Discourses in Urban Planning

A case study approach to understand what influences urban development in Harstad municipality

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Abstract

This thesis is a case study based on the urban development project “Harstadpakken”. It seeks to 1) identify leading discourse or discourses in the projects planning documents and how this, or these discourses influence the actual plan and the actual project. 2) The thesis takes a comparative view as it seeks to identify discourses from earlier development plans in Harstad, comparing them to each other and to the current development plan. It employs a discourse analysis approach to find shared meaning in the planning documents, and among the planners of the “Harstadpakken”-project. 3) The thesis seeks to find the role of environmental discourses in urban development plans, and how an environmental discourse impacts other parts of the plan and construction of planned project. There are two main discourses that are identified: A development discourse that emphasizes development of the city in itself, and in respect to its role in the region. The second discourse that was identified is an environmental discourse. The environmental discourse emphasizes green development and environmental consideration in itself, and throughout development projects. Of these two discourses, the development discourse was found to be the leading discourse, as it predominates the discussion and rationales given for development. The development discourse was partially adjusted over time, most likely due to changes in local conditions rather than global ones. The environmental discourse and the development discourse were not found to be contradictory to each other, but the environmental discourse was found to be subordinate to some degree. The findings show that a leading discourse has a decisive role in plan making processes, and that it bestows some arguments and rationale over others. It also shows the importance of having stronger environmental discourses in development plans. As there are many interests and discourses within a planning document and planning phase, it is easy for planners and entrepreneurs easily environmental discourses second-class.
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1. Introduction

1.1 Project background and rationale for topic

Attempts to improve the local environment without considering the external impacts of urban behavior, including global issues such as ozone layer depletion and global warming, are not sufficient to address the true imperatives of sustainable development. In this context, sustainable urban development has to be seen as development, with its wide-ranging agenda of environmental stewardship, intergenerational equity, social justice and geographical equity (Haughton and Hunter, 1994).

A major force in today’s world is the process of urbanization. Urbanization is not a new process and it is not giving any indications that it is slowing down, in fact the opposite is true. According to World Health Organization 54,1 percent of the world’s population live in urban areas (WHO, 2015). Typically when discussing urbanization the conversation can quickly be focusing in on the continuous growth of the mega cities of today that has millions of people living an working in them. Although this is true, there is not much discussion about the fact that all cities are growing, even the smaller ones. Also in Norway, the process of urbanization is strong. However, it is not just in the big cities that we can find urbanization. In fact, my home county Troms in Norway had a higher percentage of urbanization, 1,9 percent than the rest of Norway, 1,6 percent in 2014 (SSB 2015).

I find it both interesting and important to learn more about urban development, especially when paired with sustainability. The definition of sustainability is quite wide and used in regard to many different aspects. The Brundtland commission defined sustainable development as: “Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (United Nations, 1990,1)

My topic is sustainable urban development and environmental considerations. I chose it firstly out of interest as I have a keen interest in the workings of cities.
Coincidentally at the time of writing this thesis my hometown Harstad is underway in its urban development project. As stated by Tennøy there is a lack of knowledge about medium sized cities in Norway in regards to what and how cities become more sustainable and attractive (2012, 69) This I want to explore more.

1.2 Research question

With the above situation as the background, together with national and international trends of urbanization I have chosen the following questions for further research. I will search for and try to identify discourses that are used in the planning phase of this project. I will focus on how actors talk about and understand the environment and how planning documents describe the situation and plans in relation to the environment and sustainable development.

My questions are:

1. What discourses on environment can be identified among the planners and in planning documents?
2. Can a leading or hegemonic discourse be identified? What are the main points in this discourse?
3. How does the current discourses compare to discourses in previous plans made for Harstad municipality?
4. Do the discourses lead to a result in how the project is carried out?

1.3 Case and Context

Harstadpakken is a transportation project created to improve the transportation system in the municipality of Harstad. The main goals are to improve current road infrastructure, improve and provide more walkways and bicycle lanes and thirdly to improve the public transit system. The project has been planned since 2009, after initially being part of bigger regional plan before made into an independent project in 2009. After two years of concept study assessment work
(konseptvalgutredning) the project was ready. After a thorough political process in the municipal council the project was approved in 2013. The first shovel of dirt is being moved this April 2015.

