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How do politicians explain that they include traffic-increasing measures in a plan aiming at reducing traffic volumes?

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Research domain: *Transport economics, policy and transport behavior*

ABSTRACT

Trondheim is experiencing a rapid population growth, and as a result of this, an increase in traffic. This leads to a rise in emissions, traffic accidents and congestions, as well as delays for public transport. To meet these future challenges, the City of Trondheim adopted the Environmental Package for Transport, which has stated goals of reducing CO_2-emissions and car traffic volumes and increasing the use of ecofriendly modes of transportation. Still, half the funding in this package will be used for building new roads and upgrading existing ones, a measure that will reduce the likelihood of achieving the goals of the package. The main question in this paper is "*Why do politicians include traffic increasing measures in a plan aiming at reducing traffic volumes?*". Using theory regarding "framing" to analyze interviews with key politicians involved in adopting the package, the aim is to explain why politicians adopted measures that reduce the chance for achieving their objectives. The findings indicate that all of the politicians were aware of the correlation between increased road capacity and traffic volumes. They do, however, frame the problem as a local instead of a global challenge, and therefore see the road building as a solution to local problems, rather than measures adding to the problems they have stated as important to solve. This way of acting can be observed among politicians in different places and regarding various issues. Deeper knowledge of how politicians think, and how they rationalize their decisions, might make it easier for planners to know what they should emphasize in their communication with the politicians in order to ensure that the politicians better understand the consequences of their decisions.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 INCREASED ROAD CAPACITY

It is largely agreed upon how the development in land use and transportation areas should be like, if the goal is to reduce vehicular traffic in urban areas. Improved public transport, better conditions for pedestrians and cyclists, restrictions against car traffic, denser land use, and proper localization of residential, commercial and industrial areas are required. Tennøy (2012:20) has summed up the principles in the coordinated land use and transport planning for reduced traffic as follows:

- *to impose or encourage land use as urban densification rather than sprawl, and as 'car-independent' location of new activities*
- *to impose physical and fiscal restrictions on road traffic*
- *to improve public transport services*
- *to improve conditions for walking and bicycling*

It is generally agreed that an expansion of road capacity in already pressured transport systems in urban areas contributes to and allows growth in traffic volumes in short and especially long term (i.e. Strand et al. 2009). According to Litman (2009) induced traffic follows an increase in road capacity. Increased road capacity results in less traffic on the stretch for a period of time, and the travel time decrease. The car's competitiveness increases relative to other modes of transportation, and new travels that previously weren't conducted might arise. In addition, the increased competitiveness of the car causes modal shifts from ecofriendly modes of transportation to the private car. This will continue until the new road capacity has been filled up by traffic, and a new equilibrium in the competitiveness occurs. Induced traffic thus increase the total number of traveled passenger kilometers by increasing the drives' length and quantity. Increased capacity on main roads leads to increased traffic volumes which must be distributed on a road network in central areas that may not be designed for such volumes. While congestion in these areas is a problem in itself, it may also be transmitted back onto the main road network. In addition to this, better accessibility caused by better road standard and increased capacity may lead to a larger operating radius, urban sprawl and regional enlargement. All of this leads to increased emissions in the long term (Strand et al. 2009).

Given the stated goal in the Environmental Package, it seems odd that 50% of the funding goes towards better roads and increased road capacity. The main aim of this paper is to answer the question "*Why do politicians include traffic increasing measures in plans aiming at reducing traffic volumes?*" Previous studies who share similarities with this study, have mainly focused on either the aspect of power or how knowledge is used (e.g. Tennøy 2012, Krizek et.al 2009, Rydin 2007, Næss 2004, Mazza 2002, Davoudi 2006). Tennøy (2010) have conducted a similar study, but where the focus was on how *planners* frame road building.

Framing here refers to how an individual evaluate and act in different situations (Rein and Schön 1993). This study will focus on the aspect of *framing* - how framing influences what the politicians *believe* is the right thing to do, how framing affects the outcome, and how framing might be used to justify measures that reduce the chances of good achievement.

1.2 THE CITY OF TRONDHEIM AND THE ENVIRONMENTAL PACKAGE

Trondheim is, with its 165 000 inhabitants[1], the largest city in central Norway, and the third largest city in the country. The city is experiencing a rapid population growth, and the number of new citizens is anticipated to reach 25 000 within a 10 year period. Along with the population growth comes an increasing transport demand. This can lead to increasing congestion, more traffic accidents, a decrease in public transport accessibility and a variety of environmental issues.

