Faculty of Social and Life Sciences
Human Geography

Stephan Bösch

The Tragedy of Ordinarity

Culture Constraints on Sustainable Development Based on Public Transport

Karlstad University Studies
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Abstract

This licentiate thesis consists of two free-standing papers and a linking essay that links the papers by articulating an overall research aim and common theoretical background. The research aim is kept general and focuses on the role public transport can play in sustainable development. The work aims to contribute to a better understanding of why people do or do not choose to use public transport, to grasp the ideas/attitudes underlying the decisions made regarding the future of public transport, and to make suggestions for solving problems that may arise in public transport.

The thesis has three theoretical bases: transport research, cultural theory, and sustainable development. Transport research is the starting point of the work, and I outline a gap in it that needs to be filled. This gap is filled by drawing on cultural theory connected to geographic terms. Sustainability discourses, on one hand, legitimate the work's importance but also further stimulate the linking essay. Methodologically, the thesis can be placed in the hermeneutic tradition. Due to the work's particular alignment with cultural theory, cultural relativism is supported. In addition, the interdisciplinary and multi-methodical approach can be explained by the work's cultural focus.

Against this background, the research concluded that, as a business, public transport has difficulties achieving the vaguely formulated ideological goals set for it at the national political level. As well, citizens have been marginalised in the goal-setting process. Citizen empowerment and a clearer formulation of the ideological goals are needed. Furthermore, public transport seems to be poorly rooted in society, and the present research found subregional differences that might be culturally based or explainable. The fact that public transport is poorly rooted in society can partially be explained by the marginalisation of citizens from decision making. Cultural differences in and between subregions should thus be taken into account by a farther-reaching customer perspective that acknowledges the importance of subregions. In conclusion, one should be sceptical as to public transport's role in sustainable development. This pessimism arises from the technological step backward people would have to take in changing their main mode of transportation. Therefore, more all-embracing technical innovations are needed in the transport sector.

Culture is to us what the water is to the fish: Invisible and so taken for granted that it cannot be described to a researcher – it has to be discovered.

Lena Gerholm (1994)

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1 INTRODUCTION

Public transport (PT) is the common answer to the question of how humanity can solve the sustainability problems caused by individual transportation. Our extensive use of the car has huge environmental effects. Today, we can be sure that the climate change we are experiencing at the moment is explained by anthropogenic factors (www.smhi.se, Wärneryd et al. 2002). One important problem is our dependence on fossil fuels, in particular, oil. In Sweden, for example, road traffic accounts for one third of the greenhouse gas emissions (SIKA 2005). Carbon dioxide is the most important greenhouse gas emitted by the transport sector (although it is not the strongest greenhouse gas), and reducing fossil fuel consumption is needed to counteract climate change. Furthermore, car traffic has still other effects on our shared environment than simply that of promoting climate change. Vehicular traffic produces noise and health problems that influence people's quality of life (Miedema 2007, Van Wee 2007).
All these problems are well known and recognised by the Swedish government. Sweden expresses its sustainable development aims as follows:

> The environmental, social and economic dimensions of sustainable development shall be pursued in a coherent manner, both within Sweden and in our relations with partners around the world. (www.sweden.gov.se)

At the same time, an important aspect of the development of various Swedish regions is regional enlargement (e.g., the regional development programme of Värmland; RTP 2003). Regional enlargement assumes that people will commute longer distances; this can conflict with the national sustainability goals, and the strategy has been criticised (Boverket 2005). The use of PT in this regional enlargement is therefore decisive for at least ecologically *sustainable* regional enlargement. Given this background, it is obvious that more people must be encouraged to choose public transport. The difficulty of succeeding with this 'mobility goal' is well known to researchers in many fields, including psychology, geography, and economics (see, e.g., Gärling & Steg 2007), and to public transport companies.

The present research is another piece of the puzzle. It helps discover how people can be more attracted to use public transport by finding out why they do or do not choose this means of transportation today. From the outset, the reader should be aware that the whole work focuses on the public transport authorities' point of view.

1.1 Research Aim

The overall, and very open-ended, research question concerns the role public transport can play in sustainable regional development. The word that should be highlighted is 'can', which indicates that this work concentrates on the extent to which public transportation can permit regional development based on sustainable transport. This problem will be approached from a cultural point of view, which differentiates this from other research in the same field, although Vilhelmson (2002), for example, glances at the matter and indicates that culture plays a role. In many more traditional studies, the focus is on how people can be more attracted to other forms of transportation than the personal car. Given the present work's cultural alignment, it is of interest to understand why people do or do not use public transportation depending either on their culture or on how PT is directed (governed) and exerts direction (governing) as a cultural expression. Due to the difficulty of changing culturally dependent values, it may be more or less realistic to hope public transport will play a prominent role in sustainable regional development.

The work will contribute to solving our sustainability problems in the transportation sector by:

- building a better understanding of why people do or do not travel by PT
- grasping the ideas/attitudes underlying the decisions made regarding the future of PT
- making suggestions for solving problems that may arise in PT.

These aims should be achievable using my approach of connecting cultural theory with transportation research findings.

The problem is tackled in the two appended papers. The first is preparatory in nature, representing a test of whether there is any evidence of culturally determined differences in PT use. This first study is based on official statistics and a questionnaire. The second paper shifts focus, instead concentrating on the organisation of PT. In this paper, written with Andreas Anderberg from the Service Research Centre at Karlstad University, the strategic management of public transport authorities (PTA) in Sweden is studied in cultural terms.

1.2 Research Framework

The present research is arranged in two stages, stage 1 – this thesis – being for the licentiate degree, and stage 2 for the doctoral degree. Stage 1, paper 1 examines the citizens of two subregions of Värmland County in Sweden, focusing on culturally explainable differences in their public transport use. Stage 1, paper 2 examines 'stakeholder network' culture in the Swedish PT sector. Of course, there is the possibility of completing stage 2 of the work with further articles if needed and with sufficient time. Paper 3 will be the continuation of paper 1 meanwhile the detailed area of interest still is not defined. Figure 1 depicts the development of the work.

More concrete ideas for upcoming papers are described in chapter 5, 'Further Research'. Figure 1 only presents an overview of the general research framework.

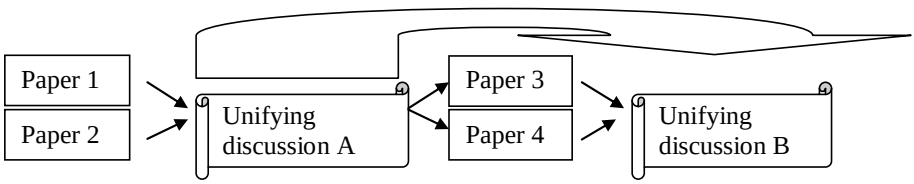

Figure 1: Research Framework

1.3 Summary of Appended Papers

Summaries of the papers are introduced early on to allow the reader to set the linking essay within a context. For the reader, this organisation makes it easier to understand the conceptual approach of the work. Furthermore, there may be readers who have not read the papers, which would preclude their being interested in the problems outlined here.

1.3.1 Paper 1: Different Places, Different Tendencies to Use Public Transport?

Paper 1 is preparatory in nature and represents a test of whether people in different places use public transport in different ways. Two data gathering methodologies were used: the primary data come from a questionnaire, complemented by official statistics from various sources. Two municipalities, Årjäng in the west and Filipstad in the east of the county of Värmland, were the areas from which official data were gathered. The questionnaire was distributed

in four rural locales in Värmland, two in the eastern and two in the western parts of the county; both subregions (i.e., Årjäng and Filipstad) are the municipalities chosen for the official data study.

Both methodological approaches yielded interesting findings. The official data indicated relatively large difference in PT use between the chosen municipalities. Clear explanations, such as population structure (in particular, the number of school-age children), physical structure, and social differences could not be found to account for these large differences in PT use. In both municipalities, however, the car was a very popular mode of transportation.

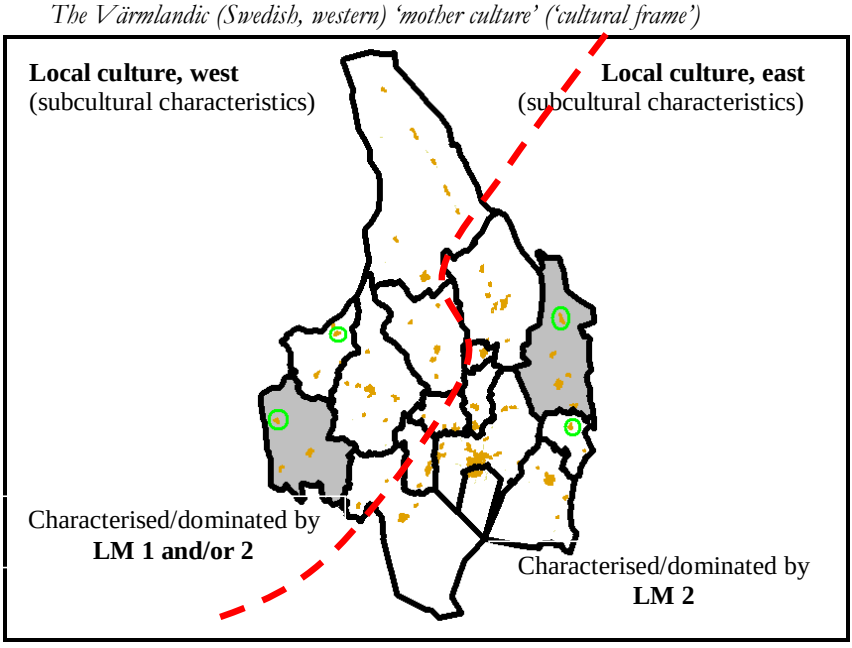

Figure 2: Schema of transport culture in Värmland (for explanation, see text)

The results from the questionnaire, although the response rate was low, confirmed the picture given by the official data. In other words, it could be established that PT was used in different ways in the different subregions and that in all cases the car was the most important mode of transportation. The questionnaire, however, gave a more detailed picture of the differences. It could be observed that people in the eastern villages travelled more regularly by PT than did those in the western villages (explained by the higher overall amount of travel in the eastern than in the western villages); however, more respondents in the western villages sometimes travelled in their leisure time.

The paper concludes with a cautious hypothesis that different 'local cultures' with subcultural characteristics exist in the subregions, apparently giving rise to different 'transport cultures'. The Värmlandic 'mother culture' (or Swedish, if you like, in the sense of dominant culture) stands for the high valuation of the car, whilst the different local transport cultures are expressed in terms of PT use. Figure 2 displays the location of the studied places and the subregions, as well as the results.

The figure depicts the two subregions which are referred to as 'local cultures' (i.e., eastern and western). These local cultures have the characteristics of subcultures. The mother culture of these subcultures is the Värmlandic cultural framework. The green circles indicate places of interest for the pilot survey study and the grey-marked municipalities indicate the locales covered by the official data. The abbreviations LM1, LM2, and LM3 stand for life-modes 1, 2, and 3. Life-mode theory was used to characterise the different subregions. As indicated by the paper's results, the cultural differences between the two subregions delineated by the red line seem to be reflected in PT use. The red line was drawn with the help of various mapped cultural characteristics and is well known in research and public opinion.

The theoretical approach focuses on exploring and defining the term 'culture'. In building an understanding of culture, the theories of Bourdieu (field, capital, and habitus), Højrup (life-mode theory), and the Birmingham School (the notion of subcultures) were used in linking travel behaviour with cultural theory.

Understanding the existence of different transport cultures in a single region can be useful for public transport authorities when planning public transport services, taking into account the customer perspective. As well, for marketing reasons, understanding and accepting cultural differences can be useful.

1.3.2 Paper 2: Organisational Culture in the Stakeholder Network of Public Transport

Against a background of cultural theory (Bourdieu, Foucault, and Habermas) and strategic management, this paper builds an understanding of the goal-setting process in Swedish public transport (PT). PT can be understood as a stakeholder network, as described by Enquist (1999, see Figure 6). The stakeholder network consists of four interested parties, three of which are examined here, namely: public transport authorities (PTAs),

politicians/principals (national and regional/local politics, i.e., the level of PTA ownership), and citizens/customers.

By analysing the presented goals in the context of the stakeholder network and the relationship between the PTAs and citizens, we establish the following: (1) There are internal conflicts between the setting of ideological goals by national governmental authorities (e.g., transport–political goals) and the slight transformation of these by regional/local political actors, as well as the implementation of these transformed goals by the PTAs. At an action/operational/detailed level, we find only a vague formulation of the transport–political goals (2). The citizens are marginalised in the goal-setting process due to the strong 'upward' orientation (national/regional/local politics) of the PTAs. This hierarchical system results in an unbalanced goal-setting situation for PT in which power is concentrated at the political/principal level, and in which the regional/local political level only has the right to *interpret* the national governmental goals. The PTAs' focus on transforming the goals formulated by the owners results in a situation in which PT is heavily influenced by political consideration and citizen requests are marginalised (see Figure 3).

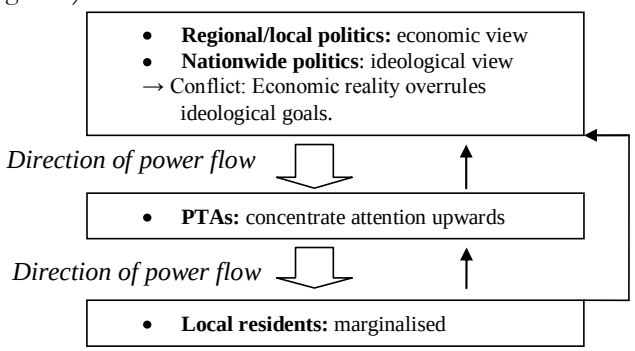

Figure 3: Decision-making hierarchy in Swedish PT

We suggest the following: (a) Give the local citizens the right to contribute their knowledge, positioning them in the decision-making hierarchy and involving them in a balanced goal-setting process. (b) Reduce the scope for interpreting the ideological goals set at the national level; a smaller scope for interpretation ought to reduce the risk of misinterpretation.

The second paper was written with PhD candidate Andreas Anderberg from the Service Research Center at Karlstad University. His contribution as the co-author of the paper are the chapters on governance and strategic management.

Furthermore, the conclusions were discussed together and his point of view is included in them. He was mainly responsible for the passenger interviews and had an important influence on the questionnaire sent to the different PTAs.

1.4 Värmland and Värmlandstrafik AB

Both of the papers described above deal with Värmland County in western Sweden. In paper 1 this local background is more obvious and crucial than in paper 2, but even paper 2 has its conceptual basis in Värmland and cites many examples from this relatively sparsely populated Swedish region. It is thus important to have an idea of the characteristics of Värmland in order to understand the important goals of sustainable regional development. Some comments on the PTA of Värmland, Värmlandstrafik AB, should also be given.

Figure 4: Värmland County in Sweden

Värmland County (see Figure 4) with its approximately 270,000 inhabitants spread over 17,500 km² (www.varmland.se) is a region strongly connected to the iron and forestry industries. Its largest centres are Karlstad, population 59,000, Kristinehamn, population 18,000, and Arvika, population 14,000 (www.scb.se). The oldest document that tells of an iron 'industry' in the area dates from 1413. Although this industry is typical of the entire county, eastern Värmland has the strongest connection with the iron industry. While there were

signs of problems in the industry in the twentieth century, especially after the Second World War, the 'iron crisis' truly arrived in the late 1970s and early 1980s. The 1980s was a decade of great structural change, when the traditional iron industry was replaced by IT and tourism, and immigration and environmental problems changed local society (Länsstyrelsen 1990). In the 1990s, Karlstad University was established in Värmland and Sweden's membership in the EU meant that Värmland received resources from the this new organisation by structural funds (Värmländskt 90-tal 2002). Today and in the future, Värmland aims to be strong in the paper and pulp (www.varmland.se), tourism, and retail industries (RTP 2003).

Värmlandstrafik AB is the monopoly provider of PT services in Värmland County. The Swedish system with generally one PTA per county is a product of the late 1970s, when the national government introduced a proposition giving responsibility for PT services to one authority per county owned by the regional and local political executive. This proposition was enacted in 1980, and its implementation in Värmland led to the establishment of Värmlandstrafik AB as a private limited company (AB = private limited company) in 1981. Before this 1980 PTA reform, Swedish PT was provided by both private and state-owned companies, which led to a very heterogeneous level of PT service. The main purpose of this reform was to improve local and regional PT service.

Turning to the road and PT history of Värmland, we can observe that today the road system still follows the physical geography, being oriented in a mainly north–south direction. This road system was built in the valleys along former water transport routes. This road system is, of course, also the basis of PT services.

In Värmland, the first buses were already running in the first decade of the twentieth century. This new form of transportation had enormous impact on peripheral villages, which led to a high status being accorded the profession of bus driver (comparable to the status of the letter carrier). The second oldest bus line in Sweden was established between Säffle and Värmlandsnäs in Värmland in ????. In the 1950s, buses were more common in Värmland than elsewhere in the country. In this period, the bus line network covered 75% of the road network of Värmland County. Due to the popularity of the private car and to population shrinkage in the countryside, many bus lines disappeared (Von Schoultz 1982). As already explained, there was no public transport authority before the 1980s and the dominant bus company before the establishment of

Värmlandstrafik AB was 'GDG Biltrafik AB' (derived from Göteborg–Dalarna–Gävle), which had its main market in Värmland. GDG also transported freight in their buses – a service still offered by PTAs (GDG 1982).

1.5 Outline

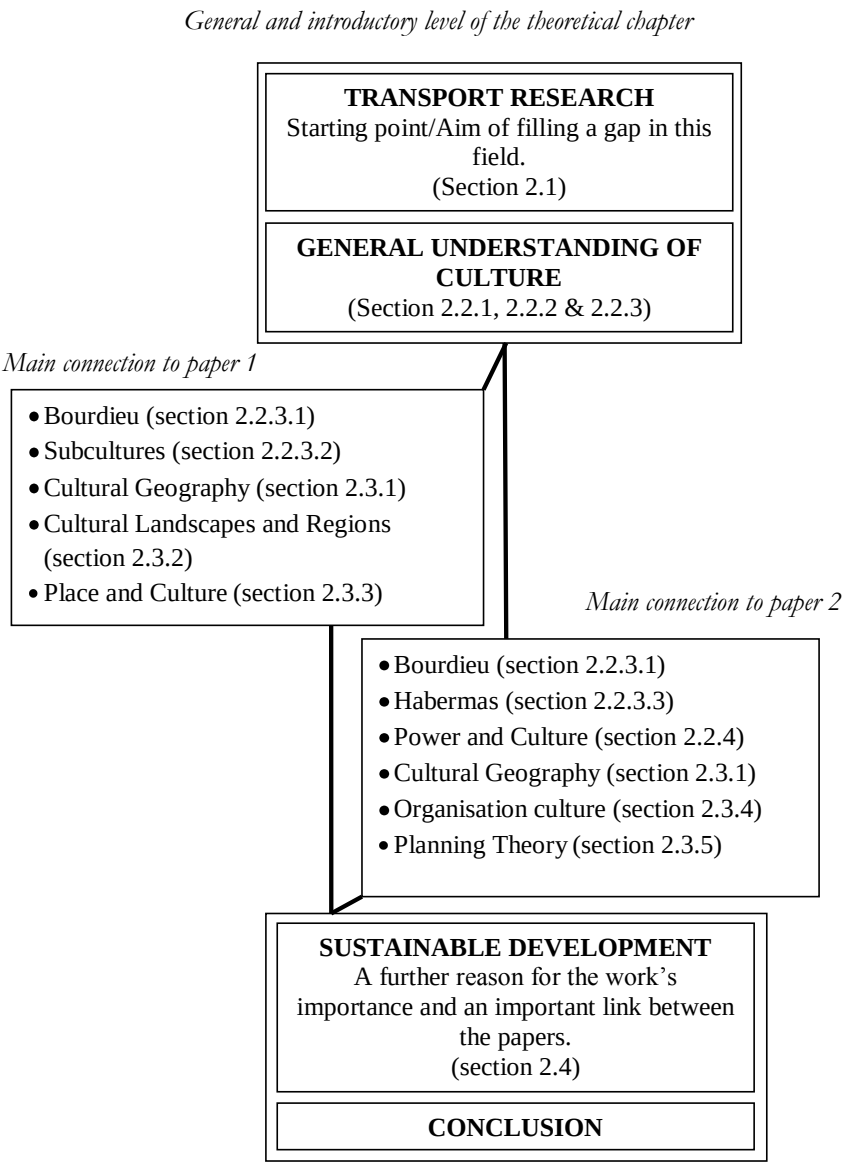

Figure 5: Outline

This introductory chapter has outlined the aim of the thesis and the context in which it should be understood. The following chapters will address the different theories on which the work is based. Due to the structure of the thesis, comprising two separate papers and this linking essay, the idea underlying the following material may be difficult to understand for a reader who has not already read the papers. Figure 5 shows how the different sections relate to the whole work, making it easier for the reader to follow the train of thought used here.