Harstad is the third largest municipality in Northern Norway with 24,676 inhabitants. It grew from a small village in the late 1800’s with the help of its fishing industry and accompanied shipping and docks industry. As the city has grown it has transformed from being primarily an industry and fishery town to a city that now primarily provides goods and services. This process has led to that the majority of the force is working in and around the downtown area with the exceptions of the local hospital and Statoil’s main office for Northern Norway situated 6 km from the city center. The municipality’s development has been heavily influenced by the local geography with the city developing along a North-South axis with the sea on the East and hills and mountains on the West side. The traffic system in Harstad is heavily reliant on car traffic with public transport accounting for only 4 percent of the total amount of travels (Statens Vegvesen, 2011, 13). The main road comes from the South and goes through the city center to the North side of the city and other villages and the neighboring municipality. The majority of industry is South of the city center. Inhabitants are scattered on both the North and South side of the city, with a majority on the South side. As the provision of land and space for houses never have been a problem most of the homes in Harstad are single family houses. These were organized and built as subdivisions through the years as needed, most of which are placed along the South-North axis along the main road. Plans for city and infrastructure development have been made throughout the years, mostly after 1960. Up until 2011 the plan that set policy for city and road development was from 1995.

1.3.1 Details on “Harstadpakken”

Initially the idea was to upgrade the current regional road no. 83 from two to four lanes, two in each direction in a length of 2.7 km. This is the distance between
the beginning of the city center area and southwards to the shopping mall Kanebogen. This was planned as the current traffic already exceeded the amount of cars the two-lane road could provide according to national standards. However, as different concepts were put forth during the planning phase a compromise was decided upon. The results are that the two-lane road stays as a two lane road, but that all intersections along it is replaced with round-a-bouts in an effort to provide better traffic flow. The expected increase of traffic is to be dealt with in two parts; firstly by providing public walkways and bicycle paths in an interconnecting network that allows its travellers to travel safely and efficiently along the North-South axis. And secondly by reconstructing the public transport system, which is operated by buses. This is a pendulum bus service which means that each service starts from point A outside the downtown area, drives through it before terminating on the other side at point B before returning to point A again. Several routes are combined in order to provide a much more frequent service along the most trafficked roads. In addition to these measures a substantial part of the project is the building of a tunnel to circumvent traffic from the current route through the downtown area. The tunnel will help divert traffic from the city center, and it is expected to reduce downtown traffic by 40 percent.
Figure 1 Map showing the affected areas and planned measures as planned by the "Harstadpakken"-project
1.4 Methods

In order to answer my research questions I have tried to understand how the responsible planners involved in the project view environment and sustainability. I conducted fieldwork in Harstad municipality over the period of a week. This allowed me to get time for interviews and also searching the local archives for older documents that can provide an understanding of earlier views on the subject matter. The interviews I conducted were all qualitative and semi-structured, in-depth interviews as I thought this would give me the answers to my specific questions in addition to providing enough leeway so that other subject matters also could be discussed. The interviews were done with the local representatives, which are the representatives for urban planning and development on the municipal side, as well as members of the planning committee on the entrepreneurial side. The views were somewhat consistent, although some variation did occur. This was supplemented by the review of planning documents of both the current project, as well as earlier plans and projects to see if there has been a change or development in understanding of the subject of environment and sustainability. The reviewing of documents has taken a larger part of the research than I first expected. This is mostly due to the fact that the relevant stakeholders all comprised a small group, and only so much information were available from the interviews.

I then chose to analyze my data by using a discourse analysis, looking for statements that showed and indicated shared meanings and understanding, which were shared or not shared. A more comprehensive presentation of my methods will be given in chapter 3.

1.5 Structure

After introducing the thesis above I am going to continue by presenting my theoretical framework in the next chapter, chapter 2. This will include discourse analysis as well as a presentation of planning theory. In chapter 3 I will lay out
the use of my methods. In chapter 4 I will provide a more detailed background on Harstadpakken in addition to present the bureaucratic and political process. Furthermore chapter 4 will also include a report on how the municipalities role as enforcers and agents on behalf of the “Agenda 21” and thus environmental approaches to policies and decision making. Finally, I will also explain the different roles of the planners in the project in this chapter.

