attention for the potentially negative influence of PSS.
- Rigorous methodological approaches, including quantitative analyses (e.g. questionnaires) and cross-context comparison.
- Normatively oriented theoretical work on the question what the influence of PSS should be.

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