2 THEORY

2.1 Transportation

2.1.1 Transportation Is Mobility

The term 'mobility' is used in many areas, which makes it crucial to understand exactly what is meant by it here. Mobility can be understood in four different senses: physical mobility, virtual mobility, media-based mobility, and hyper mobility (Vilhelmson 2002, Frändberg et al. 2005). This work's focus on public transport means that the first of these four senses, physical mobility, is central here.

The types of mobility for different purposes can change over time and can be related to each other in four different ways. (i) *Substitution* of mobility type can occur. Normally, slow mobility types are replaced with faster ones, for example, the replacement of physical commuting by bicycle with commuting by motorcycle. (ii) *Complementation* is another relationship found when different mobility types are used to complement each other. The most obvious example, one that is very common in our lives, is complementing physical with virtual mobility, for example, writing a text message when travelling by train. (iii) *Enforcement* is the third relationship between mobility types. A good example of this is when the virtual mobility afforded by the Internet facilitates the purchase of tickets for physical mobility. (iv) *Modification* is the fourth type of relationship. For example, if road pricing is introduced in a city, our physical mobility might be modified by shifting from travelling by car to travelling by PT or travelling by car only at cheap times. From a PT point of view, it is important to highlight the substitution that *should* occur for sustainable development. Of course, PT has advantages concerning the complementation of mobility (e.g., using the Internet while travelling) and it can be a tool to promote an intended modification. In this work, however, mobility substitution is the focus, including the difficulty of attracting people to move from a fast to a slow mobility type.

2.1.2 Public Transportation

Public transport research (PTR) is dominated by empirical studies and a general theoretisation of the subject does not exist. PTR is interdisciplinary and uses the theoretical approaches of the different researchers studying public

transport. This interdisciplinary and empirically based research situation indicates that PTR has been found worth studying from many perspectives. Public transport receives, in my opinion, a lot of attention due to its dilemmatic nature: public transport offers some advantages (e.g., ecological ones) compared with other physical mobilities, but it is difficult to motivate people to use this mode of transportation. The advantages of public transport versus the problem of too few users will be outlined in this chapter.

PT's most obvious advantage is its ecofriendliness, which is described in many studies either highlighting the disadvantages of car traffic (see Van Wee 2007) or the advantages of PT (see several articles in Williams 2005). In addition, the obvious health problems connected with our extensive car use incurs societal costs (Van Wee 2007). Traffic noise can also affect people's health (Miedema 2007). Quality of life, according to Gifford and Steg (2007), is endangered by car use in both the collective and individual senses. Quality of life, of course, is affected by health problems and better ecological sustainability, but also by a feeling of limited freedom, privacy, and comfort. This indicates the necessity of balancing individual and collective (i.e., societal) interests. Without going into too much depth, it can be established that car use is connected to the 'tragedy of the commons' (see, e.g., Fellmann et al. 2003). Besides ecological advantages, PT is also safer than travelling by car. Steg (2003) states, for example, that people generally value cars more than PT except regarding safety in traffic (i.e., the lower possibility of being involved in an accident). As well, from an economic point of view, PT can have advantages over the private car, especially when travelling alone. Furthermore, we can observe an additional advantage of PT when people highly value *not* having a car, which means that the responsibility of car ownership is valued as more limiting than the freedoms afforded by the car (e.g., saved time) (see Grahn 1995, Andréasson 1995).

A common way to understand the dilemmatic position of PT is Hägerstrand's time-geographic view. Our lives are directed by constraints in time and space that Hägerstrand divides into three constraint groups (Hägerstrand 1991; see also Gottfridsson 2007, Krantz 1999):

- Capability constraints
- Coupling constraints
- Authority constraints

Capability constraints have a time orientation and depend on the individual's 'biological construction' (Hägerstrand 1991). The most obvious constraints in

this group are our needs for sleep and food. The other constraints are more spatially oriented. Coupling constraints refer to the need to have contact with other people at certain places at certain times. Authority constraints include, as the name indicates, restrictions imposed by a form of authority, for example, opening hours or, in the context of the present work, timetables.

Activity-based transport research is closely related to Hägerstrand's typology of constraints. Hanson and Hanson (1993) equate the study of activities with the study of people. They regard activity-based transport research as important for a better understanding of travel habits and urban areas. Activity-based transport research is very popular today. Its alignment, however, is individual: activities are studied from certain individual's point of view, so such research stresses the unique travel pattern of each person. A deep understanding of individual travel patterns is, of course, valuable for understanding PT. However, PTAs have to generalise needs due to this transport mode's characteristic sharing of transportation. Trips from place A to place B via PT are impossible to individualise, so the transportation needs at different places must be generalised.

Paper 1 conducts a trial generalisation of demands placed on PT, seeking an explanation in cultural terms. The group of place A villagers might, generally, have different travel demands than place B villagers do. The individual travel patterns are still worth studying, but a PTA would need a different tool for planning PT services depending on a place's culturally based preferences. Paper 2, on the other hand, focuses on the important customer perspective of the PTAs (see Lindvall 2001 regarding the importance of the customer perspective). Without a clear customer perspective, neither individual nor general preferences can be understood, making it even more difficult for PTAs to be competitive. Once again I want to emphasise that activity-based transport research with its focus on individuals is indeed important, though this work instead focuses on PTA work and on individuals as members of collectives with different place-dependent cultural preferences.

2.1.3 Culture and Transport Research

Culture is a marginalised concept in transport research, although the concept is more or less consciously used by many researchers. In this linking essay I want to try to connect transport research and a concept of culture. According to Hjorthol (2006), there is a greater need for child day care today because two

incomes are increasingly the norm. This entails more journeys between home and the day care centre or kindergarten, journeys that often are made by car (though men are more likely to use the car than women). One of Hjorthol's findings is that even at early ages children get used to car travel, making them uncritical car-users in the future. This finding of Hjorthol's is culturally explainable, and can be observed in the next chapter.

If the discussion is based on individual choice, PT always stands in contrast to the car. The car symbolises freedom due to its flexibility, allowing travel whenever one wants to wherever one likes. In addition, the possibility of transporting goods strengthens the car's symbolic value (Andréasson 2000, Gottfridsson 2007). If people do not have a car, either by choice or for other reasons, the limiting characteristics of cars (e.g., petroleum prices, maintenance costs, and time spent finding parking) are highlighted (Grahn 1995). Against that background, properly working PT with frequent departures may offer more freedom of choice than a car (Andréasson 1995).

The mode of transportation chosen is connected in many ways with symbolism and values (both these terms are important in understanding culture). In scholarly articles, the car is very often described in negative terms, symbolising traffic jams, health problems, climate change, etc. If we shift our focus from the academic world to people's everyday lives, I have already described how the car serves as a symbol of freedom for many. Furthermore, the brand of the car and how the car is driven can symbolise the individual owner's personality, status, lifestyle, and so on (Choo & Mokhtarian 2004).

On the other hand, PT is also connected with positive and negative values. Clearly negative is the connection between PT and its lower status compared to that of the car. Guiver (2007) states that bus travellers observe themselves (according to some perspectives) as 'second class inhabitants'. In my own questionnaire from paper 1, but also when talking informally to people, it is observable that PT is generally regarded as important to society. On the other hand, the offered PT services are not more widely used because PT is regarded something for 'others', i.e., those who cannot afford a car or do not have a driving license. PT could thus be seen as a social service. A similar result was obtained by Eriksson and Westin (2003). They observed that bus services in areas of low population density are an important symbol of a living village: the bus symbolises connection to the rest of the world, which makes PT more than simply a mode of transportation. If the preceding is a negative example, where

the status of PT as more than a mode of transportation has little or no effect on the number of users, Schilling (1999) provides positive examples from Germany (Geissbockbahn) and Sweden (Kustpilen) when this 'more than a mode of transportation' affected the amount of PT use by shaping a PT service identity that reached out to potential users. As an aside, there is an interesting project with this conceptual basis in Switzerland, where a railway line is threatened with closure. The idea is to introduce modern steam trains, to make train travel on the route more than simply a mode of transportation (www.modern-steam-hauenstein.ch).

Although the above discussion is easily connected to cultural theory, the term 'culture' is only used in a limited sense. However, the discussion makes it more obvious how bearing culture in mind helps us understand why individuals choose a particular mode of transportation. Due to the scholarly stress on *individuals*, I claim that PTAs have experienced difficulties planning, because, as already established, PT services represent a generalisation of individual transportation needs in different places (PT offers services only from place A to place B). The cultural focus of this thesis should thus be seen from a PTA's point of view. This consideration is the basis of paper 1, which focuses on possible differences in transportation cultures between different places. Prior research has made me conscious of individual reasons that can explain travel behaviour; from a PTA's point of view. However, a place's *general* (i.e., aggregate) transportation culture might be more useful when planning actual PT services. Paper 2, on the other hand, has its roots in the idea that understanding the surrounding culture can only be useful if the PTA's 'inner' culture (i.e., organisational culture) highly values customer interests. Due to the second paper's organisational alignment, an understanding of the organisational structure of Swedish PTAs is described in the following chapter.

2.1.4 The Organisation of Swedish PT

If we now turn our attention to PT, it is also possible to observe these different previously mentioned interests from a PT organisational point of view. Figure 6 (source: Enquist 1999) shows the different parties of interest in PT. For the present thesis, the upper triangle is the focus: the citizens, politicians, and the PTA. The citizens' corner represents all the individuals in a society and their expectations and actions that influence the PTA, for example, voting in certain politicians, using PT, and complaining about PT. In Sweden, the politicians at the regional and local levels are also the represent owners of the PTA in one or another form. This situation gives them a great deal of power over the PTA.

Enquist (1999) says that the politicians have the priority right of interpretation over the PTA. Without giving it too much attention at this point, this statement leads us to Foucault and his discussion of power (see paper 2). The PTA in the lower left corner is the provider of PT services; as explained, it is directly dependent on the owners, but also is responsible to the citizens to provide PT services.

In other words, an owner, a user, and a provider of PT can be observed in the model in Figure 6. Moreover, we can observe a similar situation as was described more generally before: individual and societal interests must be balanced, here by the PTA.

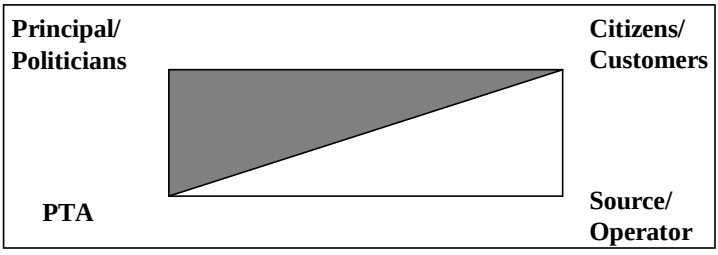

Figure 6: Parties of interest in PT (according to Enquist 1999)

Waldo (2002) describes different parties interested in planning questions, especially physical planning. Besides citizens, we can also find politicians and civil servants. Recalling Enquist's network of PT stakeholders, we can observe that, except for the operator, all these parties are also stakeholders in physical planning questions. Interestingly, in Waldo's interviews with, among others, politicians and civil servants, some civil servants working in municipal-level physical planning described their powerlessness to affect the actual planning of PT services that others, primarily politicians, determine by their willingness to pay for PT.

Carlstein (1994), on the other hand, concludes in his report that citizens do not really have the power to make decisions concerning their environment or changes made to it. PT is part of the people's physical environment and important for their sustainable transportation needs.

These three or four main stakeholders seem to be usual, at least in state-owned companies or authorities. The function of the stakeholder network is also important for PT and the problems outlined here provide a basis for paper 2.

2.2 Culture

2.2.1 The Term 'Culture' and its Origin

The word 'culture' has an enormous range of interpretations. Due to this work's focus on culture, it is important to understand this term both in general and how it is used in the present context of public transport. A definition of 'culture' is a good place to start.

'Culture' is sometimes used as the opposite of the word 'nature', although that can be questioned. One of the word's early meanings referred to agriculture or to look after the naturally growing. Williams (1976) points out the change in meaning of the term 'culture' in modern times. In the eighteenth century, culture was a synonym for 'civilisation'. This can be explained by the roots of the word 'culture' in 'agriculture', where the word has connotations of 'civilised way'. Civilisation currently refers to both behaviour and morals. 'Culture' as a synonym for 'civilisation' can be called a French notion, because the German word 'Kultur' had a stricter religious, intellectual, and artistic meaning, whilst 'civilisation' referred to the political, economic, and technical life. The rivalry between Germany and France can explain these different meanings and interpretations of 'culture'. This rivalry might also serve as a starting point as 'culture' and 'civilisation' transform themselves from synonyms to antonyms (Eagleton 2001).

Both these words have normative and descriptive parts: they can both neutrally *describe* a life form and '*norm*' things such as art and city life. At about 1900, various aspects of the word 'civilisation' began to split apart. The normative aspect of 'civilisation' (behaviour, politeness, etc.) became attributes of the word 'culture', indicating that culture was shifting from something individual to something social. At the same time, when this splitting up of attributes was taking place, the term 'civilisation' acquired a clearly imperialistic sense that created bad impressions in some political circles. A term to refer to life as it should be, in contrast to life as it is, was needed and was found in the French word 'culture' (Eagleton 2001).

A longer discussion of the historical development of the term 'culture' is not important here, but it is relevant to know that 'culture' has clearly normative implications. The word's stress on social conditions and its normative alignment connects it with politics, which will be important in later parts of this work in which politics play a certain role.

2.2.2 This Work's Position vis-à-vis Cultural Theory

This thesis's position can be described as both anthropological and normative, which leads the reader directly to cultural studies or, as it is called sometimes, the Birmingham School. This thesis is interested in the entirety of a way of life. The cornerstones of cultural studies are:

- Interdisciplinarity
- Methodological pluralism
- Contextualising
- Power criticism
- Reflexivity
  (Fornäs 2007-12-04)

In my opinion, many of these factors are obvious in the papers that are the basis of this text.

Couldry (2000) and Burke (2004) both give practical descriptions of how culture can be understood. Without a doubt, culture is a problematic term, as I discovered quite early in my research. It is difficult to categorise what is and is not culture due to the term's connection to humanity. In some way, one can claim that where there are people, there is also culture – a thought that gives an idea of how problematic the term can be. Burke describes the problem from a historical perspective:

> It used to refer to "high" culture. It was extended "downward", to continue the metaphor, to include "low" culture or popular culture. More recently, it has expanded sideways as well. (Burke 2004)

In my research I use the word 'culture' in the more recent broad sense, which also refers to practices (Burke 2004). This understanding of culture is akin to Couldry's, who regards culture as including the ordinary or a certain 'way of life' (Couldry 2000; see also Lawson 2003). Alvesson's (2001) formulation provides a good complement to this understanding of culture as 'way of life':

> Culture means a certain level of devotion, depth, and stability. It entails directing but also locking up thinking and acting. (translated from the Swedish by the author)

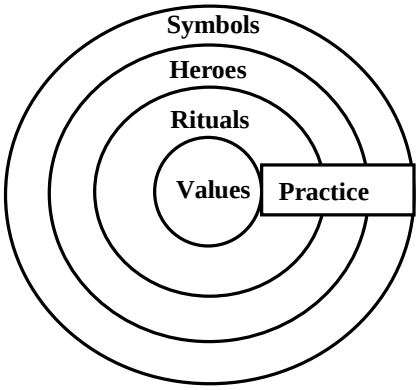

Figure 7: Culture according to Hofstede (Hofstede 2001).

According to Hofstede and Hofstede (2005), people's values are the most hidden part of their culture. Values are general tendencies to prefer one thing to another and are connected with positive or negative feelings. These values, however, are displayed to the environment by rituals, heroes, and symbols that together are referred to as a people's practice, way of life, or customs. Figure 7 depicts this onion-like structure of culture, in which the surface layer is relatively easy for everybody to observe but deeper layers become increasingly difficult to discern. Values are the most stable part of a group's culture, even though practices (i.e., symbols, heroes, and rituals) may have changed; children, for example, often do not have the same cultural heroes (such as musicians) as their parents, but still share their parents' values. That can be explained by the age at which cultural values and practices are learned. People learn their culture's values early, between 0 and 10–12 years of age in the family, whilst practices are acquired later in life in school and at work. Thus, it is logical that there should be different national, regional, subregional, or categorical (e.g., family culture, easily recognisable in Gottfridsson 2007) levels of culture. These levels overlap, which makes it possible to observe subcultures (categories such as family and youth culture) in a single 'main' or mother culture (overarching culture divided into geographic parts such as countries and regions).

Although I sympathize cultural studies and the 'cultural turn', there is a quite new (although with a clear relationship to the nineteenth century) direction in cultural research in which an evolutionary, biological approach is combined with humanities and social science approaches. Such interdisciplinary cultural studies are practised, for example, at the Centre for the Study of Cultural Evolution at Stockholm University, founded in 2007. The present thesis is in

sympathy with such interdisciplinarity, which even crosses the boundaries of social science. The Centre describe themselves as follows:

> Our interdisciplinary approach is characterized by the insight that humans are shaped by biological as well as cultural processes. (www.intercult.su.se)

Although this thesis will not combine empirical results with mathematical modelling, as done at the Centre in Stockholm, it will attempt to apply a similar interdisciplinarity. As an aside, I wish to speculate that this 'evolutionary turn' in cultural research could be explained by the environmental problems with which we are now confronted. Nature, in natural science terms, is heavily affected by humans and, because humanity is itself part of nature, these anthropogenic changes in nature (e.g., climate change) in turn affect people's living conditions, which of course affect our culture.

Returning to Hofstede's idea of culture as depicted in Figure 7, for this thesis the term 'practice' should be highlighted. As has been stated, describing culture as people's practice, according to Burke (2004), typifies a broad understanding of culture. The reader will find the term 'practice' used at several points in this work, and it always relates to this understanding of culture.

2.2.3 Cultural Theory

2.2.3.1 Bourdieu's Capital, Field, and Habitus

An important figure in cultural sociology is Pierre Bourdieu, whose book *The Rules of Art* (1996) presents a theory based on three key concepts: capital, habitus, and social fields (see Figure 8). These three concepts are closely related to each other and should not be treated in isolation.

Social fields are the basis of this theoretical schema. In a certain social field, people share an understanding of certain universal laws, giving the members of the field a 'common sense' (e.g., a perception of the beauty of art). A social field is an institutionalised context that sets entrance requirements or tests for the admission of new members; for example, someone who wants to be a part of the academic world must pass certain entrance examinations. According to Bourdieu (1996), we can say that the stricter the entrance rules, the stronger the field. These basic rules are called 'doxa'. The doxa is changeable, as we can observe when talking about art understood to be beautiful. An important sign

of the existence of a social field is its relative autonomy from its environment. Despite this 'rule', there is a hierarchical relationship between different fields, which means that there is a dominant field (e.g., business is today the strongest field and thus influences other fields, such as culture and education). Fields generate capital in economic, cultural (e.g., literature), and social (e.g., contacts) forms. This capital in turn shapes the habitus, which is an understanding of what to do, acquired without formal learning, or 'a coherent set of values and orientations' (Duncan & Ley 1994). The circle is closed by the fact that we more easily gain entry into a certain field if we are familiar with a certain habitus that is connected to this certain field.

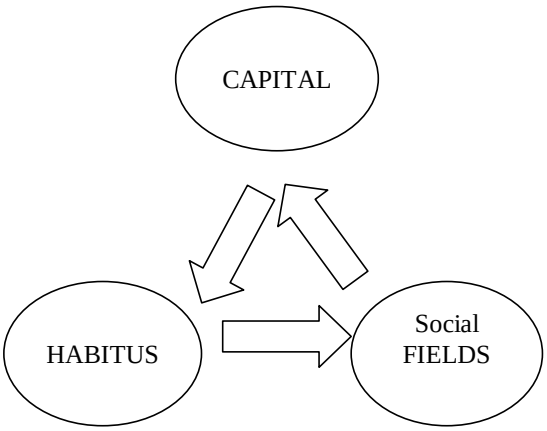

Figure 8: Field, Capital, and Habitus

Due to belonging to a social field connected with certain kinds of capital, we have certain behaviours or practices – i.e., a way of life – that reveal our habitus. Both appended papers use Bourdieu's theory as a basis for understanding cultural differences. Paper 1 focuses on the idea that there could be geographical cultural or differences in habitus, specifically, concerning PT use, whilst paper 2 is interested in the practices or habitus steering the stakeholder network in PT.

2.2.3.2. Subcultures

After explaining how culture in general can be understood by citing Bourdieu's field, capital, and habitus concepts (and Hofstede & Hofstede), an important term that remains to be defined is 'subcultures'. The roots of this word can be found in British and American cultural studies, which initially concentrated on youth cultures. Subcultures can be '… collective sociocultural patterns in a

given society' (Fornäs 1995), making 'subculture' another word for 'lifestyle', but 'viewed from another angle' (Fornäs 1995). Although the term 'subculture' is explained in social terms, it can also be used in understanding geographical cultural differences. With help of the following quotation, a 'geographical turn' of subculture will be given:

> [Subcultures can be seen as] a compromise solution to two contradictory needs: the need to create and express autonomy and difference from parents and, by extension, their culture, and the need to maintain the security of existing ego defences and the parental identifications which support them. (Fornäs 1995, citing Cohen)

This quotation presents a clearly sociocultural example of how subcultures can be understood. For a geographer, cultural differences between subregions are interesting and can be described in a way similar to that conveyed in the above quotation. According to a geographical perspective, the parent culture is the shared culture of a region. The subregions are subcultures, because they attempt to display their autonomy from the parent culture while simultaneously needing the security of the parent, regional culture.