In chapter 5 the data material collected will be presented and analyzed to some degree. Due to the vast amount of data I find it necessary to first present the data without too much commentary and analysis for the sake of providing an understanding of the plans, but also to give a sense to how the plans changed over time. Chapter 6 will then be the place for deeper analysis of the data in relation with the research questions. Chapter 7 will be the conclusive chapter of the thesis.

Also, for the sake of providing clarity throughout the thesis each chapter will further explain its intent at the beginning of each chapter.
2. Theoretical framework and background

In this chapter I will present central concepts and theoretical framework that I will use in my thesis. First I will present an overview of urban planning and development. I will explain what planning theory is, and how urban development relates to the environment. Secondly I will present sustainable development. Furthermore there will be a presentation of the discourse analysis as a tool and method, and how I will apply it in my thesis.

2.1 Urban planning and development

As cities have been founded and have grown throughout the centuries there has also been a need for the planning of them. Although older cities, or old city boroughs show the signs of organic growth with streets going everywhere, a plan has eventually been put into the works of how the city develops. Whether it is zoning for a specific type of development, the construction of modern highways or Roman aqueducts, a plan has always been necessary. However, the view of urban planning and its place and importance has changed. According to Nigel Taylor (1990) urban planning or town planning was viewed first of all as an exercise in the physical design and planning of land use and built form. This notion predated the Second World War all the way back to the European Renaissance. It viewed town planning as the natural extension to architecture thinking of it as architecture, but on a much bigger canvas. However, as time progressed, so did also the concepts and understanding of the field. Especially after World War II there was a change to urban planning being more about vision and imagining the ideal urban concept (Taylor, 1998, 17).

2.1.1 Planning theory between 1960 – 1990s.

The planning of cities between the 1960s and the 1990s is by many experts claimed to be on the premise of the car. For instance was there a wide build-out of highways and roads in cities due to increased prosperity and popularity for the car. A car-based approach was common in the West especially after the Second
World War, although with some limitations in the first few years due to rationing of resources after the war. In Norway the car was first released from rationing in October of 1960 (Monsrud 1999)

2.1.2 Background: The environmental connection to urban planning

Another factor to consider in urban planning and development to is the process of how a plan is made. No plan is made in a vacuum of events, there are often triggering factors such as need for increased capacity in water lines or roads and so it is the politicians job to work to solve the challenges. A triggering factor that is relevant for this thesis is of course that of the environment. The environmental considerations have both changed and have been prioritized differently in the past century. Thus the environmental movement is tied to urban planning and development.

The environmental movement itself did perhaps not play a significant role in this process until after World War II with the publishing of the book *Silent Spring* in 1962. The book awoke people to the realities of pollution, and is often credited to being the pivotal factor that sparked the modern environmental movement (Grizwold 2012).

As explained by Aall 2002 the emergence of the Norwegian environmental movement was parallel with the international process. However, it is also stated that although the process was a parallel one, the process was more along a national and local line of development. That is to say that the global environmental issues did not make the top of the national agenda, but rather national and local ones did (Aall, 2002, 31). The first signs of a Norwegian national environmental policy is by Aall traced back to the 1860s with the introduction of ”Sunnhetsloven” – ”the health law”. This dealt with three issues: The water supply, sewer systems and garbage handling in the cities, and the goal was to make the population healthier. It was not however until a century later that a crucial environmental policy comes into effect. A general building act of 1965
introduces the requirement of superior planning on the municipal level with the goal to provide a tool for resource management. The idea behind this was then to use the superior plan as a tool to use to have the best use of resources and with a balanced consideration of use and protection of them (Ibid. 32).

The environmental connection was further strengthened with more changes in the political understanding and also in the bureaucracy. Also in 1965 the Ministry of Municipalities and Labour was given the responsibility instead of the Ministry of Church and Education. This connection was in that day and age far-fetched from the traditional view. The traditional view was that it was the role of the national state to preserve what was described as "unspoiled nature". The connection between environmental policy making and the Ministry of Municipalities and Labour meant that the new view was to consider and balance this interest along a spectrum of "use or protect" (Ibid.). In 1979 the Norwegian parliament decides that the responsibility for environmental policy and governing is a task of the national state and government.

Another factor of urban planning that it is important to keep in mind is how a plan is made, and by whom and when. The process of an urban development plan is often based on what politicians decide first, before being handed over to the expert planners. There is a difference of course in what the politicians decide and what the experts bring to the plans. Typically politicians on the political municipal board or a political committee, decide upon the very premise of plan. This premise can again be decided by either the local politicians themselves or it can be decided on a higher political level such as the county or state level, as is the case in Harstadpakken.