The National Transport Plan for the period 2006-2015 (Norwegian Ministry of Transport and Communication 2004) did not provide Trondheim with additional funding except for finalizing the Northern road, leading traffic outside the city center. Without subsidies from the National Government, and without income from the toll roads that had been removed at the end of 2005, financial room for maneuver and development of the transport systems in ways meeting the future challenges were not possible.

As a response to these issues, the Trondheim's City Council on April 24th 2008 adopted 'the Municipality of Trondheim's Environmental Package for Transportation', which has a primary objective of "*reducing CO_2-emissions, limit the motor vehicle traffic and improve the conditions for those who travel by foot, bike or public transport*" (Municipality of Trondheim 2008a:1, own translation). The package consists of ten specific goals that will be evaluated during the set period. These regard noise reduction, fewer accidents, improved local environment and urban densification. The measures will, if necessary, be adjusted during the period to make sure the goals will be achieved. 50 % of the budgeted costs will be spent on public transport-, safety- and environmental measures, while the remaining 50 % will be spent on upgrading existing roads and building new ones. The package is mainly based on the Municipal Transport Plan (Municipality of Trondheim 2006), as well as a note from the City Manager (Municipality of Trondheim 2008b) explaining that the foreseen measures will contribute positively towards achievement of the goals, but that it will not be enough to reach them.

The parties that supported the Environmental Package when it was initiated had 65% of the votes in total. One of the parties, The Norwegian Labour Party, had almost 44 % of the votes in the local election in that period, and is without doubt the most powerful party in the collaboration.

[1] These population figures are from 2008, the year the Environmental Package was adopted. In 2012 the population had reached 176 000 inhabitants (City of Trondheim 2008, Statistics Norway 2011).

2. FRAMING AS THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Political decisions are affected by what the politicians see as main objectives, as well as their knowledge regarding different correlations and connections. *Framing* hence appeared as a good theoretical framework for studying and analyzing why politicians adopt an environmental package with traffic increasing measures, when the primary objective of the package is to reduce traffic volumes and CO_2-emissions. Rein and Schön (1993:146) describes framing as *"a way of selecting, organizing, interpreting and making sense of a complex reality to provide guideposts for knowing, analyzing, persuading, and acting"*. Framing affects what one sees as the problem that needs to be solved, which means and strategies are considered, how these are evaluated and thus which means one actually chooses.

2.1 REFRAMING THE PROBLEM

Policies often regard fields of high complexity and uncertainty. Previously unknown obstacles, correlations or other unforeseen factors may lead the politicians to reframe their problem (Schön and Rein 1994). This may happen in two ways. Firstly, one may find that the plan will not solve the problem one wanted to address, but that the plan itself is too good to give up. Rather than designing a new plan that fits the original problem, it will be easier to change *the problem* so it fits the original plan. This may also be the case for certain elements one wants to incorporate in the plan. Secondly, one may find that the problem itself, in the context it must operate, actually is unsolvable. The problem may then be changed so that the essence of the first problem is maintained, but now providing a real opportunity for achievement.

2.2 SCALE

According to Lowe (2011) framing must be seen in relation to scale. Whether the scale is neighborhood, city or region can have a great impact on how we frame the situation and the problem, which measures are seen as appropriate, which measures will be implemented and which outcomes are expected. It is thus important to define which scale that project will operate in. Still, it is difficult to define scale. It is a social construction and does not have a natural and fixed definition, and it is hence not given which scale should be used in different settings.

According to Schön (1983), when the previous problem setting does not give a good basis for problem solving, one can reframe the problem and thereby change the situation or scale. When we reevaluate the situation against the new problem setting, new solutions can be identified. This can be seen in connection with Lowe's (2011) argumentation on how planners and politicians can change scale to identify new problems and alternative solutions. Different problems and solutions may emerge with a change of scale.

> *"Analyzing problems at different scales will continue in planning, but planners and planning institutions can shift scale to identify alternative solutions"* (Lowe 2011:58).

