Rolls Royce vs VW Beetle?
A comparative study of EA quality control in the Netherlands and Denmark

Background and problem:
The European Commission has recently (2014) adopted a new EIA Directive that emphasises quality and control.

EA literature portray the Dutch system as the Rolls-Royce of EA systems with its scientific commission reviewing quality. In contrast, the Danish quality control system is widely build upon a trust in public engagement in the quality review.

This research investigate the effects of the different quality control systems; is the expert Rolls Royce or the people’s car appropriate for quality control?

Methodology
Repeating a survey conducted in the Netherlands and UK, we asked Danish EA practitioners about their experiences.

The survey is based on approximately 1/3 of the practitioners in NL (400) and DK (100)

The survey data were analysed by statistical test and supplemented with expert interviews.

Findings
Quality of EA reports is better in NL…

… but effectiveness is similar!

Implications
With reservations for other influential factors and the limitations of investigating perceptions, the study suggests:

Implication A: Is the value of technically sound reports enough justification for keeping a costly system if effectiveness is not noticeably affected?

Implication B: Elements of the public (Beetle) quality control system may be more appropriate, since it places greater responsibility on an engaged polity.

We would like to hear you view on this!

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