2.2.3.3. Habermas' Public

Jürgen Habermas belongs to the Frankfurt School of critical theory. As the word 'critical' indicates, this School and, of course, Habermas too, take a critical view of culture as described today. Habermas' book *Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit* (Habermas 1990), first published in 1962, , describes and critically discusses how the meaning of the word 'public' has changed, using the eighteenth century meaning as a reference point. In a simplified way, he describes society as having two sides, private and public. The private side contains all the people, the *Publikum*, which includes the bourgeoisie. The public sphere contains the power, which includes the state and the royal court (Habermas describes the publicness of the court by the example of the French king Louis XIV who made his life public. Between these two spheres was a bridge called 'public opinion', which connected the bourgeoisie to the state.

According to many perspectives, the changes Habermas observed in the 1950s and 1960s are still in process at the beginning of the twenty-first century, although he does romanticise the eighteenth century. The described conditions of eighteenth-century society, through historical events such as the Enlightenment and the French Revolution, became transformed into a system

in which components of the private sphere were incorporated into the state and, vice versa, components of the public sphere became privatised. Retirement insurance, for example, was clearly part of the private sphere in the eighteenth century but subsequently became 'nationalised'. On the other hand, by political parties and other clubs and interest groups, the private sphere became part of the public sphere. Public opinion is now 'mediatised' and in many ways manipulates people (who now have the right to vote) who are not involved in an interest group or a political party (i.e., people who do not know what or whom they should vote for). Public opinion is therefore shaped by the power of advertising, newspapers, etc. News is in some ways no longer objective but subjective and manipulative.

For the purposes of this thesis, Habermas's concept of 'public' is interesting, because PT users (and citizens generally through paying taxes) are the *Publikum*, whilst the PTA is an authority that, although indirectly, represents the public sphere (the state). Habermas's thought makes an especially important contribution to paper 2.

2.2.4 Power as an Important Concept in Cultural Theory

'Culture' and 'power' are two interlinked terms (Couldry 2000), as is obvious when reading cultural theory. Bourdieu, 'a philosopher turned anthropologist and sociologist' (Burke 2004), often uses the term 'power' in *The Rules of Art* (Bourdieu 1996). Foucault's use of the term 'power' is well known and important in the study of culture. As well, cultural studies 'theorises' power in order to understand culture, as can be seen in Fornäs (1995). In the present thesis, power in relation to culture is of interest, so it is relevant to outline Bourdieu's, Foucault's, and Fornäs's views of power in relation to culture.

Bourdieu's view of culture and how to explain it has been outlined above, where the hierarchy between different fields was mentioned. If there is a hierarchical system, there must also be power, i.e., something or somebody that exerts power over something or somebody else. For example, in our present society, fields that highly value economic factors are highly ranked, outranking other fields with a lower valuation of economy in their capital.

Foucault's use of the term 'power' has two main components. First, he sees power as something productive and, second, he sees power as located with and in important people (Lärkner 2008). There is no possibility of owning power; rather, it can only be exercised. Moreover, power is always with us, we need it,

and it is impossible to avoid it. In Foucault's book *The Order of Things* (1974), the two terms 'cogito' and 'the unthought' are outlined. This dyad can be used in studying who has the right of interpretation. The cogito and the unthought are distributed and determine the knowledge stabilised as the cogito and the knowledge undermined as the unthought. From a long-term perspective, all knowledge is undermined; from a short-term perspective, however, some knowledge can stabilise while other knowledge may be undermined earlier.

As can be read in Fornäs' book *Cultural Theory & Late Modernity* (1995), the social spheres are the *frame* of cultural activity at the same time as they facilitate it. One of these social spheres is the power sphere. Like Foucault, Fornäs also sees power as needed for a functioning society. Power is exercised as described in the following quotation:

> Power agents may be individuals, groups, social categories or autonomous and abstract social or cultural mechanisms (embodied in institutions or symbolic systems). (Fornäs 1995)

In Fornäs' case, a pair of terms can be constructed consisting of 'power' and 'resistance'. When there is power in a society, there is always also resistance to it, which incorporates criticism of the predominant power. As a geographer, I find the connection between power/resistance and centre/periphery to be suggestive. According to Fornäs, in both cases one can observe an asymmetric relationship. Three asymmetries can be observed, here explained by citing the centre/periphery pair:

- Centres are different from peripheries (e.g., centres are more powerful)
- The flow of money, goods, people, information, etc., differs depending on the direction of the flow
- There are more peripheries than centres
  (Fornäs 1995)

This way of understanding power/resistance in terms of centre/periphery leads to Christaller's central place theory, first presented in *Die zentralen Orte Süddeutschlands* in 1933 (Christaller 1933), in which it is possible to discern the previously mentioned relationships and hierarchical power systems in a geographical framework (see Fellman et al. 2003 for a presentation).

2.3 The Connection to the Study Areas

2.3.1 Cultural Geography

The intention of this chapter is to connect terms that are important in this thesis with terms used in cultural theory and geography; this highlights the geographical orientation of the work.

What is cultural geography? The connection of the field of human geography with the term 'culture' makes it difficult to answer this simple question clearly. Instead of describing what cultural geography *is*, describing what cultural geographers *do* may be helpful:

> … cultural geographers now routinely engage with complex but important questions about social processes such as identity formation, the construction of cultural difference, citizenship and belonging. These processes also challenge our understanding of such core geographical categories as space and place, landscape and environment, public and private. But cultural geographies, we argue, also link such ideas and imaginations with our changing material world. (Atkinson et al. 2005a)

Due to the broadness of cultural geography, I will highlight certain terms that are central to this work and connect them to cultural geography. Of course, PT deals with travel, which is a spatial practice and a central research field in geography. Cultural geography is also concerned with the spatial practice of travel. An example drawn from tourism research gives a picture of how culture is understood in this work:

> … we might address the relationship between travel and tourism, travellers and tourists, as cultures of travel. In popular, and many academic, accounts travel is seen as a superior process when contrasted with tourism. Travel is seen as an attempt to engage with the unknown and the different, to expose oneself to other ways of life and cultures, while tourism tends to be defined in terms of visiting places that are made familiar and similar to the place from whence you come – perhaps the epitome being the English breakfast or pub located in a Mediterranean resort. (Crang 2005)

In other words, it is possible to divide travellers into different cultures of travel; Crang (2005) calls these the explorer, traveller, and tourist cultures. This is a

relatively obvious example of an approach to categorising groups that is similar to that used in paper 1. Paper 1 suggests that the existence of different travel cultures, or, as they are called in the paper, 'transport cultures', is dependent on the geographical location of the villages and their inhabitants.

This first paper also makes use of the term 'identity', which in this case is not seen as purely individual; rather, '… identities are articulated relationally across boundaries of social inclusion and exclusion' (Atkinson et al. 2005b). Human identities are typically viewed individually. However, in the national, regional, gender, or class contexts we can talk about both shared and individual identities (Martin 2005). This means that the shared identities presented are built on various individual identities that negotiate between different lifestyles. In paper 1, it is possible to regard the different subregions studied as subregional identities. This understanding is, of course, based on the concept of national or regional identity:

> National or regional identity, for instance, involves subjects' perception of the importance of territorial location and history in the formation of elements that make up their common identity. "National characteristics" may also be specified, perhaps controversially, in terms of regional cultural and social "traditions": the customs and culture of southern Italians as "amoral" and individualistic, for instance. (Martin 2005)

Less connected with paper 1 than with paper 2 are the terms 'citizenship' and 'governance'. The term 'governance' has become popular in recent decades. In many ways, the term deals with the state's changing role in society, from one of sovereignty to that of a regulating authority (Jonas & While 2005). In PT, this new state function (no less territorial than before) is quite obvious. Later in this work, I present Sweden's transport–political goals, in which the management of state interests is obvious. These changes connected with the ascendance of the term 'governance' entail the redistribution of power and responsibility (Jonas & While 2005). The state is transferring power to other parties, which calls for more responsibility and accountability among these parties standing in relationship to the regulating state. To cite a concrete example, the PTAs and their owners receive power from the state (to have a monopoly on PT services in a region) and are subject to transport–political goals that regulate their work. The responsibility of the PTA and its owners relative to the state is thus increased.

The term 'citizenship' is not directly used in paper 2, but the term 'citizen' is. Of course, these terms are closely related, and it is interesting to consider what 'citizenship' entails. Citizenship is associated with rights and duties in the society in which the citizens have their membership and participate, an understanding that goes back to the ancient Greeks (Aristotle) (O'Byrne 2005). Even though Marshall (1950) is criticised in many ways today, his three-stage schema of the evolution of citizenship is still important in understanding the term. The three stages he outlines are the attainment of civil rights, political rights, and social rights: civil rights include individual freedoms; political rights represent the citizens' ability to participate in modern democratic political system; and social rights include the rights to welfare and education needed to build a welfare state (O'Byrne 2005). For paper 2, citizen participation represents a critical result that should be attainable in a modern 'technologised' environment:

> … we can rethink the concept of participation beyond liberal democracy towards a globalised, radical democracy made possible by information technology … (O'Byrne 2005)

Citizenship can be seen as connected to the concept of governance, as discussed earlier. By conferring power and responsibility (which I regard as similar to the rights/duties dyad) on new actors, democracy strengthens itself. By conferring power on the citizenry, democracy grants citizenship new rights, which in turn demands more responsibility (duties) of the citizens.

The last term that is important to the whole work and where a connection to cultural geography is reasonable, is 'environment'. 'Environment' is a more complicated term than it seems at first. Looking back in time, we could say that 'environment' used to be an unproblematic term, referring simply to human beings' surroundings in the world, which were used and managed by them. Today this 'simple' understanding of 'environment' is supplemented by theoretical developments and policy interests in which 'environment' is viewed as '… a moral qualifier and a realm of contested meanings' (Eden 2005). The terms 'nature' and 'environment' are, obviously, relatively near each other, which makes it useful to have a definition of 'environment' as distinct from 'nature':

> To distinguish more carefully between them, we could say that the environment is often (but implicitly) conceived as primarily inorganic, in

> contrast to the organicism of nature, and functional, in contrast to the visual or pictorial aestheticism of landscape. Hence we talk about "environmental pollution" and "environmental management", not natural pollution or management (which would be read as having the opposite meaning). (Eden 2005)

Environmental problems – due to the terms 'inorganic' and 'functional alignment' – are thus socially constructed, which of course does not mean that they do not exist, but that they are '… named and framed so as to be identifiable and actionable by humans' (Eden 2005). The social construction of environmental problems can be observed in how different policies for addressing these problems are formulated. Dobson (1990) defines 'light' green policies and groups as 'environmentalism', which is failing to change the environmentally damaging reality, and 'dark' green politics, which he calls 'ecologism', that aim to effect a more radical change of societies and economies (Eden 2005; compare with the later outlined discourses of ecological modernisation and ecological footprints). This unclear definition of environment gives too broad a scope for interpretation. Environmental 'alignments' can be observed in all business branches, and in some cases the term 'environment' is simply used incorrectly (Eden 2005). In brief, we can say that there are different meanings of the word 'environment', or different 'environments'. Due to the popularity of the term 'sustainable development', which is connected to the term 'environment', section 2.4 will outline the elements of 'sustainable development'.

2.3.2 Cultural Landscapes and Regions

The term landscape is anchored in both nature and culture, nature being represented by 'land' and culture by 'scape' (shape). Olwig (1993) describes the term as follows:

> … an area carved out by axe and plough, which belongs to the people who have carved it out. It carries suggestions of being an area of cultural identity based, however loosely, on tribal and/or blood ties.

Due to the present work's Scandinavian focus, it is crucial to cite the Danish and Swedish terms *landskab* and *landskap*, respectively (Mitchell 2005). Although the terms in these two languages are related to the English, German, and Dutch terms (landscape, *Landschaft*, and *landschap*, respectively), both the Danish and

Swedish uses of the word are historically not connected just to a region, but also to laws and cultural identity (Mitchell 2005). The term 'region' is itself difficult to definite – above all for a geographer. The *Oxford Dictionary of English*, however, defines the term in its geographical sense as follows: 'an area, especially part of a country or the world, having definable characteristics but not always fixed boundaries' (www.oxfordreference.com).

Two different forms of cultural (i.e., 'human shaped') regions should be outlined here. Cultural regions always incorporate artefacts, mentefacts, and sociofacts:

- Artefacts are physical objects (e.g., houses and modes of transportation)
- Mentefacts are ideologies and values
- Sociofacts refer to social organisation (e.g., family structure)

(www.nationalgeographic.com, Antrop 2003)

First, the administrative region (basically a form of functional region) is relevant to the present work. Of course, an administrative region is limited in area by administrative boundaries governing matters such as taxation, medical treatment, policing, and corporate regional departments (Castensson 1994); municipalities and counties are examples of such administrative regions. The area of responsibility of PTAs in Sweden is directly limited by county borders, making them tools of administrative regions. An administrative region thus represents the spatial organisation of a certain culture.

The other significant form of cultural region is the formal region, sometimes also known as the homogenous region. The formal region represents a spatial distribution of cultural traits such as language, religion, values, food, and music (www.nationalgeographic.com, Henning & Liljenäs 1992). The boundaries of a formal region are not as sharp as those of an administrative region, and these two forms of regions need not overlap. Figures 9 to 13 all show the distribution of different types of formal regions on maps of Sweden or Värmland.

What Hofstede and Hofstede (2005) call national or regional culture can be discerned in the Scandinavian terms for landscape, which refer to a form of administrative region (Henning & Liljenäs 1992) and help us describe regional identities (a description of the complex term 'regional identity' can be found in Ek 1992). However, neither 'landscape' nor the administrative regional division of today mirrors culturally homogenous regions. Taking the example of Värmland, the region of main interest in this work and a Swedish county and

'landscape' often perceived as relatively homogenous, it is possible to observe cultural differences within it that have their roots in the overlapping of administrative and mental or homogenous regions.

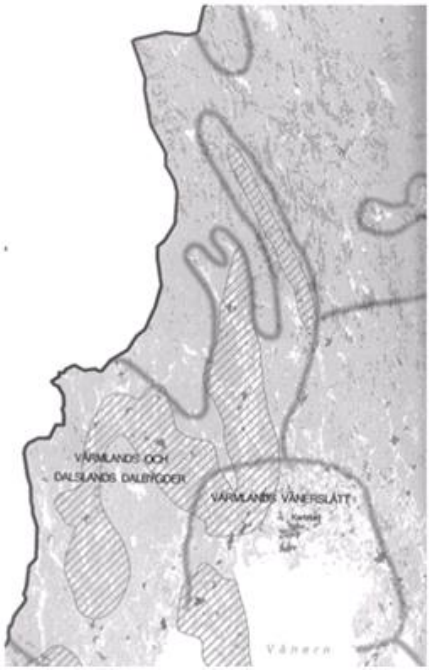

Figure 9: Cultural landscapes, Source: Nationalatlas (1994)

Figure 10: Farm types, Source: Henning and Liljenäs (1992)

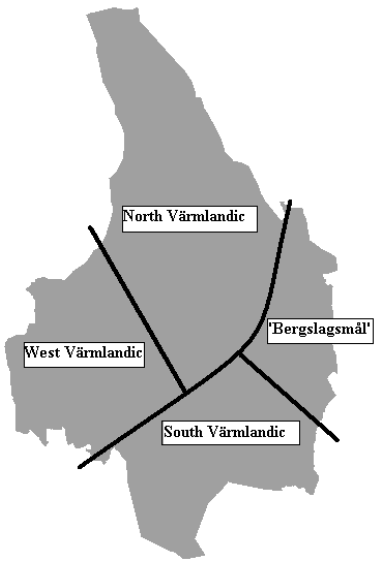

Figure 11: Dialects, Simplified Broberg map

Figure 12: Building types, Source: Henning and Liljenäs (1992)

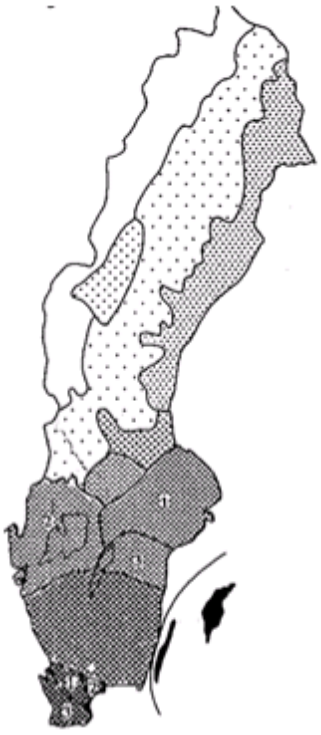

Figure 13: Human geographic regions, Source: Henning and Liljenäs (1992)

The maps from Erixon (as cited by Ek 1992, 1994, Henning & Liljenäs 1992; different types of farms, Figure 10), de Geer (de Geer as cited by Henning & Liljenäs 1992; different types of buildings, Figure 12), Nelson (as cited by Henning & Liljenäs 1992, Ek 1992; human geographic regions, Figure 13), the Swedish National Atlas (Nationalatlas 1994; Swedish cultural landscapes, Figure 9), and Broberg (Broberg 1973; dialects of Värmland, Figure 11) all exemplify different regional divisions. In all cases, we can observe regional differences within Värmland and in all the maps there is a boundary that delimits the eastern part of Värmland. Interestingly, this eastern part of the county is in all cases called Bergslagen – a region with a typical background and identity of mining and industry, which, due to structural changes in recent decades, made the region/landscape a 'problematic region'. As well, the southern part of the county is shown as separate in three of the five maps.

Without discussing the complex relationship between the terms 'nature' and 'culture', I believe it is relatively easy to observe that the cultural landscape is

connected with the natural landscape (Widgren 1994). Iron founding could not have been a 'regional identifying factor' of a formal region if there were no iron resources in the natural landscape. In other words, the natural landscape is the basis of the cultural landscape (the Centre for the Study of Cultural Evolution in Stockholm can be recalled in this context). However, the different boundaries of the administrative and the mental regions are problematic. This is, of course, especially interesting when we recall that the PTAs in Sweden are directly connected to administrative boundaries.

Regions can also be hierarchical. Taking North America as an example (see Castensson 1994), North America consists of two nations, the USA and Canada. These two nations can in turn be divided into several more or less large linguistic subregions, including French-speaking Québec and Spanish-speaking southern California. The same thing can be done in Scandinavia, which includes Sweden, which in turn can be further divided into Götaland, Svealand, and Norrland. The county of Värmland belongs to both Sweden and Svealand. Värmland can be further divided into subregions (e.g., municipalities or cultural subregions as in paper 1). In paper 2, we can also observe a situation in which the higher ranked region in the regional hierarchy does not rule over the lower regions in the hierarchy. Here, Fornäs (1995) and his geographical metaphor for power and resistance can be recalled and connected to the results of paper 2, as summarised in section 1.3.1.

2.3.3 Place and Culture

Geographical research that does not use the term 'place' is nearly unthinkable. Here, however, 'place' will be used as a bridge between cultural theory and geography. Due to this use of the term, the humanistic geographers' view of 'place' should be outlined. Agnew (1987) identifies three components of place:

1. 'Locale, the settings in which social relations are constituted …'
2. '… location, the geographical area encompassing the settings for social interaction as defined by social and economic processes operating at a wider scale …'
3. '… sense of the place, the local "structure of feeling"'
   (All quotations from Johnston et al. 1994)

The sense of place is central to humanistic geography. The sense of place as part of the description of the term 'place' consists in turn of two different but interlocking elements:

1. The character intrinsic to a place itself
2. The attachments people themselves have to a place

(Johnston et al. 1994)

The first of these senses concerns the unique physical characteristics or imagability of places. The second sense concerns the daily life of individuals and society and the strong connection of these individuals to places by means of their experiences, memories, and intentions (Johnston et al. 1994).

Both these senses stress what is unique, and by that means, the particular identity of a place – or, using the expression freely, the 'soul' of a place (see Johnston & Sidaway 2004). The identity of a place is shaped by the practices of the place, and the connection to other places is maintained by these practices. Important in this context is that the identity of a place is not only the product of a feeling of sameness throughout a place, but primarily concerns processes of social interaction. This makes places *relational* (and this, perhaps, is of greatest concern in this thesis), differences being of importance (Jonasson 2000). Human practice is thus the basis of a place and its identity:

> It also means that human practice creates places because it is deeply embedded in human "nature" – the social IS spatially constructed too! (Jonasson 2000)

Now, we are ready to establish the connection between place and culture. According to Braunerhielm (2006), who in her text refers to Hall (1995), culture is a home or place to which we belong 'naturally'. Place helps us to give a home to culture. This points to a strong connection between place and culture. This connection, though not unproblematic, depends on culture's abstract and general character, whilst place stands for something specific (Jonasson 2000). Despite this tension between the concepts, it is difficult not to observe any connection between place and culture because the general and abstract always has to adjust to the specific (Jonasson 2000). However, 'culture' should not be understood as the same as 'place', because culture cannot be limited to places:

> Places should be seen as points of departures for studies of culture, rather than limits for practice. (Jonasson 2000)

In an earlier chapter it was stated that practices are important to the broad understanding of culture that is usual these days. Due to different practices in different places, cultures also differ from place to place. The idea of subcultures

is needed for this understanding because it can accommodate the reality of cultures that exist in relation to a dominant culture in a single geographic and territorial space (Jonasson 2000).