Change of scale may be used positively to alter an unsolvable problem so it becomes solvable. At the same time, change of scale can be used negatively to justify measures that were not supported in the original scale.

2.3 SHIFT OF FRAMES

Rein and Schön (1993) suggest that we regard politicians as actors in constant changes, as they continuously respond to and learn from the situations they find themselves in. A shift of frames may happen because one attains new knowledge, new experiences or new objectives. As a political situation develops, new knowledge regarding how different measures work might arise and lead to changing frames. A change in one of the factors that affects our framing may also lead to a shift of frames.

Rein and Schön (1993) emphasize that change of frames happens over time, and it may happen both deliberately and unconsciously. For a deliberate shift of frames, the individual must be aware of and reflect on his own frames. This might happen as a deliberate strategy between multiple politicians, where they get together, reflect on their conflicting frames and jointly find a solution. Most people however do not reflect much on their own frames, so a deliberate shift of frames is less common. A subconsciously shift of frames is more common. When experiencing a gap between what was expected and what actually happened, new knowledge arises and this may alter one's understanding of the situation and thus affect one's framing. Frames may also be change subconsciously because of shifting discourses.

3. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODS

3.1 METHOD

Studying why the politicians in Trondheim included traffic increasing measures in a plan aiming at reducing traffic volumes, the aim was to identify possible explanations as to why these measures were seen as appropriate. Better knowledge about how politicians understands and explains different measures, might lead to a better knowledge of what needs emphasis when planners presents plans and their consequences for politicians.

Nine in-depth interviews with politicians who somehow were involved in the process were conducted. The interviews took place during the early summer in 2011, three years after the adoption of the package. Representatives from all the political parties in Trondheim were interviewed, including the ones that did not participate in the package. This was done to get an idea of overall problems and different views of the package. In this paper - and in the analysis, aiming at answering the research question - interviews with six politicians who were

a part of the design- and adoption process are included. The politicians that didn't participate in some way or another disagree with how the package is put together. Their framing is thus not relevant in explaining why road construction was included.

Semi-structured in-depth interviews were chosen as method. It was the most effective strategy to make sure the needed information were obtained, while at the same time making room for elaborations, comments and feedback. To further improve the quality of the analysis, ideally more interviews should have been conducted. The problem is that only a limited number of politicians were actually involved in the process on a regular basis. To interview additional politicians would not necessarily add to the analytical quality, as they would not have been a part of the design- and adoption process. Their knowledge on why the different measures actually were included would thus have been limited.

To be able to answer the research question, a theoretical framework for analyzing the interviews were needed. *Framing* was chosen to assist in understanding and analyzing the politicians' assessment of the situation and their basis for action, and thus why some measures are seen as appropriate while others are not.

3.2 ANALYTICAL APPROACH

Based on interviews with the key politicians involved in the adoptation of the package and the chosen theoretical framework, this study will analyze how each politicians' understanding of needs and opportunities in the local context, their assessment and prioritization of objectives, as well as their knowledge and understanding regarding causal correlations between increased road capacity and growth in traffic volumes, contribute to how they frame the situation. This will affect what they define as the problem that needs to be solved, and how this should be addressed. Analyzing how this influences each politician's evaluation of the situation, and how this contributes in guiding their actions - whether they participate in the package or not – the aim is to study whether there are patterns that recur and which these patterns are. Based on this, the study seeks to analyze if one can develop a more general understanding of why politicians include traffic increasing measures in plans aiming at reducing traffic volumes.

3.3 USING THE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Different factors affect each individual's framing of a given situation (as illustrated in figure 1). An individuals' understanding of society (such as main local discourses, perceptions and context), their goals (objectives, interests, values and preferences) and their background (knowledge, understanding and theories) will all affect how they frame each specific situation. During the interviews, I started out with an open mind as to which factors would be the most important ones. After the interviews were conducted it was clear that some factors were more important in the politicians explanations, and that these would make a better basis

for a thorough analysis. The focus in the analysis will be on the three explanatory factors 'local context', 'objectives' and 'understanding and knowledge'.