It is also important to be aware that planning is not something that is done only by professional planners. In most cases a plan is based on political decisions. The results of this is that the political party or parties in case of a coalition gets to decide much of the base premise of urban plans and developments before the professional planners are put to work to develop it further.
2.2 Discourse analysis

This thesis will make use of discourse analysis on the data material that consists of gathered documentation and interviews. The goal is to identify specific views and understanding, thus a discourse. A goal is also to identify specific viewpoints and understanding on the environment on its own. This will be in relation to urban planning and development in the development plan including its supporting and surrounding data. By supporting and surrounding data I am referring to position papers and documentation that discuss each case. The scope of the thesis is not just the contemporary plan for Harstad municipality. It also includes earlier plans of the same type and scale, so the goal is also to identify the view and understanding over time. As this thesis then seeks to identify specific views and ideas and change over time, the discourse analysis approach is very fitting. Especially as it is not concerned with the validity of the claims made (Futak-Campbell and Hagett, 2011, 208).

Discourse analysis as a tool and methodological approach is quite common in the sphere of social scientific studies. Methodologies of discourse analysis have taken many different forms, often in accordance with the definition of discourse used. Different disciplines have developed different modes of discourse analysis independently or by making use of work from other disciplines (Hewitt, 2009, 2).

It has many different approaches, in fact it is claimed that the discourse analysis approach has so many variations in terms of understanding and approach that “it is not unreasonable to say that there are as many approaches to discourse as there are researchers devoted to the field» (Alba-Juez, 2009, 13). It does however follow two main strands: The first is descended down from the Marxist tradition of political economy and ideology with the critique of these. Discourse analysis along this line was a tool used to uncover specific hegemonic ways of both thinking and talking in regards to how things should be. In terms of urban development in relation to the field of discourse analysis Beuregard’s ”Voices of
“Decline” outlines the role of the Marxist tradition discourse in modern urban policy-making in the United States (Lees 2004).

The second approach to discourse analysis is also the perhaps more known and used approach. It descends from poststructural theory and especially the work of Michel Foucault. Foucault is known and acknowledged for his work on “power” in terms of relations and strategy. In relation to what this thesis seeks to do Foucault’s ideas challenge the notion that the creation of policy is a ”rational” process. As explained by Hewitt 2009, evidence or information used in the process of policy making is carried out within the confines of discursive formations. The ”truth” conforms to the rules and norms of the discourse. Foucault termed this process ”the will to truth”, the effect of which is masking the formation of the discourse. The strength of a discourse analysis is that researchers may be aware of this process and expose the ”will to truth” (Hewitt 2009). This is also explained by Lees 2004 who states that discourses are not reflections or representations of “reality”, but rather creates its own “regimes of truth” – the acceptable formulation of problems and solutions to those problems (Lees 2004).

It should also be added that the two described strands of discourse analysis is, and have been mixed together for a long time, (Ibid.) and that the meaning of discourse can be ambiguous. Yet, there are definitions in use that I will apply. Svarstad 2002 distinguishes between three ways of defining discourse. The first is the linguistic approach which can be synonymous to «text». This definition is about how sentences are combined together to form texts. A text represents the wide array of texts, documents, films etc. Gee 2014 also operates with this definition. Discourse is seen as the sequencing of sentences. This is a linguistic understanding of discourse, seeking to understand how word and sentences are packaged to create meaning (Gee, 2014, 18). It is not however the goal of this thesis to conduct such an analysis.
The second understanding is a more common one, where discourse usually means a conversation or a discussion on a current issue. This is a much more «everyday-use» of the word and it is not confined to the realm of the social sciences.

However, the third definition is according to Svarstad the one that is the most common in social science. Discourse in this view is understood as something that is restricted to mean a specific delimitation of a shared phenomenon. That is to say that it is a socially constructed meaning system. A specific meaning is established within the discourse, and it is also closed against other possible meanings (Svarstad, 2002, 66.). In line with this Svarstad defines discourse as:

“A shared meaning of a phenomenon, which may be small or large; the understanding of it may be shared by a small or large group of people on the local, national or global level. Actors involved in the discourse participate (in varying degree) in its production, reproduction and transformation through written and oral statements. These statements possess certain regularities, not only as to the content (or message), but also by the use of some shared expressive means in terms of, for instance, certain metanarratives and rhetorical devices, such as metaphors” (Ibid.68).