2.3.4 Organisational Culture

Organisational culture is not the same as national or regional culture as described in the prior chapter. An obvious difference is, of course, that nations or regions are not organisations. National culture, according to Hofstede and Hofstede (2005), is 'mental software' that we acquire in our first ten years of life and consists of our basic values. Organisational culture is more superficial and it consists more of customs.

Schein (2004), also a researcher interested in organisational culture, does not distinguish between national and organisational cultures. The essential unit needed to have culture, whether organisational and national, is *a group*. Schein says that '… spontaneous interaction in an unstructured group gradually leads to patterns and norms of behaviour that become the culture of that group – often within just hours of the group's formation' (Schein 2004). He defines culture as

> a pattern of shared basic assumptions that was learned by a group as it solved its problems of external adaptation and internal integration, that has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems. (Schein 2004)

Although I can understand the basic differences between an organisation and a nation or a region, I believe that the term 'group' functions well as 'the lowest common denominator'. In my opinion, this means that culture is always a generalisation of various individuals who form any group. The theoretical tools described earlier are, therefore, also useful for studying organisational culture.

But let us return to organisational culture. An organisational culture is not only internal but also external, which means that other parties of interest connected to the organisation, such as the media, authorities, and customers, are important in maintaining the organisation's culture. This view of culture can be connected with the earlier described network of parties interested in PT (see section 2.1.4). Paper 2 is aligned with this definition of organisational culture and concentrates

on the external connections needed to maintain organisational culture. Alvesson (2001) gives one possible definition of organisational culture by citing Frost (1985):

> Talking about organisation culture seems to be the same as talking about how important symbolics are to people – rituals, myths, stories, and legends – and about how occurrences, ideas, and experiences, which are influenced and formed by the groups to which they belong, should be interpreted.

Interestingly, there are two mainstream views of how organisational culture can be interpreted. There is a less academic view that culture is something an organisation *has,* whilst the other more academic view understands culture as something an organisation *is* (Smircich 1983, Hofstede & Hofstede 2005). The difference is the possibility of change. The first, less academic view, stresses the possibility of cultural change in an organisation, whilst the second view highlights the need to understand certain cultures. I believe that both views are needed. It is quite logical, I would say, that before change can be achieved, one must understand what kinds of changes are useful or desired. The distinction between the academics' and the practitioners' preferences, however, is not surprising. Paper 2 in this thesis is interested in this external organisational culture from the PTA organisation's point of view. The customs – what we can also call practices – evident in the relationships between the PTAs and other parties of interest are the focus.

2.3.5 Planning Theory

PTAs are responsible for planning PT services that take into account the needs of the different stakeholders in the stakeholder network, as was described earlier. Planning theory, in other words, is operationalised by planning physical communication such as PT (Friedmann 1987). Planning theory thus helps us understand the organisational culture of a PTA, and this approach is, among others, used in paper 2. This chapter could, of course, be more detailed, but this would shift the work's focus in an undesired direction. Planning theory is more of a complement to the other approaches used, and it might open up possibilities for further research.

Planning and rationality are two interconnected terms. Rationality refers to a decision-making situation in which the alternative is found that best takes into

account the decision makers' material interests and provable good (Nyström 2003). The rational planning model consists of five steps:

1. Formulation of goals
2. Investigation of alternatives and their consequences
3. Choice of alternative and acceptance of plan
4. Realisation
5. Experiences

This model endeavours, in the ideal case, to attain the Pareto optimum, which means that the situation of some can be improved without making others experience impairments at the same time.

However, reality hardly ever matches the ideal case. Here, is needed the social rationality in which all individuals are part of a social group with collective interests that are more important than the individual interests. The idea of a Pareto optimum in planning questions is now less interesting (Nyström 2003). Furthermore, Sahlin-Andersson (1986) calls the rational planning model a myth, because nobody actually applies it. The model is more of an ideology or a façade that does not match the actual work done, making the model more symbolic than real (Nyström 2003). Hall (1979) also identifies problems with the rational planning model stemming from the model's basic insecurities.

In Sweden, four planning traditions can be observed, according to Nyström (2003). These traditions concern physical planning, but due to their general form and because PT is a particular mode of communication that has to be planned, the following descriptions of the four planning traditions can also be used in understanding the planning of PT services:

- Social reform: planners are not connected to either politicians or citizens; centralistic alignment in which social problems need to be solved
- Policy analysis: analysis is based on economics, statistics, and mathematics
- Social learning: inhabitants are part of the planning process
- Social mobilisation: alternative and revolutionary, inspired by Marxism, Feminism, and anarchism

These different traditions can also be seen as different paradigms that change over time (cf. Kuhn 1970), or, in Foucault's terms, the cogito can change. However, in today's Sweden, policy analysis is the most practiced paradigm or 'planning culture'. At the same time, we can also find some less used ideologies

(comparable to Foucault's 'the unthought') such as social learning and social mobilisation practices (Nyström 2003).

2.4 Sustainable Development

2.4.1 What Is Meant by 'Sustainable Development'?

The term 'sustainable development' emerged in the late 1980s when what is now called the 'Brundtland report' was published under the title *Our Common Future*. The Brundtland report presented a common definition of sustainable development that is still topical:

> Humanity has the ability to make development sustainable to ensure that it meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. (www.un-documents.net)

The UN conference in Rio de Janeiro ('The Earth Summit') in 1992 was an important event in the evolution of the sustainable development concept:

> The primary goals of the Summit were to come to an understanding of "development" that would support socio–economic development and prevent the continued deterioration of the environment, and to lay a foundation for a global partnership between the developing and the more industrialised countries, based on common needs and interests, that would ensure a healthy future for the planet. (www.un.org)

Three major agreements were adopted at this Summit by the 108 nations represented:

- Agenda 21
- The Rio Declaration on Environment and Development
- The Statement of Forest Principles
  (www.un.org)

The knowledge of environmental problems that depends on people's behaviour was, however, discovered earlier and had its breakthrough in the late 1960s and early 1970s. In Europe, environmental problems were viewed as limited to major cities and industrial areas, such as London and Paris, the Ruhr region in Germany, and the industrial corridor in the Rhine Valley. Europe's biggest concern after the Second World War was economic development. This fact can

explain why the USA in this early period of environmental awareness was a leader in solving environmental problems (Kneese et al. 1971).

Even though a lot of time has passed since the end of the Second World War, economic development via expanded economic activity and economic growth is still a key goal of all nations. Today, attaining a globalised economy is high on the agenda and growing resource use appears likely. Accelerating resource consumption, supported by economic growth and higher living standards in industrialised countries, could paradoxically mean the self-destruction of the traditional economy. It is important that we, as human beings, perceive the human economy as 'fully dependent on the ecosphere' (Wackernagel & Rees 1996). Nature is not something 'inhuman'; rather, all humans are part of nature (Wackernagel & Rees 1996).

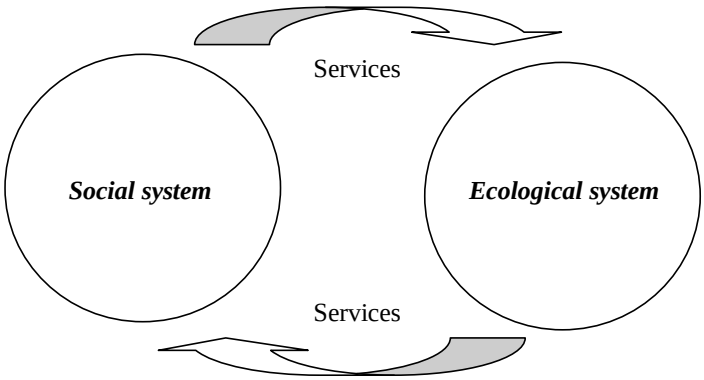

Figure 14: Figure inspired by Marten (2001)

The focus is on the environmental aspect of sustainable development. In that sense, we must recognise humans as part of the natural system. Figure 14 is a human ecological sketch of how the social system is connected to the ecological system. In a balanced world, the exchange between the systems is as shown in Figure 14. The social system consumes services from the ecological system. After using these services, the social system returns the 'waste' products to the ecological system for 'recycling'. Through the excessive use, for example, of fossil fuels such as coal and oil, the ecological system has become unable to assimilate the produced CO_2 in a reasonable time scale for humanity.

This inability of the ecological system to assimilate what has been 'returned' to it destroys the balance between the systems. We now know that the balance between these two systems is disturbed, which means that the social system is consuming more from the ecological system than can be returned to it. The

question is therefore what to do to stop this overconsumption. Two typical and often discussed approaches will be outlined in the coming chapters: the ecological modernisation and ecological footprint approaches. These are not all the relevant discourses that can be identified, but I would claim that these two are the most used (which is interesting in light of the discourses' mutual antagonism).

2.4.2 Ecological Modernisation

Ecological modernisation (EM) is a discourse that arose in the 1990s (Oelofse et al. 2006, Barry & Paterson 2004) and became popular in the developed world because of its policy-oriented way of being 'Green' (Oelofse et al. 2006). The EM paradigm is modernistic and stresses the possibilities of 'being Green' through technical innovation instead of stressing nature's dysfunction (Wärneryd et al. 2002, Oelofse et al. 2006). In other words, we could say that '… economic growth and the resolution of ecological problems can be reconciled' (Oelofse et al. 2006). According to this discourse, the state provides policies and frameworks for environmentally sustainable development, which results in a relationship between state and market (Oelofse et al. 2006, Christoff 1996). EM is 'a process of structural change in economic, political and cultural institutions that directly affect environmental outcomes' (Zahran et al. 2007).

Barry and Paterson (2004) describe (referring to Christoff 1996) weak and strong forms of EM. Weak EM concentrates on 'certain key sectors of the economy' (Barry & Paterson 2004). These key sectors are chosen by the state and EM only directly concerns these chosen sectors. Strong EM targets the whole economy and its reconstruction, but also aims toward broader social change ('reflexive modernisation').

As an operationalisation of EM but with clear connections to the 1970s rhetoric of crises instead of possibilities, the expressions 'factor 4' and later 'factor 10' emerged in the 1990s (Wärneryd et al. 2002). Figures 4 and 10 concern the (mathematical) effectivisation factor of resource use by humans (4 alt. 10 times less used resources). Initially, factor 4 was used but later factor 10, deemed a more appropriate figure, had its breakthrough. Despite the alignment of dematerialisation with the discourse of the 1970s, the expression 'factor 10' is closely connected to EM due to its basis in technological optimism and traditional economic development.

The expression 'sustainable development' does not include only environmental consideration. When discussing sustainable development in the sense of EM, we normally mean development based on the 'triple bottom line' (TBL), which means that society on the whole must develop socially, economically, and environmentally. The expression 'triple bottom line' was coined by John Elkington in 1994 and took off in the late 1990s (Elkington 2004). Elkington's TBL could be described as an operationalisation of the Brundtland report. TBL helps in shaping 'a global cultural revolution' toward 'sustainable capitalism' (Elkington 2004). Elkington points out seven areas in which a sustainability revolution should take place for TBL development:

1. *Markets*: from compliance to competition
2. *Values*: from hard to soft
3. *Transparency*: from closed to open
4. *Life-cycle technology*: from product to function
5. *Partnerships*: from subversion to symbiosis
6. *Time*: from wider to longer
7. *Corporate governance*: from exclusive to inclusive
   (Elkington 1999, 2004)

Although TBL is regarded as operationalisation by companies, this way of thinking in three equal development focus areas has become popular in political development planning. The Swedish transport–political goals are an interesting example in the present context, as they are based on the need to develop socially, economically, and environmentally:

> The overall transport policy objective is to ensure that citizens and businesses in all parts of the country are provided with transport that is efficient in terms of the economy as a whole and sustainable in the long term. (www.sweden.gov.se)

This overall goal is further divided into six sub-goals that are clearly connected to the ideological basis of the triple bottom line:

- An accessible transport system
- High standards of transport quality
- Safe transport
- A good environment
- Favourable regional development

- A transport system that is managed by and serves the interests of women and men equally
  (www.sweden.gov.se)

2.4.3 Ecological Footprints

> Ecological footprint analysis is an accounting tool that enables us to estimate the resource consumption and waste assimilation requirements of a defined human population or economy in terms of a corresponding productive land area. (Wackernagel & Rees 1996)

This introductory quotation defines the term 'ecological footprint' (EF). The pedagogical discourse of EF has its starting point in taking moral responsibility at a global level (Wärneryd et al. 2002). EF discourse is built on the old ecological idea that each geographical area has a limited amount of resources that can be used without overexploitation, also called the area's 'carrying capacity' (Wärneryd et al. 2002, Wackernagel & Rees 1996).

EF discourse problematises economic development via growth of economic activity, which still are the most important goals of all nations. Nowadays, the global economy, as distinct from national economies, is itself an important player, which will further accelerate the use of resources. Growing resource consumption, supported by economic growth and higher standards of living in industrialised countries, has, together with economic development, led to the depletion of forests, soil, water, air, and biological diversity. Ironically, the traditional economy is destroying itself by its very overexploitation of the resources on which it relies (Wackernagel & Rees 1996).

To cite an example, we can say that in the 1990s the per capita land base for sustainable consumption was roughly 1.5 hectare. An average North American, however, needed 4 to 5 hectares to support his/her lifestyle while a European needed approximately 3 hectares (Wackernagel & Rees 1996). The problem is obvious: If everyone were to have the same standard of living, one world would not be enough. Moreover, the problem is growing due to the growing world population and better standards of living in developing countries (especially China and India). As well, the growing use of arable land to produce ethanol feedstock can be seen as part of the problem.

Faith in technological solutions is more limited in EF discourse than in EM discourse. Though EF discourse regards technological progress in a positive

light, technology is not viewed as the sole solution; rather, it is only part of the needed lifestyle change. The following quotation explains the discourse's view of technological progress:

> Clearly, improved technologies are essential. Even simple things like solar water heaters or better insulation in our houses can reduce our footprint without compromising our material standards of living. However, keep in mind that many technological innovations have not reduced our use of resources … (Wackernagel & Rees 1996)

EF discourse adopts a similar tone in its view of the economy. EF is a critical voice and questions the self-regulating power of the free economy: 'But let's be realistic, the "free market" will not solve all our problems' (Wackernagel & Rees 1996). The discourse's view of the economy and technology makes EF less attractive to politics than ecological modernisation (Wärneryd et al. 2002).

2.5 Connection between the Approaches and the Main Interests

As can be understood easily, the present thesis uses three main theoretical approaches: transport research, cultural theory, and sustainable development. The connection between transport research and sustainable development is obvious and does not need further explanation. How cultural theory comes into the debate, however, should be explained.

The section dealing with transport research outlines the factors normally deemed relevant to the choice of means of transportation. People travel in different ways depending on their age, income, class, and so on. Although culture shapes people's behaviour, discussions of the role of culture are uncommon in transport research. For this reason, we must ask ourselves whether there are any normative beliefs or values in society that might be important determinants of people's choice of means of transportation. If any evidence or results point in that direction, then the starting point for changing travel behaviour toward a more sustainable mobility is more or less attainable depending on the culture in question. The most important factor inhibiting the linking of culture and 'conservative' transport research is the normative character of culture. For example, we can observe people in a village and recognise many different social, economic, and generational differences between them that can determine their travel behaviour. Culture, on the other hand, tries to observe the *normative* patterns in the village, norms common to all villagers, independent of whether they are rich or poor, old or young. In other

words, this thesis does not attack traditional transport research, but rather questions whether it needs a cultural complement. Paper 1 focuses on this idea. The main theoretical approach used here is Bourdieu's; it provides a general understanding of culture in connection with the concept of subcultures, which can divide the dominant regional culture into underlying subregional cultures (or subcultures). The chapters in this linking essay on cultural landscapes and regions, place and culture, and, in part, cultural geography, complement the argument of paper 1.

Another question we must ask is whether the network of PT interests could have a certain organisational culture. To answer that question here, the connection between power and culture is germane. The hypothesis for this part of the thesis is that there may be a certain normative 'strategy culture' based on the distribution of power between the different interests in the network of PT interests; this thinking is used in paper 2. Besides Bourdieu, paper 2 is also based on Habermas and the connection between culture and power. These theoretical bases are complemented by organisational culture and planning theory, as also described in this text.

The term sustainability is discussed in relation to the term 'culture'. In the transportation sector, culture can play a key role in sustainable development. PT must be highly valued to be able to recruit new travellers and to keep those who are already using it. Any cultural obstacles will negatively influence the possibility of the transportation sector developing more sustainably. The theoretical discussion of sustainable development presented in the linking essay should be understood as background. This background is important to this essay's conclusion, and it functions as a bridge between papers 1 and 2, although neither of the papers explicitly concerns sustainable development.

The thesis discusses culture, public transport, and sustainability from both the horizontal and vertical perspectives. The first paper applies a 'horizontal' point of view, because possible *geographical* differences in transport culture are studied. Paper 2 applies a 'vertical' point of view in studying the roles of different social *categories* in PT decision-making culture. By means of these two approaches, the role of PT in sustainable development is examined in the specific case of Värmland. The work's horizontal and vertical orientations can be described as two different approaches to explaining PT use and sustainability in terms of 'culture in landscape' (horizontal) and 'culture in organisation' (vertical). Figure 15 attempts to depict the conceptual structure of the work.

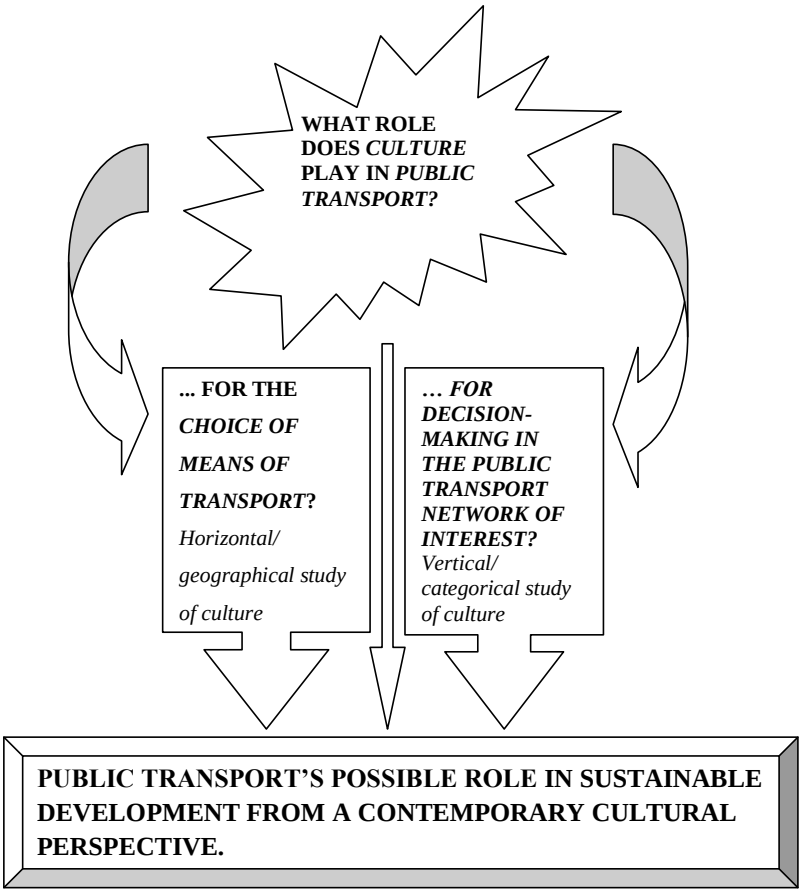

Figure 15: Conceptual outline of the work

3 RESEARCH METHODS

What thinking and tools were used in the research for this linking essay but also for the appended papers? This chapter explains these methodological questions.

First, I will present a general discussion of the terms 'hermeneutics', 'positivism', 'qualitative', and 'quantitative'. These terms are selected due to the hermeneutic form of the thesis. The terms 'qualitative' and 'quantitative' are discussed to build a better understanding of the orientation of this work. Then, as a second step, the different parts of the linking essay are outlined in greater detail, meaning that the linking essay, paper 1, and paper 2 are methodologically explained in separate sections.

The aim is to describe how *this* work arrived at its results: what tools were used, what inspirations were important, which problems were encountered, etc. This chapter describes what I have done and how.

3.1 Hermeneutics and Positivism

Given the clearly cultural approach of this work, it is not surprising that I would call myself a relativist. Accordingly, this thesis does not aim to explain definitively, but rather to convey one of many understandings (Alvesson & Sköldberg 2000). The concept of cultural relativism is, in my opinion, an important justification for doing cultural studies at all. This stems from the fact that cultural studies can have some connections to a form of determinism related to ethical problems. However, by viewing culture in a more relative light, we can observe and understand differences in our own cultural environment without forgetting that it is our own, while viewing it as one of many ways of life – not the only 'true' way of life.