Context, perceptions and local discourses all affect how politicians see the local situation, what they see as the problem that needs to be fixed, and how they frame the situation. *Context* was chosen as explanatory factor in the analysis, as it was the most specific factor regarding the politicians understanding of society and thus the easiest to discuss with them. Objectives, interests, values and preferences all embrace each individual's personal preferences and how that affects their framing. Each politician may have goals, interests etc. that influence how they frame the increase in road capacity, and thus whether it is seen as a proper measure. *Objectives* was chosen as explanatory factor in the analysis, as objectives were already defined in the package and it was most fruitful to analyze each individuals objectives in comparison with the package. Understanding, knowledge and theories all affect each politician's understanding of connections and correlations in the specific situation, and thus their framing. Further, educational background will affect what is seen as the problem, which measures are seen as appropriate, and whether the politicians think it is possible to reach the primary objective in spite of the increased road capacity. *Understanding and knowledge* was chosen as explanatory factor in the analysis, as these factors are intertwined and capture the influence of the individual's educational background. Theories could have been chosen, but that would include another analysis – to process the politicians' different understandings and knowledge into different theories before analyzing these theories in the theoretical framework.

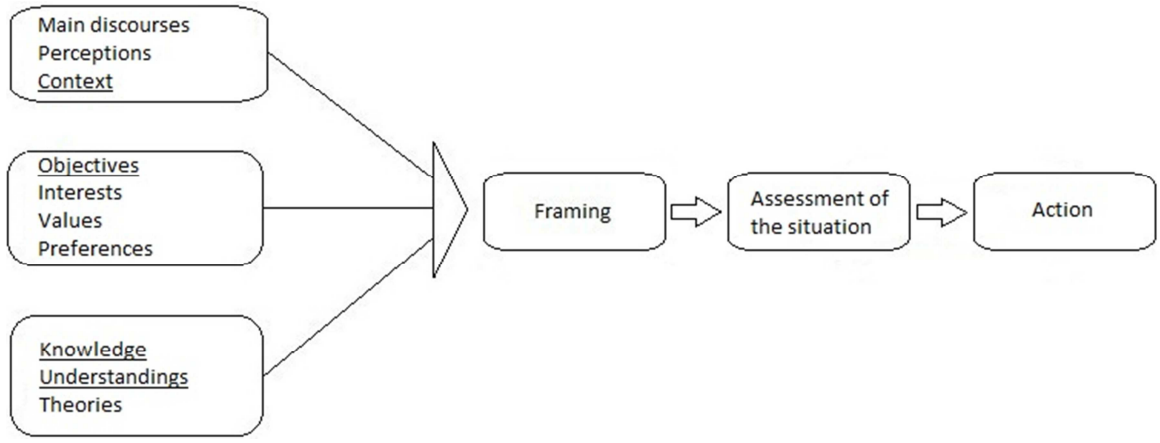


Figure 1: How frames occur (based on Tennøy 2012 and Schön and Rein 1994)

The defined explanatory factors are used for analyzing how the politicians frame "increased road capacity", how this affects their assessment of the situation, and how this leads to an action – whether one votes for or against an Environmental Package with traffic increasing measures.

Even though some explanatory factors are chosen while others are left out, this does not imply that omitted factors have not had an influence. Investigating the other factors is more complex and would have required an unreasonably large amount of information.

4. HOW POLITICIANS FRAME "INCREASED ROAD CAPACITY"

Drawing on theory of coordinated land use and transport policy, we can define the problem related to increased road capacity to be:

> New road capacity will allow and contribute to an increase in traffic volumes and CO_2-emissions. The main goal in the Environmental Package is to reduce traffic volumes and CO_2-emissions. Therefore, road capacity should not be increased. Why then are 50% of the funds spent on road construction?

The answer to this question might partly be grounded in the fact that several political parties have participated in the design and adoption of the package. As a political compromise, it's very likely that the individuals frame "road construction" differently. A political negotiation might result in measures that contradict what the theory would define as positive development. While one party focus on some measures as efficient and important, other parties find other measures more efficient and thus more important to implement. Even though this is a possible explanation to why measures that reduce chances of receiving the stated goals are adopted, it does not explain why these measures receive half the funding in the package. Neither does it explain why expanding road capacity is seen as a proper measure. To answer these questions, the focus will be on how the politicians *frame* the problems regarding the increased road capacity.

4.1 FINDINGS

In the analysis of why the politicians include traffic increasing measures, the focus in this paper is on two different explanations - 'why increasing road capacity is seen as an appropriate measure' and 'how the politicians think they can improve the chances of still achieving their objectives'. These explanations were defined during the interviews, since almost all politicians focused on these aspects as explanations to why it was not a problem to include traffic increasing measures into the package.