This understanding is the one I will use in my thesis and analysis. As I have identified specific plans I will seek to identify a shared meaning concerning each plan and its supporting and surrounding documentation. Also I will try to identify if there has been a change in meaning and in understanding as time has progressed. This turns me toward the concept of leading discourses, which is also from Svarstad. She bases it on the concept of hegemonic discourses from Gramsci´s hegemony theory (Gramsci, 1991, 1948-51). A discourse can be labeled as hegemonic if it dominates thinking and is translated into institutional arrangements. For this thesis I will use Svarstad´s concept of leading discourse in order to identify the leading understanding of the environment on its own and in relation to urban development. Using documentation of plans from 1972 to 2011 I seek to identify the leading discourse according to each plan, but also if and how the leading discourse was replaced or changed over time.
Following this it will be helpful to analyze the relationship between them. As a discourse can be identified as hegemonic by dominating thinking on a given subject it alludes to the theme of power relations between one discourse and another. The issue of power relations between discourses is not the main agenda of this thesis, but it can help explain some of the findings. As Hewitt 2009 points out Foucault’s ideas can be enough to provide a ”way of thinking” when conducting research (Hewitt 2009).

2.3 Previous works of discourse analysis in relation to urban development and environment

Jacobs 2006 provides a very good overview of different bodies of work that deal with discourse analysis and urban development. It is presented along the two main lines mentioned above. In the first Marxist-descending line there are works that seek to put down linguistic strategies deployed by key actors in order to shape policy agendas. These are among others Hajer (1993), Davoudi and Healey (1995), Newman (1996) and Rydin (1998).

The second strand following the works of Foucault include among others the work of Atkinson (1999), Stenson & Watt (1999), Sharp & Richardson(2001). Their focus is on the Foucauldian approach of language in relationship to power as a recursive relationship instead of reflective (Jacobs 2006). Dryzek (2005) explores the environmental discourses and how it relates to different contrasting issues.

2.4 Sustainable development

Since this thesis is concerned with the environment a relevant and related topic is that of sustainable development. The word sustainability is often used today in different settings, and can be said to be a word in vogue. The very concept of sustainable development was first introduced in a report made by the World
Commission on Environment and Development. This is also known as the Brundtland Commission. The 1987 report defines sustainable development as:

“Development which meets the needs of current generations without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (United Nations 2015)

With the concept of sustainability “three pillars of sustainability” were introduced as focus points. These are economic development, social development and environmental protection. The work of the commission was well received by its audience in the United Nations Conference in Rio de Janeiro in 1992. This environmental conference made ambitious commitments to ensure sustainable development in wide array of areas and on many levels of society. This is known as “Agenda 21”, which was the name of the action plan(United Nations 2015).

However, it should also be mentioned that the concept of sustainability has received criticism. The critique is not as much on the definition itself, but that the concept has lost its meaning. Since sustainability has become a fashion word and phrase there are many who argue that the term and understanding of it has and is losing its meaning. The argument is that sustainability can mean all things to all people, and that the concept is pushed ahead to masquerade only cosmetically changes. This debate should be kept in mind as they may become relevant to the findings in the thesis. Especially when analyzing the planners understanding of environmental consideration and urban development. The “Agenda 21” action plan is also relevant in this thesis and will be discussed below.
3. Methodology

3.1 Qualitative Case Study

As my goal of this thesis is to examine and analyze a single project, the best way to achieve this is through the case study approach. A case study is simply put using a case, an actual example, as the lens to view and do the work through. A case study is empirical in its approach. It is very well described as something that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within a real-life context (Yin, 1990, 23).

A case study is often binary in its approach. It is usually either quantitative or qualitative. The quantitative case study is based and concerned with measurable data that can be ordered and for example made into statistics. These statistical findings will then inform the conclusion based on what the research questions is to begin with. However, as this thesis is a discourse analysis the qualitative case study will be the approach used. The qualitative case study is apt when the numbers are not the concern, or in order to understand why the numbers are as they are.