This point of view leads directly to hermeneutics. Hermeneutics has its roots in Biblical interpretation (Wallén 1996, Alvesson & Sköldberg 2000). In the nineteenth century, the romantic époque, when the real world was spiritualised and made into something mental, this form of interpretive research started to be used in literary and art criticism. In the twentieth century, hermeneutics was extended, becoming a general theory of interpretation (Hartman 2004).

The main elements of hermeneutics are as follows:

- Interpretation addresses the meaning of texts, symbols, actions, experiences, etc.
- The interpreter is assumed to have a preunderstanding
- The interpretation shifts from the part to the whole
- Interpretations are related to contexts
  (Wallén 1996)

These elements are clearly evident in the present work. Interpretations of texts, symbols, actions, experiences, etc., are treated in both papers as a key conceptual source of further understanding (recall that culture can be seen as practices). As the interpreter, I have an invaluable and unique preunderstanding of the PT sector in Sweden, due to my position as an industrial PhD student with daily contact and experience of a Swedish PTA from 'the inside'. This particular preunderstanding is most prominent in paper 2, where it forms an explicit part of the methodical approach. Due to the general structure of the work, consisting of two papers and this linking essay, my interpretation shifts from part to whole very obviously, the appended papers representing different parts of the linking essay that shapes the whole. My interpretations are also related to a context in which the theoretical approaches play an important role.

The circle of alethic hermeneutics (see Alvesson & Sköldberg 2000) appropriately describes this thesis' interpretive method. 'Alethic' has its roots in the Greek word *aletheia*, which means 'uncoveredness – the revelation of something hidden' (Alvesson & Sköldberg 2000, referring to Heidegger 1959). The uncovering of hidden facts is done in a circular fashion, in which the starting point is preunderstanding, which leads to understanding, which in turn leads to a new preunderstanding: '… the basic idea concerns the revelation of something hidden, rather than the correspondence between subjective thinking and objective reality' (Alvesson & Sköldberg 2000). This knowledge spiral from preunderstanding to understanding to preunderstanding to understanding, and so forth, can be recognised in this work. Through education in any form, I acquired a preunderstanding that led to a subsequent understanding (papers 1 and 2). For the purposes of this linking essay – and any subsequent research – this understanding comprises preunderstanding. Of course, my understanding is *explained* in my work, which – and this is important – does not mean that this explanation of *an* understanding objectively describes reality and therefore the truth. The explanation is only needed to explain my subjective, but objectively plausible understanding.

The term hermeneutics is usually used in contrast to positivism. Positivism can briefly be described as a research tradition that tries to explain how the world *is*, whilst hermeneutics understands how the world *could be*. This distinction comes from the nineteenth century, when Johann Gustav Droysen introduced the terms *erklären* and *verstehen* (Bjereld et al. 2002). However, this strict distinction should be avoided. I believe that all the positivists understand that there is no absolute truth, whilst all hermeneuticians understand that there are things they must understand as the truth. Although culture should be studied in a relativistic sense, where no right or wrong culture can be singled out, the present thesis has to assume that the idea of culture is 'true'. In any other case, all the work would be meaningless and the research would not be useful in the real world. In other words, I am not a hermeneutician but am more interested in hermeneutics than in positivism.

3.2 Qualitative and Quantitative Methods

Method is the tool for using scientific theory, which is realised through the scientist's choice of methods (Hartman 2004, Bjereld et al. 2002). Depending on the required scientific approach, there is a choice between qualitative and quantitative methods. Distinguishing between qualitative and quantitative method is a reasonable place to start.

The quantitative approach is described by its basis in positivism and stresses the possibility of observing the phenomenon to be studied (Hartman 2004). The aim is to explain and to be able to *repeat* the achieved results. In that way, when something is proven 'true', phenomena can be predicted (Andersen 1998).

The qualitative approach, on the other hand, tries to gain a deeper understanding of a phenomenon. The basis of the approach is hermeneutics, and it is used to forge an understanding of a subjective phenomenon. Social sciences often use this approach in which people are studied as individuals or in a societal context (Hartman 2004, Andersen 1998).

Hermeneutics (with strong connections to qualitative methods) and positivism (with strong connections to quantitative methods) are two methodological approaches that cannot be seen as mutually exclusive. All data gathered in a quantitative spirit can be interpreted qualitatively. The social sciences, I would say, are typical of this 'hybrid' use of approaches. In the case of the present work (see paper 1), quantitative methods can be very useful, even though the

research is done in a clearly hermeneutic spirit and making qualitative interpretations of the (quantitative) results. This 'hybrid' methodical approach is certainly not usual in cultural research, but it highlights the methodological pluralism characteristic of the Birmingham School.

3.3 About the Methodical Approaches Used in the Linking Essay

First, even though it is obvious, this thesis is not a monograph but consists of two free-standing articles that are discussed together in this linking essay. The task of the essay is to place the freestanding papers in the same frame as well as to provide additional discussion of the papers, which are viewed as a complementary pair.

As described, papers 1 and 2 take different approaches to studying culture in combination with PT, paper 1 being geographically horizontal whilst paper 2 is categorically vertical. The upcoming papers 3 and 4 are to be thought of as continuations of papers 1 and 2. This is, of course, not the only way the thesis could have been structured; in fact, at an earlier stage of my studies I intended to follow directly on with the continuation of paper 1. However, it was not only that concrete ideas for what is now paper 2 came up, but also ideas as to the form of this linking essay. This chosen procedure gives a clearer understanding of the niche in which the present work fits.

In addition, although I was not really aware of the fact at the outset, the choice to do research in the compilation tradition (combining free-standing papers with a linking essay), and not as a monograph, was a methodical statement with its own advantages and disadvantages.

3.4 Methodological Approaches Used in the Papers

3.4.1 Paper 1

Paper 1 uses both official statistics and a questionnaire. By using these two data sources, the research question of whether there were cultural differences in PT use in a single region could be answered. Although the data used are somewhat quantitative, I would not call the study typically quantitative due to the theoretical approach used, which aimed to interpret the results in light of local culture. This approach makes the paper slightly more qualitative than quantitative. In other words, I would like to describe (simplified for the sake of

understanding) my standpoint by referring to May (1997), who cites Habermas. To understand my research problem, namely, gaining knowledge of *how* (a qualitative issue), I have to explain *why* I am interested in the question (a quantitative issue). The quantitative, explanatory part of the study, studying official statistics and administering the questionnaire, is the basis for my qualitative results, namely, an understanding of the phenomenon.

The official statistics were chosen to gain an official explanation of the characteristics of the examined subregions in terms of, for example, labour market, income, and, finally, PT use. Important for this first method is the consciousness that even official statistics do not mirror reality exactly. They present a picture that can be changed easily or that omits parameters (May 1997). As a starting point to provide culturally interpretable results, this method was appropriate. To complement the official statistics, a questionnaire was delivered in the same subregions. The places chosen for questionnaire distribution were comparable concerning size, function, and PT services (including prices, comfort, accessibility of PT, accessibility to other places, and traffic safety). The questionnaire only contained basic questions that were easy for the respondents to answer. Most of the questions were multiple choice, whilst the last three were open ended; not all the questions were used in the final paper. The questionnaire sought information about the following:

- Classification or background variables (i.e., age, sex, family situation, and income)
- Explanatory variables or background variables (i.e., place of residence)
- Factual questions on travel behaviour (i.e., PT use, access to cars, and usual mode of transportation to work)
- Relevant opinions (i.e., what is good/bad when travelling by PT)

The questionnaire was delivered in two villages in western Värmland (one large, one small) and in two villages in eastern Värmland (one large, one small). I delivered the questionnaire in three different housing areas in each village to obtain a range of different backgrounds in each village. The respondents returned the questionnaire in a prepaid envelope by post. To obtain a random selection of respondents over the age of 18 years, the member of the household with the earliest date of birth had to answer. The response rate was, unfortunately, low. Despite this, the results gave indication of differences that could be explained in cultural terms. Despite the low overall response rate, the response rates were comparable in the different villages and housing areas, with the exception of the larger western village where the response rate from the

area of flats was lower than elsewhere. However, there were no larger differences in the social composition of the different villages' respondents. This means that the questionnaire is not representative of the villages or subregions in their entirety; rather, these villages and subregions are comparable to each other. In other words, the questionnaire does not give right or wrong answers, but provides a basis for qualitative (cultural) discussion. Due to this low response rate, the mentioned official statistics were used as a complementary reference.

The results of the questionnaire helped me interpret the official statistics and arrive at a more nuanced understanding of what was conveyed by the official statistics. This also opened the way toward a more reliable interpretation using the cultural theory background. Validity is an important matter to discuss, due to the difficulty of pinning down the meaning of 'culture'. The whole work was described from the outset as 'preparatory', and should be understood as such: its aim is never fully to explain reality, but rather to propose a possible understanding of it, of its tendencies and indications. Due to the chosen mix of methods, from examining official statistics and questionnaire administration to theoretically based interpretation, I am confident of the paper's validity. The paper has given indications of the importance of (sub)regional cultural differences (in line with a horizontal understanding of culture). However, further research to arrive at more far-reaching results should (and will) be done in an upcoming paper that will also be part of the dissertation. The regional differences could still depend on more than just cultural factors. This pilot study gave, however, interesting results that suggest it is worth studying general transport cultures if one is to improve the value of PT for a region's inhabitants.

3.4.2 Paper 2

Paper 2 is completely different from paper 1. The methodical approach used in it is preceded by an implicit participatory observation. This is explained by my and also the co-author's, Andreas Anderberg's, situation as PhD students supported financially by Värmlandstrafik AB and physically located in Värmlandstrafik AB's offices. This situation often gave rise to questions about our work's objectivity. In any case, this situation gave us the possibility of observing (although not always directly) the 'way of life' in a Swedish PTA. Questions of 'why', 'how', and 'for what' arose by critically observing the daily businesses at the PTA. Paper 2 is a typical example of this implicit observation

that is the unarticulated basis of the entire work. As an aside, I would like to add that even though there is a risk that such a financing arrangement might compromise the objectivity of the research, it did afford an important advantage, in that it allowed daily and natural, implicit observation of the inner workings of the company.

The paper is primarily based on the study of documents, which means that we turned to texts to gain an understanding of 'how things are'. The texts used in making our interpretations can be described by the term 'process data', as defined in Andersen (1998), and comprises reports, newspaper articles, and pictures. To study the PTA–politics relationship, we primarily consulted official reports from the various Swedish PTAs and other reports from political sources. As well, newspaper articles, more precisely, letters to the editor and responses to them, were used in studying the PTA–citizen relationship. Without having intended to apply strict discourse analysis, our document research nonetheless has some of the characteristics of this methodical approach. When doing discourse analysis, the researcher may feel he is not paying enough attention to what is being said in informal everyday life (Alvesson & Sköldberg 2000). As well, the idea that 'social institutions and social relationships are constructed and reproduced through communicative actions' (Alvesson & Sköldberg 2000) is in line with the paper's conceptual basis. These characteristics are typical of discourse analysis and were used in work on the paper – although unconsciously at the beginning.

As a secondary component, a few questions about goals, goal-setting, and customer relations were sent out by e-mail to all PTAs in Sweden (the recipient of the e-mail was in all cases the responsible person for information, i.e., the information officer). This allowed us to make general conclusions applicable to Sweden as a whole. We sent the e-mail to all PTAs, 50% of which responded.

To gain an understanding of the PT users' interests, we also took two trips (both by train, one in the early afternoon, the other later in the afternoon) in Värmland and asked fellow travellers, with the help of an interview guide, about their opinions on PTA sensitivity to their concerns and about other experiences. These interviews were held informally. We also sent out an e-mail including four questions to the government office responsible for Sweden's transport–political goals, to gain a preliminary understanding of how these goals should be interpreted. Unfortunately, this e-mail was never answered.

These various data sources together made it possible to understand the PTAs' organisational culture. This broad base of both official documents and primary sources let us interpret how the PTAs behave in relation to what they say.

4 CONCLUSIONS

4.1 Citizens as Tools for Sustainable Development

Analysis of the contemporary situation suggests that citizens are tools for attaining sustainable development. Even though the triple bottom line, as an operationalisation of the EM concept, is based on technical improvement, we have not experienced a breakthrough of new sustainable technical solutions in the transportation sector. The citizens and their choice of means of transportation when they are physically mobile are thus crucial for sustainable development – especially when economic growth is based on longer commuting distances, as is common in Swedish regional enlargement policy and practice. Promoting the more active involvement of citizens in the goal-setting process, as discussed in paper 2, is one of the steps that should be taken. Such citizen empowerment would not only make it possible for PTAs to balance abstract ideological goals with concrete details, but also is sustainable from a long-term perspective in which cars might become more ecofriendly. Already today, for example, ethanol-driven cars are promoted as ecofriendly (although this can be called into question by different analysis), giving the owner of such a vehicle a 'clean' conscience. PTAs must know exactly what their potential customers want to be able to defend their market share in, perhaps, a harder concurrence situation (meant in relation to ecofriendly-marketed cars; marketing is another key point for PT success in the future). Still, there must be a shift from merely *producing* PT in line with the owners' goals, to a more balanced PT that takes account of citizen desires for a *service-oriented* PT.

Citizens must gain more power to influence PT due to their crucial function as potential users and therefore as a means to increasing market share in the transport sector. Knowledge is power, says Bacon. In other words, people without power automatically lack knowledge. I do not believe that either politicians or PTAs regard the citizens as lacking knowledge, and they (the politicians) also have to act according to their beliefs. Conferring on citizens the responsibility for co-determination means that citizens are seen as possessing knowledge. Due to the accepted belief that knowledge is power, the power has the possibility to give power.

Of course, this does not solve the problems presented by habits, physical planning, and beliefs; rather, it is part of the overall change that has to be

achieved to attain sustainable development. Nor does it make goal-setting or planning in the PT sector easier; in the beginning, this will be still more difficult due to the unusual way of making decisions.

4.2 Relativism: Using the Ordinary Way of Life as a Recipe for Success

By now, I have suggested that citizens must be involved in the goal-setting and other decision-making processes of PTAs, in order to attain the goal of sustainable regional enlargement. This was suggested because the citizens are the decisive factor determining whether or not these goals can be reached.

Against the background of paper 1, this citizen empowerment seems to be more complicated than appears later in paper 2. Paper 1 describes how there might be different transport cultures in different subregions (subcultures). If we now suppose that this result is confirmed, a regional PTA cannot apply the same methods (or perhaps also goals) over an entire region. Although some methods may be useful across the entire country and others across entire regions, there might also be special methods that need to be used in particular subregions. I do not primarily mean different ways of producing PT (e.g., bus, taxi, or train), but different ways in which people in their ordinary lives think about using PT. Knowledge of people's preconceptions and, thus, expectations is important in formulating PT goals in offering useful PT. For example, people in the different subregions of Värmland do not necessarily all perceive and value PT in the same way. The way of life, the ordinarity, the practice – all terms describing how culture is understood in this thesis – of the subregions should be taken into account. To some extent this is already done when national goals are converted to regional goals. However, this conversion of goals and practices could also be done further 'downward' in the chain, so as to accommodate subregional differences as well as possible. This change could be described as a relativistic change. The quite large Swedish regions/counties should not be seen as homogeneous but heterogeneous. Their PTAs are therefore asked to use a relativistic approach when, for example, planning and setting goals. Subregional differences in the ordinary way of life should be taken into account more accurately.

That means when PTAs change their goal-setting culture, they must be aware of cultural differences *within* their geographical working areas. Furthermore, being aware of these differences is a 'soft' method of reaching the goal of

sustainable transportation. By now, two culturally explainable results can be put together:

- Adapt goal-setting culture to our shared democratic habitus.
- When this goal-setting culture has changed, the different transport cultures with subcultural characteristics in the same region should be taken into account by listening to citizens' opinions of PT.

4.3 Locally Rooted PT for Sustainable Development in the Transport Sector

It is crucial for PT, as a key contributor to sustainable development, that its customers and other citizens (i.e., potential customers) be listened to more extensively and intensively. Knowledge of possible differences between subregional cultures, together with citizen empowerment, are both important for a PT service that matches the needs and desires of local citizens. Only if local wishes are regarded as important will sustainability in the transport sector have a chance. Ironically, the policy of regional enlargement promoted by the Swedish government only has a chance of occurring sustainably if people travel by PT, which is only possible if local views, knowledge, and ideas about PT are treated with the respect they deserve. PTAs should thus be locally rooted in order to achieve global change. To round off the theory chapter, I described the papers' approaches as horizontal (paper 1) and vertical (paper 2). It can be concluded that these two approaches are closely connected with each other. To take horizontal cultural differences into consideration (i.e., cultures in the landscape), political governance and the PTAs have to accept the horizontal cultures present in their own organisational culture (i.e., the vertical cultural approach). The vertical culture is thus asked to observe and take into account that the horizontal culture is less regionally homogenous but more locally rooted in a heterogeneous region.

4.4 Theoretical Conclusions

The discussions presented so far have been mainly practical in implication, so a more theoretical discussion should round out the thesis.

As already known, this thesis draws on three theoretical bases, namely, transport research, cultural theory, and sustainable development. These three theoretical bases have had different functions in the present work. Transport research is not the most important of these, but it has shown that this work can

indeed fill a gap, more precisely, a cultural gap. Cultural theory is central to the work. It makes it possible to fill the cultural gap in transport research. Sustainable development, the third theoretical basis of this thesis, rounds out the research: culture apparently affects our choice of mode of transportation and therefore the role PT can play in sustainable development.

Against the background of the papers' results, I would claim that the authority constraints (i.e., restricted PT services as organised by timetables) are very important. The number of offered trips is a crucial factor for PT success. However, this technical way of thinking – not that unusual in transport research – cannot explain everything. Even though our knowledge of people's choice of mode of transportation is enormous, we do not really know how more people can be attracted to use the more sustainable PT and to abandon their cars. This gap can partially be filled with knowledge and acceptance of (sub)regional cultural differences. Obviously, the horizontal understanding of culture as used in paper 1 is what is referred to here. The Birmingham School's subculture discourse, together with more geographical concepts such as cultural landscape and cultural regions, can help us improve our understanding.

The vertical understanding of culture, to which paper 2 contributes, is related to discourse on organisational cultures. PTA culture, in which citizens and customers are marginalised, the owners have the right of interpretation, and the state's governing role is too weak, seems unready to fill this cultural gap. The customers and citizens must be seen as the reason why PTAs exist, which is not clearly the case today; PTAs instead seem to exist for their owners. The sensitivity to customer and citizen concerns, as also described in Kollframåt (Kollframåt 2007), is crucial from this cultural point of view. This part of the discussion also indicates that better 'culture matching' PT starts with critical observation of PTA organisational culture. Without critical self-assessment by PTAs, more appropriate PT is not possible.

This critical self-awareness is something the PTAs can change on their own if they have the will to change and develop. Another problem is PT investments – a problem not located at the PTA but at the political level. In my opinion, PT is more part of the EF discourse than the EM discourse. If more people travelled by PT than by private car, this would mean first a change of lifestyle and second a development backward in time. This moralisation of sustainability problems in the transportation sector does not match the overall alignment of EM, in which technological developments that promote further economic

growth are the focus. Investments in ecofriendly car development are thus more likely to succeed than investments in, for example, the 'old' (in the meaning of old technology) railway network.

The tragedy of our unsustainable transportation sector is, thus, its very ordinarity. On one hand, PT is poorly rooted in people's overall culture; on the other hand, the few limited possibilities for encouraging people to travel more often by PT have not been discovered by the PTA's, which can be explained by the lack of customer perspective/sensitivity on the part of the PTAs. To summarise, there are three key problems:

1. PT is culturally poorly rooted.
2. PTA organisational culture does not sufficiently take account of customer/citizen views in planning PT development.
3. PT is not a 'technological innovation', which it would need to be to succeed in 'EM-ruled' political governance.

A speculative approach to change could therefore start with a changed attitude of the PTAs toward the customers/citizens. At a second level, PT must become technically innovative (featuring, for example, pod cars and transrapid or high-speed trains) if it is to receive more investment. At a third level, when the technical instruments are changing, PT can become rooted in people's culture.

4.5 Recalling the Aims of the Thesis

The thesis aimed to contribute to a deeper understanding of why people travel by PT, to explore the attitudes underlying PT decision-making, and to make suggestions for solving problems that may arise in PT. PT's poor rootedness in people's culture might partly explain why and the extent to which people travel by PT. People in different cultural subregions, as indicated in paper 1, travel in different ways and to different extents using PT. Such knowledge of cultural differences is not actively applied in PT and related planning, which may make it more difficult to recruit new travellers and to achieve sustainability goals in the transportation sector.