4.1.1 Why the increase in road capacity?

In the interviews, all the politicians clearly show that they are aware of the connection between increased road capacity and increased traffic volumes and CO_2-emissions. Most say it out loud, while others imply it.

When asked why increased capacity is an appropriate measure, the politicians have numerous explanations. An estimated population growth will increase the transport demand significantly, the congestion reduces the level of service of public transport and thus the ridership, the current road network will not be able to deal with future traffic situations, and

there is too much traffic in neighborhoods and in the city centre. New road capacity will relieve all these problems.

All of these explanations stem from *the local context*, and influence how the politicians understand the problems that need to be fixed. The politicians also explain that congestions will result in increased emissions and noise, as well as increased costs for both individuals and the business sector. These explanations draw on their *understanding and knowledge*. According to the politicians' *objectives*, congestions should be avoided and traffic should be led outside central and residential areas. In addition, a more secure and coherent road system can enhance traffic safety and improve level of service and ridership in public transport. The road construction in the Environmental Package is seen as a solution to all of the mentioned problems, and it is thus – in their opinion – necessary to increase the road capacity.

4.1.2 How can the primary objective still be met?

When asked how they can improve the chances of still achieving their objectives, the politicians explain that the rise in traffic volumes following increased capacity can be counteracted with both positive and restrictive measures. With positive measures, ecofriendly modes of transportation will become a genuine alternative to the car. They suggest faster, safer bicycling and walking paths, as well as reduced prices and increased frequencies on public transport, as such measures. With restrictive measures, such as the introduction of toll roads and transforming previous car lanes into public transport lanes, driving a private car will be less desirable. One of the politicians also explains that technological development will reduce CO_2-emissions. All of these explanations stem from the politicians *understanding and knowledge*.

While the politicians knew that increased road capacity leads to increased traffic volumes, most of them at the same time believed that building new roads would be the solution both for congestion and capacity issues that is present today, as well as those which might arise in the future. Since they believe it is possible to counteract growth in traffic volumes with various positive and restrictive measures, road construction is not seen as a problem. It would be interesting to examine other but similar cases to see whether these explanations and understanding also appears there.

4.2 THE POLTICIANS' ASSESSMENT OF THE SITUATION

Based on the politicians reasoning in the interviews, a figure that illustrate how they assess the situation on the basis of their framing of the road construction is included (see figure 2). How they see and understand the factors in the first section will affect how they frame the situation. This will influence how they asses the same situation, and which reasoning they draw from it. This assessment in turn leads to an action – in this case they determine whether they want to participate or not participate in the package.

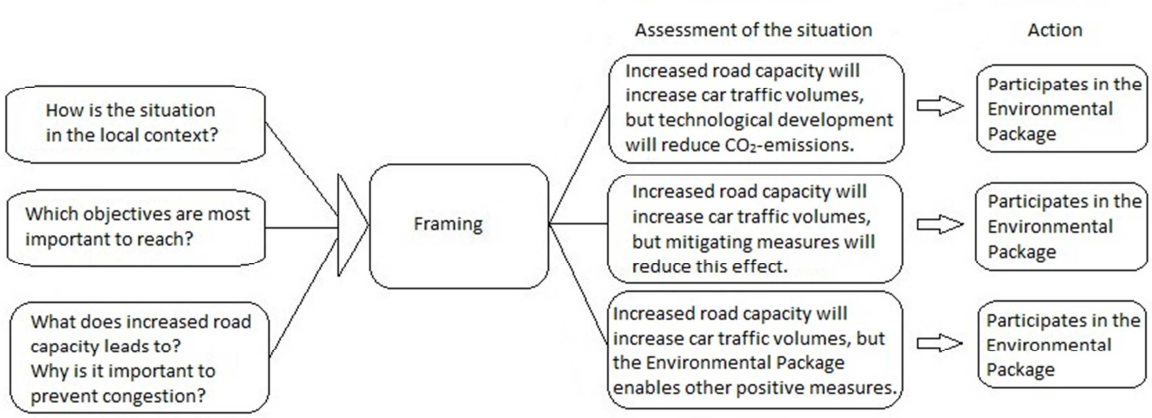


Figure 2: How the explanatory factors contribute to the politicians' framing, and thereby their assessment of the situation and their actions.