Further on the qualitative case study allows for in-depth examination of the case. It allows room for me as a researcher to begin with assumptions about the case, but to also provide room for reflecting on the data that I gather. This is what Denzin and Lincoln 2005 describe as a “situated activity”. Within this situated activity a set of practices of interpretation and materiality make the world visible and ordered into representations. For example the use of field notes, interviews, conversations, recordings and so on (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, 3)

As my goal is to learn from analyze the project, the qualitative research approach is very fitting. It can be helpful when a complex or detailed understanding of an issue and context is necessary (Cresswell 2007, 39).
Further, the exact case study approach this thesis employs is the instrumental one, as it is used to gain a broader understanding of an issue or phenomenon that is larger than the single case itself (Crowe et al, 2011, 2).

### 3.1.1 Literary review

In order to find out if there had been a development or change of understanding in what constitutes sustainable urban development, much of the research process was spent on examining documents. These were the actual planning documents, and background documents with supporting data. The use of supporting documents with discussions and objections were important in order to get a sense of the discussion. I also spent much time looking for and examining earlier municipal plans that dealt with development of the city, infrastructure and the environment. This was necessary in order to come to an understanding of what plans had been made before, and if so, the reason why. I was granted access to the archives of Harstad Municipality and was able to spend several days going through the archives myself with the aid of the employees in the administration. I found several plans and position papers on city development and the building of infrastructure. I was able to keep a few of the documents as they had plenty on record. But most of the documents were scanned on-site to digital files and made searchable. This was necessary to make the work load easier as much of the position papers discussed issues that were not relevant to my questions, except for here and there. This also allowed me to digitally code the documents in the program NVivo.

### 3.1.2 Semi-structured, open ended interviews

After looking through the available material I could get a hold of from online sources I decided to contact the relevant actors to schedule interviews. All of my contacts responded positively on being interviewed. Before doing the interviews I thought about how to approach the interview situation and I quickly decided on doing the interviews with somewhat of a structure, and doing them in such a way that it was open-ended. In practice that meant that I prepared some questions,
those that I found to be most relevant and needed a specific answer to. I sent these questions to the interviewee a few days before and also brought them with me for the interview. All the interviews were recorded after receiving consent. The duration of the interviews varied between just over 30 minutes to almost 2 hours. Each interview started with me explaining why I was interested in this topic, and also me encouraging my subjects to speak freely and bring in issues that in their view also were relevant to the questions. A challenge with semi-structured interviews is that the conversation may sway too far away from the subject matter, but again with the help of the structure this was not much of a problem. Also I took notes as bullet points during the interview to keep an overview of topics discussed so that it was easier to revisit topics.

My informants represented two different sides; the members of the concept study committee and Harstad municipality who were on the receiving end, and that in place guidelines for the project.

The planning committee members:

The members of the planning committee are all employed by “Statens Vegvesen” which was given the task to plan the project as well as overseeing its construction. I interviewed the leader of the committee, Hans Nilsen Haukland, as well as committee member Wibeke Knudsen. The committee was responsible for leading the project in the concept phase, deciding on which alternative to implement and plan the project from start to finish. In addition I also interviewed the regional manager in Staten Vegvesen, Torbjørn Naimak, in order to get additional background information around work strategy and viewpoints on a higher level.

Harstad Municipality

I interviewed Lars André Uttakleiv, the on-staff urban developer in Harstad municipality. He was as of the time of the interview in the process of putting together the new city development plan for Harstad. In my thesis he represents
the side of the city of Harstad and thereby also the many considerations the city would like the planners in Statens Vegvesen to take into consideration in the planning of the project.

The questions asked in my interviews were all quite similar. I asked about the following topics:

How they understood the term environment and sustainability, as a loose term, but also in relation to their profession work. I asked about this in order to understand how they thought about the environment and how they phrased their rationale about it.

I asked specifically about measures that were claimed to be environmentally minded and how that would affect the result. I asked about how the process had come to the conclusions it had regarding the environment.

I asked about how and why the conclusions were made. Reflections made on their part during the planning process. Here I focused on how the planners themselves had reflected around the issue of environment and sustainability regarding the project.

I did not ask the question in this order, but made sure that all the topics were discussed during the interview. This was intentional in order to have the interview be more conversation-like and open.