By focusing on the PTAs and their attitudes to decision-making, we established that the different parties of interest are not taken account of in a balanced way; rather, the owners' interests are at the centre. The important travellers or potential travellers (i.e., citizens) are marginalised when decisions are made regarding future PT (see paper 2). This correlates with the findings of paper 1

(that PTAs do not take account of regional cultural differences) and makes it difficult for the PTAs to play a significant role in sustainable development in the transportation sector. The citizens' crucial role is only recognised formally (in documents), but in many cases not in practice (in the way the PTAs act).

My suggestions for change are thus not surprising. PTAs must change their attitude toward the customers/citizens, which also includes taking into account possible regional cultural differences. Without the citizens, sustainable development is not attainable. As PT is today, it is difficult to see what role it can play in sustainable development in the transport sector. This problem has several aspects. On one hand, PTAs are not sensitive enough to their customers' needs and wants. On the other hand, the people's culture does not place a high value on PT, which makes it difficult for the PT sector to be a key player in sustainable development. A third problem is the EM orientation of the countries in the western world, an orientation based on technological innovation. Today's PT would better support changes for sustainability if ecological footprint discourse (concerning change of lifestyle) were the prevalent state orientation. In other words, PT *can* become more attractive and, thus, more important for sustainable development in the transport sector by taking subcultural variations into consideration and by being more sensitive to the customers/citizens. If, however, more fundamental changes are sought, PT must become more innovative to match the power and dynamism of EM discourse.

5 FURTHER RESEARCH

First of all, the relatively vague conclusions of paper 1 should be tested to find more supporting evidence. An article with this aim is already planned and will be realised together with PhD Hans Olof Gottfridsson. In this planned work, but also for a later linking essay, the term 'culture' should be discussed in greater depth. How can the nature of culture be revealed? Is it only something in our heads or also something materially manifested in one way or another?

The second question that comes up after this first linking essay concerns the role of sustainable development discourse, which warrants deeper discussion. Interesting questions concerning this theoretical discourse, in my opinion, include the 'political correctness' of EM and its limitations as we move toward a more sustainable world. Cultural theory would also play an important explanatory role in this research area. An empirical study object could be out-of-city shopping centres.

The third research idea is connected to paper 2 as presented in this linking essay; like paper 2, a future article on this third subject would be written together with Andreas Anderberg. A possible approach would be to study an actual change in (Värmlandic) PT services. What role does the different stakeholders have? Are our findings from paper 2 right?

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Appended Paper 1

(Working Paper)

DIFFERENT PLACES, DIFFERENT TENDENCIES TO USE PUBLIC TRANSPORT?

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This paper explores whether people in different places have different tendencies to use public transport. Overall, the paper examines whether cultural differences between places in the same region influence people's choice of the means of transport. This is a comparative study, making use of official statistics from two rural municipalities and a pilot study observing variance between different places in the same region. The study hypothesises that though the regions shared a car-oriented transportation culture, they harboured differences in the use of public transport in their subregions (which had different backgrounds, i.e., location, politics, trade, and industry) that could be explained in cultural terms.

1 Introduction

There are many definite facts in public transport research. We know that differences in economic and social circumstances influence whether or not people travel by public transport, we know that psychology (e.g., via individualised marketing) offers important methods for changing behaviour, and we know that public transport can play a key role in sustainable development. On the basis of selected literature on culture, I developed an interest in determining whether cultural differences between different places influenced people's travel behaviour. Geertz (1993) writes that cultural forms are articulated through behaviour (including, in the present case, through the use of public transport). Although associating the terms 'culture' and 'transportation' is uncommon and few studies have used the present approach, there are some interesting related findings. Vilhelmson (2002) describes why people travel; one reason, he states, is that people 'must' travel, 'must' being explained by physical structure (e.g., location of activities) and by culture (through valuation). Gottfridsson (2007) describes in his dissertation the symbolic values attributed to the car and to public transport. Symbols are also part of culture (see Hofstede 2001, Hofstede & Hofstede 2005) even though the symbolic valuation of different means of transportation is usually discussed

in psychological terms (see Gärling & Steg 2007). In his dissertation, Jonasson (2000) describes traffic cultures that are expressed by both location (different places have different traffic cultures) and mode of transportation (cyclists have a different culture from car drivers). Perhaps the most interesting work from my perspective is that of Kaufmann and Sager (2006) who chose four Swiss urban areas for studying urban development and public transportation policies. Interestingly, among other things, their article observed that the cities' cultural make-up partially explained the differences in public transport use. The proportion of travel by public transport is greater in German-speaking Basle and Bern than in French-speaking Geneva and Lausanne, even though Geneva is the densest of the studied cities.

This paper focuses on different places and their cultures. Culture is often studied geographically by comparing different countries (see Hofstede 2001, Hofstede & Hofstede 2005, Herbig 1994); the present work, however, emphasizes geographical cultural differences at a subregional level.

Due to the relative lack of previous studies, this paper is introductory in nature; it attempts to identify tendencies suggesting that subregional cultural differences could influence public transport use. This paper does not include all the parameters treated in existing research. My main interest was to find places in different subregions that were similar in terms of *some* typical parameters. The work generalises to build a foundation for future research examining the identified possibilities in more detail. In other words, this paper does not *prove* a hypothesis but *shapes* a hypothesis for the purposes of further research. Furthermore, I must be clear about the paradigm used. I do not refer to the activity-based transport research background as my aim is to generalise about subregional groups. The rationale for this approach is my focus on the viewpoint of a public transport authority. Public transportation, in any case, represents a generalisation of travel needs between one place and another, where public transport authorities are unable to take into account individual or even small group needs. By understanding that there are different needs or tendencies to use public transport in different subregions, we will be able to offer public transport services that better match citizen needs. Studying such different general needs or values based on awareness of subregions, culture, and cultural theory yields productive new understandings.

The area of interest is Värmland County. Värmland was chosen because we know that there are differences in public transport use in different parts of the

county. As well, Värmland can be divided into at least two culturally distinct subregions, an eastern and a western one, which are the focus of this work.

The methods used are adapted to the research aim. Official statistics were used as general indicators of the different places and municipalities. Of course, we could have thought of more parameters, but here only some of the important ones were chosen. Some of these parameters indicate important similarities between the subregions, such as population density, population, car ownership, and available public transport services. Normally, I would expect public transport to be used in similar ways in different places. General observed differences such as election results, self-employment, and travel by public transport are indicators of cultural differences between the subregions. To complement the official statistics and forge a better understanding of how people generally travel by public transport in the chosen subregions, a questionnaire was delivered in different places with similar structures in the two subregions. All these places have similar access to public transport services, and because both subregions are served by the same public transport authority, we can assume that conditions are similar in terms of ticket prices, traffic safety, and comfort on busses and trains. Due to the general characteristics of the research, the questionnaire results were used in a qualitative way to gain a better understanding for further research. Again I should emphasise that the present results should not be seen as definite. At the end, I will describe how further research can amass more evidence supporting the tentative understanding arrived at here.

2 The Empirical Study

The study took place in Värmland, a county in western Sweden (Figure 1). Värmland has 273,000 inhabitants (including 55,000 in the main city of Karlstad) spread over 17,600 km² (www.varmland.se), which makes Värmland a sparsely populated region (approximately 15.5 inhabitants/km²). To carry out the study, two rural municipalities were chosen for comparison using official statistics. Apart from the comparison at a municipal level, a pilot study (questionnaire) was sent to four rural places, two

Figure 1: Värmland in Sweden

in the chosen municipalities and two in neighbouring municipalities. The chosen rural municipalities/places are located in the eastern and western parts of Värmland, two are in the east and two in the west (Figure 2 shows the locations of the four places, located both on and off main commuting thoroughfares).

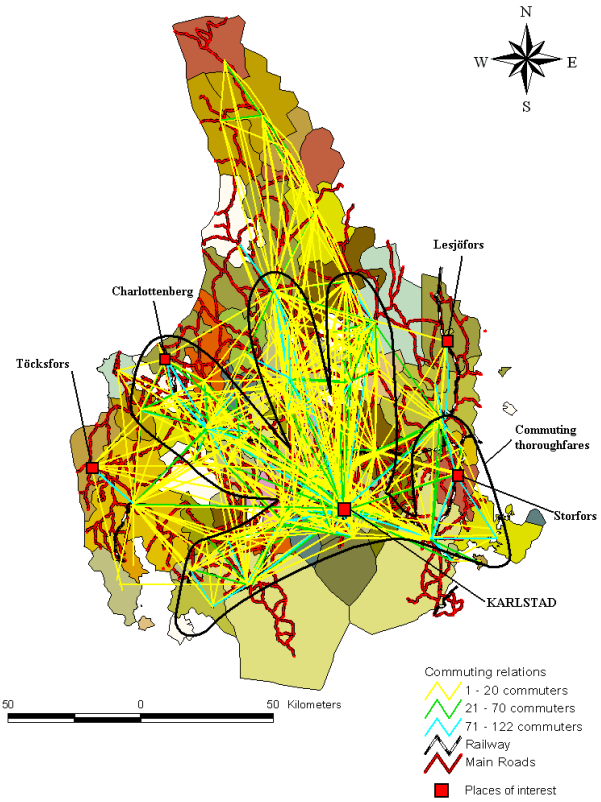

Figure 2: Commuting, commuting thoroughfares, and locations of places of interest (Source: author's study based on official statistics)

One place in each subregion belongs to each municipality. Although all these municipalities share Värmlandic (and Swedish) culture,[1] we could refer to them as subcultures (or place-bound cultures) that differ from the Värmlandic cultural norm. The selection criteria for the rural municipalities/places are summarised in Table 1. Criteria for trade/industry and politics (i.e., election results) are used as the indicators of (sub)culture; the criteria for location, population, and access to public transport are important parameters for the

[1] There will be no discussion of what Värmlandic or Swedish culture is.

comparison. It is evident that municipalities 1 and 2 are similar with regard to access to public transport and population size, but differ in location, trade/industry, and election results; likewise, places 3 and 4 also resemble each other, as do places 5 and 6.

Table 1: Selection criteria

Selection Criteria						
	Municipalities		***Places***			
	Årjäng (1) west	**Filipstad (2) east**	**Töcksfors (3) part of (1)**	**Lesjöfors (4) part of (2)**	**Charlottenberg (5) municipality of Eda**	**Storfors (5) municipality of Storfors**
Access to public transport **(Source: Tidtabell öst, väst, tåg, 2006)**	One bus line to the region's central and several sub-regional bus lines	One bus line to the regions central place and several sub-regional bus lines	One bus line to the nearest rural central place (9 round trips/day Monday to Friday)	One bus line to the nearest rural central place (8 round trips/day Monday to friday)	One bus line and train connections to the nearest bigger central place (bus: 9 round trips/day monday to Friday; train: 11 round trips/day Monday to Friday)	Two bus lines and train connections to the nearest bigger central places (bus: 13 + 7 round trips/day Monday to Friday; train: 2 round trips/day Monday to Friday)
Inhabitants **(Source: www.scb.se)**	9877 (year 2007)	10782 (year 2007)	1062 (year 2005)	1117 (year 2005)	2048 (year 2005)	2442 (year 2005)
Location	In the western part of the county near the Norwegian border. Not in a main commuting thoroughfare	In the eastern part of the county near the county border. Not in a main commuting thoroughfare.	In the western part of the county near the Norwegian border. Not in a main commuting thoroughfare	In the eastern part of the county near the county border. Not in a main commuting thoroughfare.	In the western part of the county near the Norwegian border. In a commuting thoroughfare.	In the eastern part of the county near the county border. In a commuting thoroughfare.
Trade and industry **(Kåpe, 2006; Karlsson et.al., 1999; municipality data)**	High self-employment, agricultural region, retail trade.	Low self-employment, typical industrial community.	High self-employment, agricultural region, retail trade.	Low self-employment, typical industrial community.	High self-employment, manufacturing and agricultural region, retail trade.	Low self-employment, typical industrial community.
Election results **(www.val.se; municipality results)**	Biggest party: Center Party ("the farmer party"; 37.39 %) followed by the Social-democratic Party (26.19 %)	Biggest party: Social-democratic Party(51.39 %) followed by the Moderate Party (conservatives; 13,03 %)	Biggest party: Center Party ("the farmer party"; 37.39 %) followed by the Social-democratic Party (26.19 %)	Biggest party: Social-democratic Party (51.39 %) followed by the Moderate Party (conservatives; 13,03 %)	Biggest party: Social-democratic Party (38.13 %) followed by the Center Party ("the farmer party"; 30.32 %)	Biggest party: Social democratic Party (43.16 %) followed by the Moderate Party (conservatives; 12.52 %)

The selection criterion 'location' contains a simple description of the place's location in the county and an indication of whether the place/municipality is located on a commuting thoroughfare. Incorporating commuting statistics (SCB 2006) based on postal codes, a geographic information system map was drawn that displayed the location of main commuting thoroughfares in the county. A qualitative assessment (i.e., number of commuting relationships and

people commuting) was used to define these thoroughfares, the limits of which outline a hand-shaped figure (Figure 2).

3 Municipality Comparison (official statistics)

Here I make some comparisons based on available statistics to see whether there are any differences in PT use that cannot be explained in a 'traditional' way and, thus, could be explained culturally. Filipstad and Årjäng are comparable municipalities in the county of Värmland, as can be observed in Table 2, which goes into more detail than Table 1 does. The populations are nearly the same and the average annual income is low in both cases.

Table 2: Official statistics, Årjäng and Filipstad

	Årjäng	***Filipstad***	***Source***
Inhabitants (2007)	9877	10782	www.scb.se
Density (inhabitants/km^2)	6.9	7.1	www. arjang.se/ www.filipstad.se
Average net income (2006)	SEK 152,070	SEK 152,734	www.scb.se
Passenger cars/1000 inhabitants (privately owned only)	401	448	www.sika-institute.se
Passenger cars/1000 inhabitants (all cars)	582	503	www.sika-institute.se
Self-employed	583	316	www.arjang.se/ www.filipstad.se
Scheduled bus trips/weekday[2]	62	61	Tidtabell Öst, Tidtabell Väst
Made bus trips/weekday[2]	969	1492	Värmlandstrafik AB

The two municipalities are similar in population density, at approximately 7 inhabitants per square kilometre, so the inhabitants are widely distributed in both cases. Both municipalities have two exceptions: a municipal centre (Årjäng in Årjäng Municipality and Filipstad in Filipstad Municipality) and a smaller village with approximately 1000 inhabitants in both cases (Töcksfors in Årjäng, and Lesjöfors in Filipstad). The general physical structures of the municipalities are similar.

[2] All the scheduled bus trips in the named timetable areas within, out of, or into the municipality are counted. Travellers of all ages are included, as are students travelling on school busses. The statistics for Värmlandstrafik AB, the public transport authority in Värmland, are based on the ticketing system.

Car ownership is high in both municipalities. If one only observes privately owned cars, Filipstad has the higher car density, but if all cars are counted (including company-owned cars, taxis, etc.), Årjäng leads. The higher number of self-employed people in Årjäng partly explains this situation.

Figures 3 and 4 display the population distribution by age in Filipstad and Årjäng municipalities. At first glance, the age distributions in both municipalities appear very similar. The clearest, though still not large, difference is that the population of Filipstad is slightly older than that of Årjäng. Statistics Sweden (SCB) data confirm that the average age in Årjäng is 43.4 years and in Filipstad 45.6 years. In both municipalities the average age clearly exceeds that of both Värmland and Sweden as a whole (Värmland: 42.8 years, Sweden: 40.9 years; www.scb.se).

The bus timetables for each subregion (Värmlandstrafik 2006) do not display large differences in the number of scheduled trips per weekday. In Årjäng, people can choose from 62 bus trips per weekday within, into, or out of the municipality; in Filipstad, 61 bus trips are offered. Although the number of scheduled trips is similar, the number of journeys actually made is, according to Värmlandstrafik's statistics, is higher in the east than in the west. In Filipstad, 1492 journeys were made by public transport every day, versus only 969 in Årjäng. That means that with the same number of offered travel opportunities, people in Årjäng made over one-third fewer trips by public transport than did people in Filipstad.

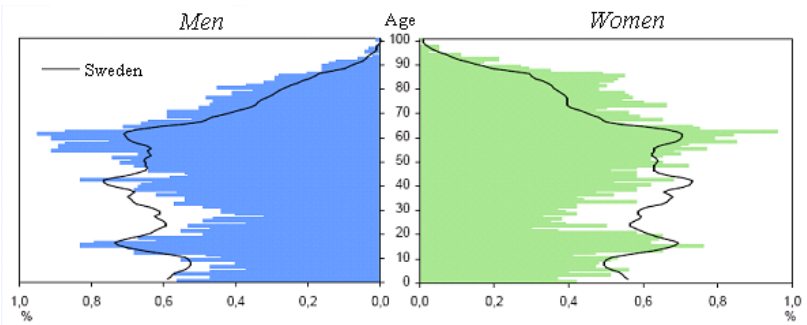

Figure 3: Population in Filipstad (www.filipstad.se)

One may ask why this situation is evident, when car ownership is similarly high in both subregions and cannot explain this large difference in the number of trips. Income cannot play a significant role in explaining the difference, as it is similarly low in both municipalities; nor can physical structure, both

municipalities being rural with one regional centre. As for population structure, we have noted earlier that Filipstad has an older population than does Årjäng. Moreover, Figures 3 and 4 indicate slightly more young people (up to 15–16 years old) without a driving license and with a legal right to school bus service in Årjäng than in Filipstad. The differences in number of bus trips taken cannot be explained by such factors.

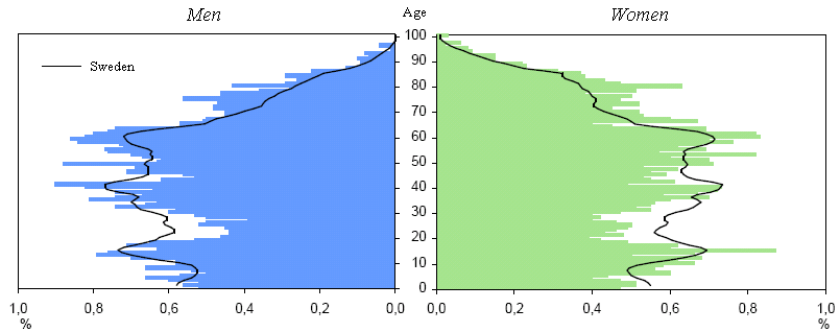

Figure 4: Population in Årjäng (www.arjang.se)

Of all the subregions' background characteristics (selection criteria), only public transport use, trade and industry, self-employment, and election results display large differences. The factors of income, population, and car ownership we investigated cannot explain these differences. The high level of car ownership in both subregions is a possible indication of the presence of a car-oriented culture. This means that both subregions share a 'habitus' that values the car highly; Värmlandic, Swedish, or even Western culture can be compared with Hägerstrand's (1991) general expression 'transport culture'. When shifting the focus to public transport, differences in use can be observed although the offered amounts of service are comparable. In other words, we could say that there are subregional differences: the norms for public transport use seem not to be the same in the two subregions.

4 Pilot Study – Questionnaire

Without necessarily giving it a central role in this paper, the questionnaire administered by the author in the studied subregions yielded some interesting results. The questionnaire was administered in three residential areas in Lesjöfors, three residential areas in Storfors (both in eastern Värmland), three residential areas in Charlottenberg and three residential areas in Töcksfors (both in western Värmland). The choice of the areas aimed to achieve a mix of

detached houses and blocks of apartments (flats). The questionnaire consisted of 18 items, three of which were open ended whilst the rest were multiple-choice. The main questions dealt with the respondents' public transport use and their opinions of public transport services. The first four introductory questions dealt with general social matters (i.e., education, age, sex, and income) and matters of residence.

A total of 88 of the 400 questionnaires delivered to these rural places were returned. This low response rate (22%) ruled out making definite conclusions, but it did give some indications of differences between the eastern and western subregions. We can observe, for example, that the age, income, and sex structures of the respondents were comparable in the chosen places in the east and west. When analysing each village separately, we can recognise that in all cases the response rate is higher in detached-housing areas than in apartment areas. In Charlottenberg, the response rate was low in the chosen apartment areas.

From this pilot study, one can observe differences between the chosen subregions. The use of public transport differed between the studied places and, interestingly, these differences persisted when comparing groups from the two places that were similar in terms of income, sex, and age.

5 Empirical Explanations – Cultural Differences Between East and West

Filipstad is part of the so called Bergslagen region, indicating it is an industrial community with all the problems connected with structural change. The municipality, for example, used to be dependent on the steel sector, which led to problems arising from the steel crisis. The way of life of Swedish industrial communities is described using the word '*bruksanda*', which is referred to as a culture in Ekman (1996) and Bergdahl et al. (1997). Årjäng, on the other hand, is more agricultural, as can be observed in older statistics showing that Årjäng always had a higher proportion of agricultural activity than Filipstad (see Kåpe 2005).