The politicians' perception of the local context, their objectives and their understanding and knowledge leads to a framing that justifies road construction. How each politician understands different issues - such as "*How local context affect the situation*", "*Which objectives are most important to reach*", "*What increased road capacity leads to*" and "*How to most effectively prevent congestion, and why that is important*" - affects how they frame the situation. The politicians' framing of the situation in turn leads to an assessment and understanding of the situation. Even though framing is unique for each politician, the assessment of the situation shows clear similarities between the politicians.

The politicians' assessments of the situation can be summarized in three points.

- Most of the politicians believe that mitigating measures will curb the growth in traffic volumes that increased road capacity induces, and that the package enables other eco-friendly measures that otherwise wouldn't have been adopted.
- One politician believe CO_2-emissions will be reduced through technological development.
- Only one politician believe that road capacity should not be increased at all, but the only way he could argue his point of view, and hopefully be able to include more ecofriendly measures, were through participation.

Most of the politicians believe the primary objective still will be reached. Because of this, they believe they can adopt an environmental package with traffic increasing measures, while still being able to reach their objectives of reduced CO_2-emissions and car traffic volumes.

5. Discussion

Discussing the findings from the specific case in light of theories about framing might lead to a better understanding of why the politicians chose to include traffic increasing measures in a plan aiming at reducing traffic volumes.

5.1 REFRAMING THE PROBLEM TO FIND ALTERNATIVE SOLUTIONS?

Reduced CO_2-emissions and traffic volumes are part of the primary objective in the package, while increased road capacity leads to a rise in traffic volumes and emissions in the long term. The politicians are aware of this correlation. Still they include traffic increasing measures in the package, explaining that it is a necessary move to relieve congestions. The question is whether the politicians have reframed the problem - from reduced traffic volumes and emissions to reduced congestions – so they can include traffic increasing measures in the package. One hypothesis could thus be that road construction and increased capacity was an important part of the package all along, and that it was necessary to identify problems where road building actually were a solution instead of a part of the problem.

There are strong indications that road construction has been an important element all along. The politicians are aware of the connection between increased capacity and increased car traffic volumes, but road construction is still seen as a solution to those problems that are present. On the Environmental Package's webpage it says that "there is not enough money on public budgets alone for a quick and massive development of the transport system. That is why the Environmental Package for Transport was adopted by the Municipality of Trondheim in 2008 […]"[2] (own translation). Further, the decision document for the Transport plan for Trondheim 2006-2015 states that "the City Council believes that in the interest of the environment, traffic safety and accessibility, it is absolutely necessary to complete the development of the main road network in Trondheim […]"[3] (own translation). Whether road construction was the reason that the package was initiated, one cannot know. It is likely that to finalize the road network was a main target to some representatives, while it was not a target for others. Some of the politicians nevertheless pointed out that it is a reason why the package was initiated when it was; it was just another way to receive funding for road construction desired by some politicians. One possible explanation to why traffic increasing measures were included in a plan aiming at reducing traffic volumes might hence be that some of the problems were deliberately reframed so that road construction were a part of the solution, not the problem.

5.2 HOW DOES SCALE INFLUENCE FRAMING?

Which scale the problems are framed in seems to affect which solutions are emphasized. But scale is hardly defined in the Environmental Package. To illustrate how scale may have influenced the politicians' problem setting, which scale the different elements in the primary objective are likely to operate in will be defined. Further, whether the politicians understanding of the problem can be linked to scale will be examined.

[2] http://miljopakken.no/om-miljoepakken/bakgrunn
[3] http://www.trondheim.kommune.no/attachment.ap?id=30029

The primary objective is to "*reduce CO_2-emissions, limit the motor vehicle traffic and improve the level of service for those who travel by foot, bike or public transport*". While reducing CO_2-emissions can be seen as a solution to a global problem, reducing car traffic volumes and increase the use of ecofriendly modes of transport can be seen as local measures to accomplish this. Increasing the attractiveness of public transport, walking and bicycling combined with a reduction in traffic volumes can also be seen as solutions to local challenges, such as reducing noise and local pollution, improve the local environment and increase safety, accessibility and well-being in the population. The primary objective is thus a global challenge leading to positive, local effects. Still, the politicians base their explanations on the necessity of road construction on the local context. One hypothesis could be that the politicians deliberately changed the scale of some of their problems to justify road construction and increased capacity, a measure which were not supported in the global problems in the primary objective.