Today, the economy of eastern Värmland is stagnating, whilst the western part is gaining in economic importance due to the establishing of shopping centres for the growing trade over the Swedish-Norwegian boarder in the studied municipalities of Årjäng and Eda. Karlsson and Lönnbring (2008) describe an

economic dividing line between eastern and western Värmland, the east typically being connected to the industrial tradition whilst the west is connected to agriculture and small businesses. These differences in economic tradition are called cultures by Karlsson and Lönnbring (2008); the west tends to encourage individual initiatives and new business strategies, whilst the east is more collectivist, making it more difficult to introduce individual initiatives. '*Bruksanda'* culture signalled that one should not take individual initiatives, not think one is special, do what one is told, and not try to change anything (Christensen 2005). Högman (2008) also describes cultural differences between villages that belong to the '*bruksanda'* tradition in the eastern and western parts of the county. Photographs (a) and (b) speak loudly in this respect.

Photo a: Ruins of a factory in Lesjöfors

Photo b: Prosperity in Charlottenberg

Dividing the county of Värmland into practical, cultural subregions is not an unusual practice. Despite the fact that Värmland is often perceived as relatively

homogenous (cf. Berger 2008), one can observe cultural differences rooted in the overlapping of administrative and mental or homogenous regions. The following maps are examples of region subdivisions made by Erixon (as cited by Ek 1992, 1994, Henning & Liljenäs 1992; different types of farms, Figure 6), de Geer (de Geer as cited by Henning & Liljenäs 1992; different types of buildings, Figure 7), Nelson (as cited by Henning & Liljenäs 1992, Ek 1992; human geographic regions, Figure 8), the Swedish National Atlas (Nationalatlas 1994; the Swedish cultural landscapes, Figure 5), and Broberg (Broberg 1973; dialects, Figure 9). In all cases, we can observe regional differences within Värmland and in all the maps there is a boundary that delimits the eastern part of Värmland. This division of the County is well known and is the base of the study. Interestingly, this eastern part of the county is in all cases called Bergslagen – a region with a typical background and identity of mining and industry that, due to the structural changes of recent decades, has made the regiona 'problematic region'. As well, the southern part of the county is shown as separate in three of the five maps.

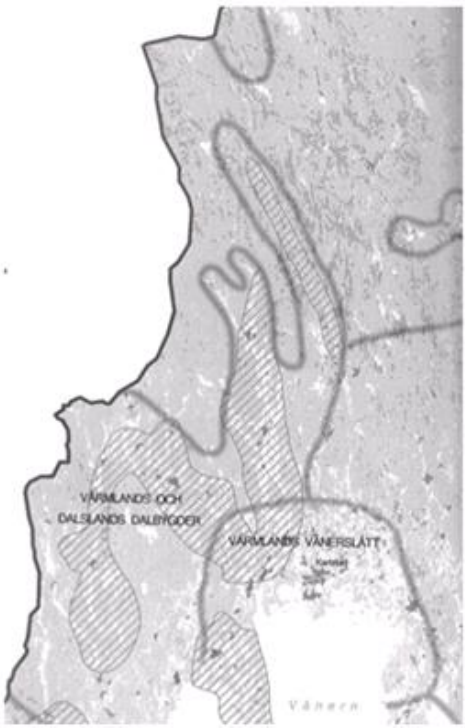

Figure 5: Cultural landscapes, Source: Nationalatlas (1994)

Figure 6: Farm types, Source: Henning and Liljenäs (1992)

Figure 7: Building types, Source: Henning and Liljenäs (1992)

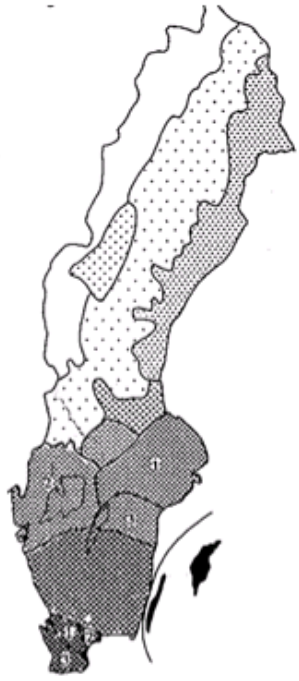

Figure 8: Human geographic regions, Source: Henning and Liljenäs (1992)

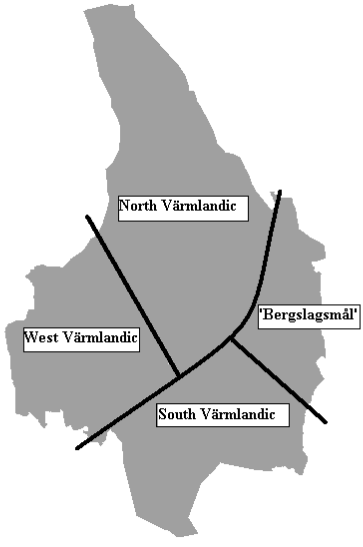

Figure 9: Dialects, Simplified Broberg map

Karlsson et al. (1999), citing economic conditions, also describes the municipalities of Värmland County as differing in culture and tradition. Kåpe (2006) cites differences in industry sector and demography in Värmland, using them as a basis for regional subdivision. In addition, differences in politics became apparent when reviewing the results of the last election (September 2006) in Sweden and Värmland (www.val.se).

Against this background and given the noted cultural differences, the subregions' characteristics can be accounted for by Højrup's life-mode (LM) theory.

In the present study, Thomas Højrup's LM theory is used to describe the normative character of places. In other words, every place can be seen as an individual possessing certain characteristics. In this study, LM theory is not applied directly to individual people but to the identity every place manifests through the group of individuals living in it. Højrup (see Højrup 2003) outlines three life-modes, which he identifies as life-mode 1 (LM1), life-mode 2 (LM2), and life-mode 3 (LM3). LM1 does not distinguish between work and free time, treating both as interwoven activities. LM2 does the opposite, strongly distinguishing between work and free time:

> There is no meaning in work – i.e., working hours – in itself, but it just so happens that one has to have work, one is dependent on it. (Højrup 2003)

LM3 does not distinguish between work and free time. The difference between LM1 and LM3 is in the nature of the work, LM1 relating to routine workers whilst LM3 relates to career professionals. As a fourth LM, Højrup introduces the possibility of a special female LM (see also Jakobsen & Karlsson 1993).

As already established, places in western Värmland had a stronger agricultural background with stronger support for right-wing parties. As well, the proportion of people operating a sole proprietor business was higher than in the east. LM1 is frequently encountered in these places and matches their characteristics rather well. The high rate of self-employment, which can be aligned with LM3, seems logical for these places, as LM1 and LM3 are quite similar. In other words, the LM of people in western Värmland can be viewed as one of independence. A demand for independence is evident in the questionnaire results as well. The respondents do use public transport, but not necessarily for commuting, so the number of trips can be expected to be lower

than in the east. The residents of this area would require a flexible public transport system, offering a greater number of connections, that matches their independent LM. Furthermore, this independent LM seems to be a modern life-mode that is not only connected to urban areas, as stated by the IT Kommissionen (www.itkommissionen.se). The individualism of society, aligned with the quality of independence, is strengthening and seems to signify social modernity. The studied places in western Värmland have obtained their modernity through the immigration of new inhabitants, and the attraction of Norwegian investment in shopping centres. Both of these sources of renewal – new inhabitants and one strong engine of development – are positive for economic development (Nilsson 1998).

On the other hand, there are places in eastern Värmland that are typical industrial communities possessing long-held traditions. If these places are described using Højrup's theory, they are seen as conforming to LM2. The lack of development can be explained by this fact, as people with this life-mode need a boss to direct them. As mentioned earlier, a strong person or organisation is required to develop a region characterised by this LM. Accordingly, it would be appropriate to rename LM2 as the 'LM of dependence'; this must not be interpreted as having negative connotations, but as simply descriptive.

The second form of LM can also be seen in how the respondents use public transport. In the east, more respondents never use public transport than in western Värmland, *but* when they *do* use public transport, they are more likely to use it for regular commuting. This can explain the higher number of public transport trips made in Filipstad than in Årjäng. This result is confirmed by the comments of respondents, who more often than in the west called for a public transport schedule coordinated with working time; this is in line with LM2 with its clear splitting of work time and leisure time. If people in eastern Värmland primarily use public transport for commuting, which they seem to do more often in the west, they do not require it in leisure time.

Hofstede and Hofstede (2005) discuss individualistic versus collectivistic societies, finding Sweden, on the whole, to be very individualistic compared with other countries in Europe and around the globe. However, one cannot 'sum up' the whole of Sweden as homogenous, as indicated by the examples of the studied places in western and eastern Värmland. In western Värmland, individualism seems to be more typical than in the east, though this does not

imply that the east is particularly collectivistic – it still remains 'individualistic' compared to other countries. However, the lower demand for flexibility in the east (though a schedule coordinated with working time is requested more often than in the west, and public transport is valued differently as well) and the very high proportion of left-wing voters suggests that this part of Värmland, and perhaps of Sweden, is more collectivistic than others.

It is not new to observe different cultures and cultural regions manifested in different ways of life (here called life-modes), but there is still the question of whether such cultural differences also influence public transport use – the research question. To explore this question further, a look at cultural theory will be useful.

6 Cultural Theory – An Attempted Explanation

'Culture' has a huge range of meanings, contemporary and historical. In a web-based encyclopaedia (www.oxfordreference.com), culture is defined as follows:

> In anthropology, all knowledge that is acquired by human beings by virtue of their membership of a society. A culture incorporates all the shared knowledge, expectations and beliefs of a group. Culture in general distinguishes human beings from animals, since only humans can pass on accumulated knowledge due to their mastery of language and other symbolic systems.

This definition describes quite well how culture is understood in this paper, though we also assert that culture is understood as both descriptive and normative. This means, simply stated, that culture both *describes*, for example, life-modes or regions, and *specifies norms* for what these life-modes or regions should incorporate (such as art or clothing) (Eagleton 2001). We could say that a certain 'public opinion' evident in a society mirrors that society's life-modes and their norms (cf. '*öffentliche Meinung*' in Habermas 1990). Culture is here understood in a broad sense as referring to 'way of life' (Couldry 2000) or describing practices (Burke 2004, Hofstede 2001).

Bourdieu's thought is helpful in seeking a deeper understanding of culture. Bourdieu (1996) bases his cultural theory on three key concepts: social field, capital, and habitus (see Figure 1). These three concept are closely interrelated and should not be treated in isolation. *Fields* are the bases of his theoretical

schema. In a certain social field, people share an understanding of certain universal laws, giving the members of the field a 'common sense' (e.g., a perception of the beauty of art). A social field is an institutionalised context that sets entrance requirements or tests for the admission of new members; for example, someone who wants to be part of the academic world must pass certain entrance examinations. According to Bourdieu (1996), we can say that the stricter the entrance rules, the stronger the field. Fields generate *capital* in economic, cultural (e.g., literature), and social (e.g., contacts) forms. This capital in turn shapes the habitus, which is an understanding of what to do, acquired without formally learning it. The circle is closed through the fact that we can easily understand part of a field if we are familiar with a certain habitus.

In theoretical terms, the present study is positioned in the field of cultural studies (or the Birmingham School). This theoretical approach is described as both anthropological and normative. Although I see my work as a part of this theoretical stream, I do not hesitate to use other approaches, such as cultural sociology (as represented by Bourdieu). This does not present a problem, but underlines an important component of cultural studies, namely, its interdisciplinarity (Fornäs 2007-12-04).

In addition to the practical use of LM theory, the concept 'subculture' is useful for this study. Subcultures are collective sociocultural patterns in a given society (Fornäs 1995, p. 104), and the term 'lifestyle' is synonymous. Importantly for geographers, subcultures are 'locally bound' (Fornäs 1995). The study of subcultures is related to Bourdieu's 'power-oriented taste studies' (Fornäs 1995). There are several ways to distinguish different lifestyles, which are explicit behaviour, actions and habits that may be separated from attitudes and tastes expressed in consumption patterns or reflexive verbal statements but also from more profoundly hidden values that can only be analysed indirectly' (Fornäs 1995, p. 109). These different levels of profoundness can influence each other, which makes it impossible to prioritise one over another. The idea of subcultures is useful for the present study because it helps us grasp the reality of places in relation to a dominant (Swedish or Värmlandic) culture in a single geographic and territorial space (Jonasson 2000).

Both these theoretical approaches – i.e., LM theory and the subculture concept – are here used geographically, which means that they are used in observing cultural differences between different places/subregions. Of course, different categories of groups in a single society can also be studied, but that is not the intention of the paper.

Culture and place are key and interconnected terms in this work; they actually 'intertwine and separate at the same time' (Jonasson 2000). Place and culture are inseparable but should at the same time be kept apart, because culture transcends place, and cannot be limited by boundaries. On the other hand, practices (important in understanding culture) are specific to places. It makes sense to start this study where 'practice is practiced' (Jonasson 2000).

7 Concluding Discussion

I do not think that there is a problem in talking about different subcultures when comparing the two chosen municipalities with the specific places within them selected for study. The problem is whether these cultural differences are mirrored in public transport use.

In both municipalities, we can observe (from car ownership data) that the car is regarded as valuable. One explanation is that the car is an 'acculturated' means of transportation in Värmland. This 'car norm' is valid in all the places chosen for study, in all the subregions. In Bourdieu's terms, the car is an important part of the Värmlandic habitus. This can be explained by the capital connected to the car: the car is not only economically, but also socially valuable or, in other words, significant. To arrive at a partial understanding of Värmlandic society, and of the Värmlandic cultural sphere, one should note that car ownership is regarded as something positive and is important for being accepted (personal experience supports this). We could also speak of a mother-culture consensus as to the value of the car. As mentioned earlier, Hägerstrand (1991) would also recognise a general transport culture. I agree with him that transportation is an important factor in Western society, but it seems that this Western transportation culture is not expressed in the same way everywhere. Although the car is generally highly valued, subcultural/place-cultural differences between the chosen places can be observed.

In both municipalities, public transport is more or less little used, though it is more popular in Filipstad than in Årjäng when all travel is considered. The questionnaire results were able to confirm the official statistics (indicating that more travellers commute regularly in the west), but the results also showed that respondents in western Värmland were also willing to use public transport. The scheduling of bus trips to match peak commuting times seems not to match the west's way of life (i.e., subculture, life-mode, or social field) as well as it does the east's. This result, in turn, confirms the subregions' cultural differences

characterised by LM1/LM3 in the west and LM2 in the east. The subregions seem to display 'autonomy' from their mother culture with regard to this particular aspect.

The cultural differences outlined at the beginning of the paper might also influence the attitudes to and actual use of public transportation in the studied places. This means that something we could call a 'transportation (sub)culture' might exist. It also means that subregional differences in ideas or values concerning means of transportation could even facilitate change in the future for a public transport authority. If travel patterns are studied in isolation, then the debate will be dominated by the 'impossibility' of future change.

Further research should seek evidence for these cultural differences. Due to the pilot character of the study, nothing has been proven conclusively and more evidence is needed for the tendencies noted here. One idea for a future study is to survey bus riders in both eastern and western Värmland. This would allow the possible differences in public transport use, noted here, to be studied in greater detail and the key role of culture either to be confirmed or falsified. A further study should also try to make a better connection between theory and the empiric methods. In this paper, the concept of cultural theory came into the paper after the empiric work was done.

Acknowledging and understanding the existence of different transport cultures in a single region could help public transport authorities plan services while taking account of the customer perspective. For marketing reasons as well, knowledge and acceptance of cultural differences can be useful.

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Appended Paper 2

(Working Paper)

Organisational Culture in the Stakeholder Network of Public Transport

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Abstract

Against a background of cultural theory and strategic management, this paper builds our understanding of the creation and implementation of vision, mission, and goals in Swedish public transport (PT). By analysing the presented stakeholder network goals, we identify the following: (1) There are internal conflicts between the setting of ideological goals by governmental authorities, the slight transformation of these goals at the regional/local political level, and their implementation by the public transport authorities (PTAs). (2) At an operational level, we find that the ideological goals are only vaguely formulated. The citizens are marginalised in the vision-, mission-, and goal-setting processes due to the strong owner orientation of the PTAs. This hierarchical system results in imbalance among PT stakeholders, where power is concentrated at the political/principal level. The PTAs have an owner focus, resulting in a situation in which PT is heavily influenced by political considerations and the citizens/customers are marginalised.

Keywords: Public transport, culture, governance, strategy management, empowerment.

1 Introduction and aim

Swedish public transport (PT) has been organised in more or less the same way since the public transport authority (PTA) reform in 1978 when all Swedish counties were forced to install a regional PTA in the years the followed. With some exceptions, the PTA is owned equally by the county council and the municipalities of the county. The state is involved in regional PT by means of legislation, transport–political decisions, and contributions for infrastructure investments. Banverket (Swedish Rail Administration) and Vägverket (Swedish Road Administration) are state authorities responsible for the PT sector that play an important role in developing PT. The purpose of the 1978 reform was

to offer better PT to the citizens as taxpayers and potential travellers, a purpose that was later fulfilled (SLTF 2002).

This paper builds our understanding, from a cultural perspective, of the creation and implementation of vision, mission, and goals in Swedish public transport (PT). Here, the goal transformation process (from ideological mission, vision, and goals at the national level to the operational level at the PTA) and stakeholder balance are essential.

Due to our situation as PhD students placed in a Swedish PTA (Värmlandstrafik AB), we have a unique preunderstanding of how a Swedish PTA works 'from the inside'. The situation we describe here was in many ways affected by their preunderstanding and should be seen as one of many possible ways of understanding of 'how things work' at a PTA in Sweden.

Our unique preunderstanding was complemented by official documents from the PTAs, and by governmental reports and propositions. This document research was completed by a survey of Swedish PTAs (sent to those responsible for information) and both informal, spontaneous and structured interviews with PT customers in Värmland (Sweden). These interviews took place on a train in the early and late afternoon. The survey was sent to those responsible for information in the PTAs (the mailing addresses of these people are publicly accessible at www.sltf.se). As well, an e-mail was sent to the government office responsible for transport–political goals; unfortunately this message was never answered. The questions in this e-mail aimed to gain a sense of how to interpret the transport–political goals.

2 Theoretical framework

2.1 What is culture?

The term 'culture' is problematic, which can be explained by its history: 'It used to refer to "high" culture. It was extended "downward", to continue the metaphor, to include "low" culture or popular culture. More recently, it has expanded sideways as well' (Burke 2004). Due to this enormous range of meaning, it is important to limit this paper's understanding of 'culture'. 'Culture is ordinary' and culture is a certain 'way of life' (Couldry 2000) – these statements convey how 'culture' has more popularly been used in a broader sense in recent times to describe practices (Burke 2004). This view of culture, as

comprising practices or customs, is also used in the term 'organisational culture'.

Organisational culture differs from national/regional culture. National culture is the 'mental software' we acquire in our first ten years of life and consists of our basic values (Hofstede & Hofstede 2005), whilst organisational culture is more superficial and consists to a greater extent of customs (or practices). An organisational culture is not only internal but also external, which means that other parties of interest connected to the organisation (such as the media, authorities, and customers) are important in maintaining an organisation's culture.

2.2 Culture and power

Power is a commonly used term in cultural theory, essential when discussing the stakeholder balance in PT. Bourdieu (1996) provides a theoretical description of culture based on (social) fields, capital, and habitus. A social field is an institutionalised context that sets entrance requirements or tests for the admission of new members; for example, someone who wants to be a part of the academic world must pass certain entrance examinations. Fields generate capital in economic, cultural (e.g., literature), and social (e.g., contacts) forms. This capital in turn shapes the 'habitus', which is an understanding of what to do, acquired without formally learning it, or 'a coherent of set of values and orientations' (Duncan & Ley 1994). The circle is closed by the fact that we can easily understand part of a field if we are familiar with a certain habitus. Fields are – and this is crucial for the term power – organised in a certain hierarchy, where the more accepted social fields have a right of interpretation that overrides that of less accepted fields. The term 'right of interpretation' leads us to the terms 'cogito' and 'the unthought' (Foucault 1974). The cogito and the unthought are distributed and determine what knowledge is stabilised as the cogito, and what knowledge is undermined as the unthought. From a long-term perspective, all knowledge is eventually undermined; from a short-term perspective, however, some knowledge can stabilise while other knowledge may be undermined earlier. The term 'cogito' therefore refers to where the right of interpretation is situated.

Habermas (1990) explains the shift of the term 'public opinion' from referring to a way for the private sphere (i.e., the bourgeoisie) to convey its requirements to the public power (the state, including the royal court) to an inverse situation

in which 'public power' manipulates and marginalises the 'private sphere'. A parallel to our time (Habermas' book was first published in 1962), when most people in the western world have the right to vote, can be established if most of the private sphere and its public opinions are regarded as manipulated by, for example, the state through the media (e.g., via advertising). Newspapers can no longer be viewed as objective conveyers of news, but rather as manipulating public opinion by subjectivising the information conveyed. When connecting this understanding to terms of power, we can establish that most of the public lack power due to the manipulation of their opinions – by the state, for example, where the power is located.

2.3 Governance

Habermas and his ideas lead us to another interesting term that has become popular in recent decades, namely, governance. The ascendancy of this term reflects the state's changing role in society, from one of sovereignty to one of a regulating authority. This change has redistributed power and responsibility, which the state has delegated to other organisations (Jonas & While 2005). This calls for greater responsibility and accountability among such parties in their relationship to the regulating state. The term 'meta-governance' (Jessop 1998) further helps us understand the state's new role as a regulating authority. 'Meta-governance can be defined as the "government of governance": the strategies, policies, incentives, and practices used by the state to co-ordinate and steer various governance projects in directions that are consistent with the wider interests (fiscal, political, etc.) of the state itself' (Jonas & While 2005).

The meta-governance concept identifies the state as a key factor for success and describes the governing role the state *should* have. The role, the 'capable citizen *can* have' in this system, is described as follows: 'When ordinary people act in the role of citizen, they are capable of considering the common good. Democracy in this sense involves supporting and creating civic institutions and participatory processes that facilitate the construction, maintenance, and development of democratic identities' (Kjær 2004).

2.4 Strategic management

Strategies are an analytical dimension of ideas needed for the good governance of a company (Lindvall 2001). The 1990s strategic wave shifted the focus of strategic interests from questions regarding the outer world (e.g., the

significance of industrial structures) to the importance of internal conditions in companies, which means the ability to compete. In this light, a company's competitiveness is viewed as its access to knowledge and competence. Scenarios are an important starting point for this strategic wave, as described by Hamel and Prahalad (1994). Strategies are used for stretching and as leverage. 'Stretching' means that the strategies shape a tensioned relationship between the strategic aims and actual capabilities of the organisation. Strategy as a leverage does not view the absolute *quantity* of resources as important, but rather the optimal *use* of such resources. It is not how many resources used that is the focus, but how they are used and what value this use has for the customer.

However, there is a lack of theories treating strategic work (Hamel 2000). One of few people who have studied practical strategic work is Henry Mintzberg (Lindvall 2001). Mintzberg's model, which has been successful in the academic world, describes three different types of 'realised strategies'. Firstly, there are *intended* strategies that are planned by a company. Second, there are *deliberate* strategies that the company was actually able to implement. Third, *emergent* strategies could be described as 'spontaneous strategies', in other words, strategies that reveal a company's needs and its ability to handle unplanned situations. Finally, the concept of unrealised strategies is also used in Mintzberg's model (Lindvall 2001).

One important strategic term is 'flexibility', used frequently in connection with the idea of network organisations, today's dominant conception of a successful organisation. The network organisation concept highlights the relationships between various internal and external divisions in an organisation. In network organisations, a movement away from a hierarchical organisational structure can be observed (Lindvall 2001). A shift from control to empowerment, or 'from top–down to bottom–up empowerment' (Johnson 1992) is significant here. Furthermore, an evolution from detail management (traditional management) to management by goals can also be seen. This obviously relates to the understanding that a budget orientation leads to worse performance than does results-oriented management (compare with Hopwood 1973).

2.5 Planning theory

There is a range of planning theories that underlie planning. The connection to the present research can be found in the connection to PT, which depends not

only on concrete physical changes but also on Swedish planning norms. It can be observed in Waldo (2002) that planning must accommodate various stakeholders, as does PT. Furthermore, planning theory will be used here to complement the above strategic management discussion. The following presentation is far from complete but serves to advance our thinking on the topic.

Planning and rationality are interconnected. Rationality means that in a decision-making situation the best alternative is the one that takes into account the decision maker's material interests and provable good (Nyström 2003). The rational planning model consists of (1) goal formulation, (2) investigation of alternatives and their consequences, (3) choice of alternative and acceptance of plan, (4) realisation, and (5) experience. In the ideal case, this model endeavours to attain the Pareto optimum, i.e., some can improve their situations without causing others to impair theirs. Such rationality does not often function in reality; instead, what comes into play is social rationality, in which all individuals are part of a social group with collective interests that outweigh those of the individual. This practical situation makes the concept of the Pareto optimum less interesting (Nyström 2003). According to Sahlin-Andersson (1986), the rational planning model is a myth and nobody works in the way the model proclaims. It is more of an ideology or a façade that does not mirror the actual work done. Rationality is thus more symbolic than real (Nyström 2003). Hall (1979) also observes problems with the rational planning model due to its fundamental weaknesses.

In Sweden, where most responsibility for physical planning is located at the municipal level, four planning traditions can be observed (Nyström 2003):

- Social reform: planners are not connected to either politicians or inhabitants; centralistic alignment in which social problems need to be solved
- Policy analysis: analysis is based on economics, statistics, and mathematics
- Social learning: inhabitants are part of the planning process
- Social mobilisation: alternative and revolutionary, inspired by Marxism, Feminism, and anarchism

These different approaches can all be regarded as entirely different paradigms. This simultaneous existence of different paradigms makes it possible to change paradigms with changing phases (cf. Kuhn 1996). In today's Sweden, policy analysis is the most common practice (or 'planning culture'), although social

learning and social mobilisation are parallel, but less used ideologies (Nyström 2003). An obvious connection to the strategic management discussion can be found in the different orientations of the planning approaches, where we can divide the presented ideologies into top–down or bottom–up approaches. Although such a division is possible, current strategic management discourse notably has a predominantly bottom–up alignment, whilst planning at different levels in the public sector still has a strong top–down orientation.

3. Empirical framework

3.1 The stakeholder network

Being responsible for PT in the regions, the PTAs must interact with several parties having an interest in the services they provide. Enquist (1999) describes this situation via a stakeholder network, displayed in Figure 1.

This paper focuses on the upper triangle, which depicts the relationship between the PTA, the political sphere, and the citizens. Enquist describes how the political sphere has priority of interpretation over the PTA. He also calls this priority a 'power advantage', which was also recognised in earlier studies in other areas than PTA (Abrahamsson 1992, Enquist & Javefors 1996). We should take a critical stance toward this power advantage concept, because the PTAs should be autonomous and more concerned with the citizens than with the state (Enquist refers to Rothstein 1994).

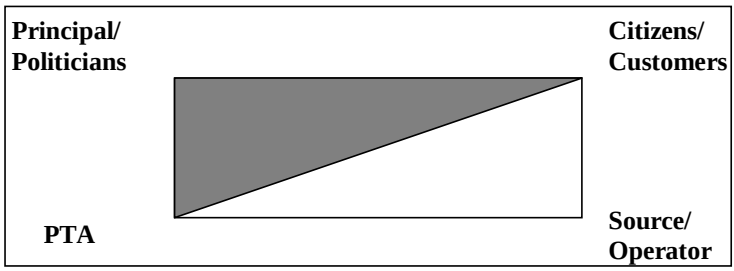

Figure 1: The stakeholder network in Swedish PT (according to Enquist 1999)

3.2 Transport–political goals (TPG)

TPGs, set at the governmental level, heavily influence the PTA principals/regional politicians, located in the upper left corner of the

stakeholder network diagram. TPGs also influence the strategy process of the PTAs. It is worth observing how TPGs are described in both overall and detailed terms.

At the overall level, 'The overall transport policy objective is to ensure that citizens and businesses in all parts of the country are provided with transport that is efficient in terms of the economy as a whole and sustainable in the long term' (www.sweden.gov.se/sb/d/2156/a/20469). This level is based on a triple bottom line perspective – the idea of socially, economically, and ecologically sustainable development (Elkington 1999, 2004). At a detailed level, the overall TPG is divided into six sub-goals: (1) an accessible transport system, (2) high standards of transport quality, (3) safe transport, (4) a good environment, (5) favourable regional development, and (6) a transport system that is managed by and serves the interests of women and men equally (www.sweden.gov.se/sb/d/2156/a/20469).

When relating the TPGs to strategy management at the PTA level, we can establish a strong connection to these national goals in several cases. This relationship exists because the TPGs are transmitted from the owner to the PTAs via the mission. This situation is exemplified in the following PTAs: Västtrafik (VT 2008), Östgötatrafiken (ÖT 2008), and, the most obvious one, Värmlandstrafik (VTAB 2008). Other PTAs use the TPGs more as 'rules of the game', serving as a background for the specific goals of the organisation. The surveyed PTAs that take this approach to TPG are Stockholms Länstrafik (SL 2008), Länstrafiken i Jämtlands län (LZ 2008), Upplands länstrafik (UL) (Verksamhetsplan 2005), and the PTAs in Örebro, Sörmland, and Västmanland (ML 2008). In these cases, different 'goal areas' are outlined (e.g., economy, environment, travel, in many cases connected to the TPG) containing set goals for the PTA. The 'spirit' of the TPGs, however, is preserved in all cases.

Governmental proposition 1997/98:56 is the basis of the TPGs, and is later cited in SOU 2001:106 (2001). The proposition relates to aviation, navigation, road transportation, and railways. Here, we state that TPG is set at the sectoral level; the goal formulation for PT context is thus unclear, because PT is not a sector itself, but rather part of several sectors. Given this background, the difficulties of interpretation are not unexpected.

In an attempt to reduce the scope for interpretation in the context of PT (as part of the transport sector), SOU 2001:106 (2001) states that 'the goals of

accessibility, transport quality, regional development and equality are about the purpose of the transport system … The rest of the goals can be seen as the framing conditions for the systems development'. Further on, the SOU (2001) discusses the important role of PT in achieving the TPG. The titled 'PT with a focus on people' is used for both SOU 2001:106 and 2003:67, and the importance of customers is alluded to throughout the text.

3.3 What is the predominant stakeholder perspective among the PTAs?

In most of the cases, the role of the principals is prominent, as underlined by the following quotations will underline this statement: 'The principals are our most *important* party of interest' (Verksamhetsplan 2008); 'To meet the needs of the principals, VTAB aims to possess the competence needed' (Trafikförsörjningsplan 2005); 'The principals of Västtrafik have formulated seven all-embracing goals' (VT 2008); 'It feels difficult to have a vision if the principals can take decisions that make it impossible to reach our vision' (ÖT 2008). However, in all cases, the customers (i.e., travellers) are described as important. The usual interfaces by which customers can share their views on PT are as follows: Kollektivtrafikbarometern (monthly telephone survey introduced by the Swedish Association of PT), sharing thoughts by letters to the editor and/or using the standardised customer complaint system called Boomerang (created by the PTAs for the PTAs). UL (Verksamhetsplan 2006) and VTAB (Trafikförsörjningsplan 2005) intend to create different kinds of focus groups, which VT (2008) as already done. SL (2008) conducts surveys about PT routes and Länstrafiken Kronoberg (LK 2008) considers their travel guarantee (i.e., monetary compensation for late arrivals and the like) part of their customer perspective (SOU 2003:67 treats such guaranties as consumer protection and not evidence of a customer perspective).

When comparing what PTAs claim they will do with what they really implement, we find discrepancies in some instances. For example, there is the situation in which a PTA declares, in writing, the importance of having a customer reference group to cultivate a deeper understanding of the customer situation/opinion but does not actually realise this aim. Another instance in which a PTA displayed its lack of a customer perspective and preference for a production alignment (Enquist 1999) in their actions is described as follows:

> The buses on route 3 were not able to drive according to the timetable due to the number of passengers entering. The PT provider in Piteå solved the

> problem by taking another way where there were no bus stops. "It was the only chance to speed up the bus line. We have to keep the buses moving", says Birger Eriksson, local manager of the PT provider to the Piteå newspaper.
> (*Metro* 2001)

The questionnaire given to all the PTAs yielded interesting responses, describing situations in which respondents encountered problems of being unable to obtain a customer focus due to the strong top down/principal orientation. Respondent ÖT (2008) observed a problem with the customer perspective in PT: 'Unfortunately, the customers are not always at the centre as we, information and marketing people, would wish. This depends on our contracts with the principals, who sometimes make us feel a stronger obligation to satisfy the principals than the customers'. LZ (2008) also described the problem of a lack of customer perspective in PT practice: 'according to my experience, the term "customer perspective" is a political prestige word. A little bit like special equipment you can paste on afterwards'.

When discussing the customer perspective as such, it was of interest to obtain the customer's view of the customer focus in PT today. This was done by conducting approximately 50 interviews with randomly selected customers. We asked travellers for their opinions on how the customer perspective was evident in PT in the county of Värmland. Numerous views, ideas, and thoughts about PT were shared with us. In general, our interviewees felt the PT business did not have a keen ear for customer input. Interviewees commonly believed that sharing their thoughts with the PTA would be both complicated and a waste of time, due to expected/experienced indifference. It was commonly felt that single customer voices would be ignored and that one needed to share one's views as a group to obtain any response. A letter to the editor was regarded as the only mode of input that could be expected to elicit a response.

4 Interpretation

4.1 The role of TPGs in PT business

When relating power and resistance to the geographical terms 'centre' and 'periphery' (Fornäs 1995), the TPGs should govern the direction of PT development. A geographical view of power, in the spirit of central place theory, would regard the state as the head of regional and local politics and,

thus, indirectly of the PTAs via their principals (see Christaller 1933). As stated earlier, all PTAs have adopted the TPGs in one way or another in their strategy work, which we do not regard as a problem. A problem does, however, occur when the vague formulation of the TPGs results in a large scope for interpretation, resulting in a situation in which different principals interpret the TPGs differently.

Stakeholders other than the state have to reduce the scope for interpretation by the PTAs and/or their principals. This leads to insecurity on the part of the principals and the risk of losing much of the ideological direction of the national goals to more budget-determined traditional management and management in detail (PT management in Sweden is described as traditional by Johnson & Anderberg 2007). The governing role of the TPGs is too weak to break through the traditional management thinking of the PTAs. As stated earlier in section 3.2, even other governmental reports had to make their own interpretations of the TPGs (SOU 2001, 2003).

In Bourdieu's terms, the social field of the principals is higher in the hierarchy than either the state or the PTAs. This situation gives the principals the right of interpretation (see Enquist 1999) over the PTA, a situation that leads us to Foucault. The cogito is located at the principal level. This was observable in many survey responses from the PTAs: VT's goals were set by the principals, ML's most important party of interest was its principals, VTAB aimed to satisfy its principals' needs, and LZ's only party of interest was its principals.

4.2 The customer – the marginalised stakeholder

What is the customer's role in this system? The customer, both directly (by paying fares) and indirectly (by paying taxes), pays for PT and is the main instrument for fulfilling the TPGs: only if more people travel by PT instead of by private car, can a more sustainable transportation system be reached.

All the PTAs describe their organisations as having a customer perspective. On the other hand, we could observe that many PT travellers/customers did not use the feedback channels the PTAs provide to get a sense of the customer perspective, because they do not feel that their views and ideas would be used. As well, some of the PTAs described earlier have a problem in applying the customer perspective. In other words, there seems to be a discrepancy between what the PTAs state in their written aims and how they act. According to

respondent ÖT (see section 3.3 for an interpretation of her statement), this depends on the principals' right of interpretation (we feel that Östgötatrafiken's statement is outspoken and necessary).

This discrepancy between the written aims and practical behaviour of the PTAs marginalises the customer – who is, after all, a key actor in PT. As stated earlier, according to our understanding, the TPGs do not provide enough guidance for the principals, which keeps them from communicating a clear mission to the PTA. In the absence of explicit guidelines articulated via a clear mission, the principals instead choose to rely largely on traditional management. This leads to short termism and an principal focus (or right of interpretation) in which the customer is marginalised.

4.3 Connecting to planning theory

The situation described here can be connected to planning theory. As described in the theoretical framework, in today's Sweden, policy analysis is the most common planning tradition (we could call this the 'planning cogito'). This tradition has clearly positivistic and quantitative features that stand in contrast to the current idea of strategic management that proclaims a bottom–up alignment that better takes advantage of people's knowledge as a developmental resource. In the theoretical discourse on planning, we would classify this 'tradition' as social learning.

Due to the PTAs' situation as companies offering services to the public while remaining dependent on public organisations and administrations, we could interpret the outlined difficulties as representing a conflict between internal will to develop a bottom–up empowerment alignment and external pressure from the municipalities and counties to adhere to the policy analysis tradition (or 'traditional management'). We could further interpret this situation as a currently ongoing paradigm shift in public organisations and administrations concerning their governance, a shift from policy analysis/traditional management to social learning/strategic management (we could also call this a 'shift in the cogito's location').

5 Conclusion – Discussing the interpretation

Before discussing the interpretation, it is crucial to understand that this paper does not aim to uncover the 'truth' in any objective sense. It does, however,

aim to develop a deeper understanding of the specific situation of the stakeholder network in Swedish PT. We will start the concluding discussion by examining the principal–PTA relationship.

Traditional management by the principals (Johnson & Anderberg 2007) is deeply rooted and governs the PTAs, which also means that the ideological, national goals take a back seat in determining PTA actions. Due to the economic alignment of the principals, the national ideological goals are adapted, but the implementation is dependent on the principals' will to pay. What we can observe is a transformation of the national, ideological TPGs, based on the triple bottom line, into goals for the regional PTA, based on the principals' conditions (determined by the economic bottom line). This situation occurs even though SOU 2001:106 and SOU 2003:67 both interpret the TPGs and how PT should relate to them. The TPGs should thus leave a smaller scope for interpretation to the PTAs and their principals or be clearer as to who should interpret the TPGs (which would also give the PTAs a smaller scope for interpretation).

The citizens, as potential and current customers, are marginalised in this transformation. We found a complicated situation in which a bottom–up ideology is operative between the state and the municipalities but a top–down ideology between the municipalities and the PTAs and, by extension, the citizens. The citizens are taxpayers, voters, and users of PT; the politicians should always act as their representatives (Enquist 1999, referring to Jacobsson 1994; von Otter 1997, Rombach 1997, Rothstein 1994, 1995) and the PTAs should be sensitive to their expectations (see suggestions in Kollframåt 2007). A lack of sensitivity on the part of the PTAs is also recognised by Kollframåt (2007), which in many ways bases its findings on PT research. Of course, suggestions and complaints can be made via letters to the editor or by contacting the PTA, but the citizens are greatly lacking in power. The citizens' role is reactive rather than active: they react to changes but do not really have a chance to act *before* any changes are realised. Citizens do have the ability to vote, which gives the individual the chance to choose a more or less PT-friendly party. The elected politicians are afterward the citizens' representatives and are doubtless willing to assume their responsibilities, as the citizens expect them to. However, the right to vote is a relatively weak tool for citizens to wield, because an individual's vote represents too many interests. Interests such as nursing, childcare, school, and the labour market influence people's vote more than do questions concerning PT. After the actual elections, the possibility of citizens exerting influence on PT is diminished to a minimum.

Thus, we have a situation in which citizens are unable to take responsibility for the PT services because they play only a reactive role and have handed over responsibility for their collective interests to the politicians. This situation can be explained by Habermas. The private sphere, which includes the actual public , does not need to have a political opinion. This depends on the 'state' (i.e., the political sphere as a whole) that - as I tried to describe with the term 'responsibility' – is administrating, distributing, and care taking, and, by that means, relieves the actual public by institutions (such as the PTA). In our view, at the same time as the actual public is relieved of responsibility it is also relieved of much of its power – apart from the possibility of voting, which, according to Habermas, is possibly manipulated. In other words, we could regard the citizens as not having *any* power in the PT goal-setting process, except the possibility of voting for economically biased politicians/PTA principals and reacting to changes that often do not focus on the citizens' desires but on economic and production difficulties. The citizens can, thus, be seen as marginalised. Figure 2 is an attempt to organise the different interested parties in a hierarchical way, as was explained in this chapter.

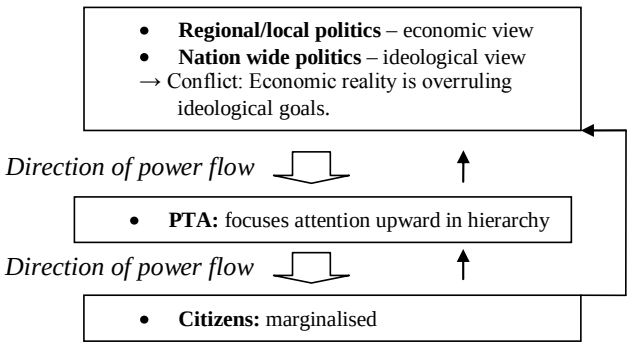

Figure 2: Goal-setting hierarchy in Swedish PT

Citizens should therefore become more active in the goal-setting process and other planning for PT development, for example, by participating in reference groups. Besides empowering the customers/potential customers, the ideological transport–political goals should give a smaller scope for interpretation to the PTAs and their principals, to prevent the emergence of an organisation too aligned with traditional management. These suggestions, however, would not be easy to realise because the ordinary 'way of life' in daily PT practice is a rooted habitus in which the cogito is located with the principals. Although change will not be achieved easily, we should recall that from a long-term perspective, all knowledge is undermined, which means that the location of the cogito will

shift. Furthermore, planning theory helped us observe that a shift in the location of the cogito might already be in progress.

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The Tragedy of Ordinarity

This is a licentiate thesis that combines research on public transportation and sustainable development by the term 'culture'. Two papers, one with a geographical and one with an organisational understanding of culture, are the base for the linking essay that puts together these two working papers. The result of the linking essay can be described as slightly pessimistic concerning the role of today's public transportation for a sustainable development.

The reader can expect the unusual use of culture theory for the development of an understanding of public transport's role for a sustainable development. The thesis' geographical focus is laid on the Swedish context, and in particular on the county of Värmland. However, the basic way of doing research and the understanding that is described in this thesis can be generalised and, thus, also used in other local, regional or national contexts.

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