The identified problems in the local scale in Trondheim are not unsolvable without road construction; the politicians could simply have chosen not to increase the capacity. Following the principles in coordinated land use and transport planning for reduced traffic, this would actually lead to a higher probability that the local goals would be reached. A positive change of scale has not occurred – that is, changing scale to make an unsolvable problem solvable – as road construction is not a solution to the problem. The question is whether the politicians deliberately shifted focus from a global to a local scale to identify problems where road construction can be seen as a solution. If this is the case, a negative change of scale has been used to justify a desire to upgrade the road network. Drawing on the explanations in chapter 5.1, it is likely that road construction were an important element of the package all along. Whether a deliberate negative change of scale may occurred –that is, changing scale to justify measures not supported in the original scale - one cannot know. One explanation to why traffic increasing measures were included in a plan aiming at reducing traffic volumes, still seems to be that local targets were prioritized above global targets.

The discussion in section 5.1 and 5.2 is summarized in table 1, describing the goals of the package, what the expert says about these issues, the politicians' line of reasoning, and thereby their solution to what they see as the problem.

Table 1: The package's goals, what the expert says about these issues, the politicians' line of reasoning and their solution, summarized.

	The package says	Experts says	The politicians line of reasoning	Solution (according to the politicians line of reasoning)
Reframing the problem	CO_2-emissions and increased traffic volumes is a problem.	CO_2-emissions and increased traffic volumes is a problem. Road capacity should not be increased.	Congestion is a problem that must be solved, increasing the road capacity will help solve this problem.	Constructing new road capacity.
Scale	CO_2-emissions and increased traffic volumes is a problem, as well as traffic through central and residential areas. Scale not mentioned specifically.	CO_2-emissions is a global problem. Reduced traffic volumes will lead to lower CO_2-emissions and fewer cars in central and residential areas. Road capacity should not be increased.	Congestion is a problem that must be solved, alongside with reducing traffic in central and residential areas.	Constructing new road capacity and new roads that leads traffic outside central and residential areas.

5.3 CHANGING FRAMES?

How then is it possible that those representatives who might not had increased road capacity as a main target, now argues its' necessity? Even though framing is unique for each politician, the assessment of the situation (as shown in figure 2) shows clear similarities between the politicians. One hypothesis could be that several of the politicians had a change of frames, either deliberate or subconsciously.

In this case, nothing implies that the representatives have been aware of and reflected on their own frames, or that change of frames is a deliberate action. But a change of frames may also happen unconsciously, with a gradual change over time. The question is thus whether there has been a change from conflicting frames to shared frames (Rein and Schön 1993).

All politicians, except one, argued the necessity of increased road capacity in a similar way. The same reasoning, explanations and objectives recur. This might be a result of gradual and unconsciously changing frames. As a political compromise between six political parties, it is not unlikely that the politicians started with partly conflicting frames. A possible scenario is that some of the politicians forced through their point of view on road construction because they had the majority of the seats in the City Council. This may have influenced the perceptions and explanations of the remaining politicians. When there now is a consensus on why increased road capacity is necessary, it may indicate that shared frames have been reached over time and through discussions. Since frames changes over time, it is impossible to answer whether this has been the case. The politicians were interviewed once, quite a while

after the initiation of the package. It is thus no basis for comparison. Still, it is important to keep this option open. It may also be, as the representative from one of the parties says, that:

> "*[…] when one reach a compromise within a negotiation process, you'll be responsible for the entire package. Then you probably won't criticize parts of the compromise in public, as that would be counterproductive. It is in the nature of the compromise that all participants have been successful in response to some things, and had to withdraw some of their concerns regarding other things. Then, you really can't criticize the compromise you were a part of designing*" (own translation).

5.4 HOW TO IMPROVE THE DECISION MAKING PROCESS?

In Trondheim, the politicians were told that their chosen measures were not enough to reach their stated goals (Municipality of Trondheim 2008b). Still, they went ahead and adopted the package – with the pretext that it would be possible to alter the measures after a while if achievement were not within reach. To be able to alter the measures if needed is of course a positive trait. Still, according to my findings, the politicians believe they will be able to reach their stated goals with the current composition of measures, even though they have been told otherwise. What then can be done to improve the decision making process, to make sure that politicians make informed decisions *actually* contributing to achieving their objectives?

One suggestion is that planners and advisors must work even harder to ensure that politicians are aware of the consequences of their actions. The expected effects from each measure should be clearly defined and displayed to politicians, as well as the overall effect from all the measures combined. Pointing out conflicts between wanted measures and stated goals can hopefully help politicians better understand the consequences of their actions. Further, advisors should show politicians clear alternative measures that would actually lead to goal achievement, so they get an understanding of what truly needs to be done. The advisors must be sure not to provide politicians with knowledge that "excuses" their measures – such as "increased capacity relief congestion" – but rather explaining the real correlations and expected outcomes (Tennøy 2012).

6. Conclusion

The City of Trondheim's Environmental Package for Transport is ambitious, especially when it comes to the primary objectives of "*reducing CO_2-emissions, limit the motor vehicle traffic and improve the conditions for those who travel by foot, bike or public transport*" (Municipality of Trondheim 2008a:1, own translation). Half the funding are directed towards ecofriendly modes of transport, and the package possesses several environmental friendly measures. Still, it is not know how the development of traffic volumes in Trondheim will be in the long term, especially after increased road capacity is realized.

The main aim of this paper was to answer the question "*Why do the politicians include traffic increasing measures in a plan aiming at reducing traffic volumes?*"

One hypothesis to this question was that the road construction and increased capacity was an important part of the package all along, and that it thus was necessary to identify problems where this actually were a solution instead of a part of the problem. Some of the politicians pointed out that the reason the package was initiated, was because it was a way to receive funding for increased road capacity desired by some politicians. One possible explanation to why traffic increasing measures were included in a plan aiming at reducing traffic volumes thus might be that some of the problems were deliberately reframed so that road construction were a part of the solution, not the problem.

Another hypothesis was that the politicians deliberately changed the scale of some of their problems to justify road construction and increased capacity, a measure which were not supported in the global problems in the primary objective. These politicians are *local* politicians, and they see their job as to safeguard *local* interests and challenges. At the same, the very same politicians defined and adopted the primary objectives, which was supposed to be the guiding principle in the design process. Increased road capacity is seen as a solution to the defined local challenges, but the politicians also believe that traffic induced by increased capacity can be prevented. The politicians have chosen a solution that gives short term achievement of local goals, while simultaneously reducing the chances of achieving their primary objective. Whether they deliberately changed the scale to justify road construction, one cannot know for sure. One possible explanation to why traffic increasing measures were included in a plan aiming at reducing traffic volumes, still seems to be that local problems where prioritized above global problems.

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APPENDIX 1: IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW GUIDE

1. How would you shortly summarize the Environmental Package?
2. How and why did you land at a 20% decrease of CO_2-emissions as a goal?
    a. To what degree did you believe this was realistic/possible to achieve?
3. Why do you think the environmental package was adopted at that particular time? Did anything in particular happen at the time that affected the endorsement?
4. How did you arrive at these particular measures, and why where these chosen?
5. To what degree was there agreement on which measures that would be most efficient?
    a. Do *you* believe the adopted measures are the most efficient if the goal is to reduce emissions? Would you have done something differently?
6. Are there any special measures you wanted to avoid (regardless of whether they were included in the package)? Why?
7. To what extent do you think the objectives and measures in the package correspond with what the professionals/experts in the field would recommend?
8. If the design of the package was outsourced to a hypothetical consulting company/research institution, what do you think the biggest differences would be?
    a. To what degree do you believe the expert knowledge is compatible with your/your party's views?
9. Is there anything else not mentioned that you believe has influenced the work of Environment package?
10. How do you think the package has worked out so far?
11. What is the background for road building projects in the package?
    a. What is the aim of these projects?
12. What do you believe is the possible consequences of not expanding road capacity?
13. Many believe that expanding the road capacity in these projects contributes to increased motor vehicle traffic - do you believe this is actually the case?
14. If the aim is to restrict traffic, why then are 50 % of the funds used for expansion of roads capacity?