A challenge regarding the interviews was that the planning committee for the concept study has very few members, and so there were few people on the list to interview. This can be considered to be a weakness, yet it should also be said that I have in fact interviewed those parties that have the knowledge and experience with the project. I was also looking to interview the municipal environmental advisor, but he had just started in his position. Since the subjects were in different locations I had to do three of the interviews by telephone. I was aware that this would pose a challenge to the information gathering process as I might miss subtle cues or hand motions made by the subject. My solution was to do all
of the interviews in a semi-structured way. When doing the interview I did my best to keep the conversation “light” and easygoing so that the person on the other end would feel free to add information that I did not know to ask about. The result worked quite well and from all of my interviews I was given extra information as the result of letting the subjects speak freely.

The interviews were transcribed before being analyzed using the program NVivo to map out findings. As the interviews and transcriptions are in Norwegian I will translate excerpts that are relevant for analysis.

### 3.2 Choosing sources and data

Obviously the decision on which data material and which sources to rely on for analysis is a crucial factor in any research project, and so also this one. In the case of this project I did this in the following way. The first step was deciding on the case itself. This involved me looking into several different alternative cases first, but I ended up in seeing the need for limitation. This was in order to have enough time and space to analyze the case thoroughly enough. When deciding on the case, I already knew that the project “Harstadpakken” had several official papers and plans published, and that these were available to the public. My training as a journalist made this process fairly intuitive and straightforward. I began with the approved concept study, which is the official plan of the project. Then, in order to shine more light and understanding on the works of the concept study, I identified the team that carried its work. The team was identified using the snowball-sampling method. The snowball strategy is somewhat criticized for being obscure, but in this case it was probably the best approach as the main value of it is that it is a method that is useful when dealing with few respondents. The theory on snowball sampling suggests that it may give the researcher the benefit of becoming an insider in the group he or she is acting with (Atkinson & Flint, 2004, 1044). This happened to some extent in my case, as the informants were curious and happily surprised that I wanted to do research on the project, and I was happily referred to the other members of the group.
Concerning the older plans I was helped by my experience from journalism once more. Being aware that many of the earlier plans would be available online I first searched through this to find any relevant material. In order to decide on which material to bring into the thesis for analysis, I collected material that dealt with the environment directly and indirectly. I also looked for material that was concerning development and political proposals that was about the environment and development of Harstad. I was given access to the material and was able to look through it for myself. But I was also given the help of municipal employees that had worked with the archive for several years. When looking through the material I found data dated back all the way to the 1890s and up until today. However, I chose to focus on the material that dealt with urban development after the 1960s. This decision was based on the fact that this was the first trace of a development approach of Harstad that is somewhat similar to that of today. Also, in the material it quickly became clear that after the 1960s the succeeding plans referenced earlier plans that were made, and so a connection and development could be identified.

As the analysis of the papers and other data went along I came to realize that there was a missing piece in the policy making. There were some references to national and county policies but not anything that could explain why the environmental policies were put in place to begin with. To me as a researcher this appeared to be a gaping hole. However, as I was made aware of the work and efforts made by “Agenda 21”, I found what I was looking for.

3.3 My role as a researcher

When conducting research it is important to be aware of my own role in the research as well. Any researcher will most likely bring his own background and earlier experiences into the work that he or she is to carry out. This can be a challenge to the work of the thesis, especially if one is not aware of the issue. However, by being aware and reflecting on my role I may negate the problem this can cause. For this thesis and for me as a researcher I should be aware of my
earlier education and training within the fields of media and communication. The journalistic approach I have adopted through earlier work and study might lead me as a researcher to find angles and viewpoints too early, which may lead me astray. On the other hand, this background may also prove to help me see connections between my findings. It can also help inform me during my interviews with asking the right questions and keeping a cool head in the interviews themselves.

Another important factor that I as a researcher need to keep in mind is the fact that I am conducting research on a project that I have much knowledge about. I have close connections to Harstad, as it is my hometown. The challenge as I understand it is that I may take some aspects for granted, or pieces of data that makes sense within my own understanding, but that is not necessarily clear for everyone else. I hope to negate this as a problem by providing a thorough presentation of the data.
4. City Planning and Development in Norway

The process of bringing a project like Harstadpakken to fulfillment is a long and complicated endeavor. In this chapter I will first lay out a general approach to how this is done in Norway. Following this I will then present how the environmental responsibilities of the municipalities play out as well. I will present each of these topics in the chronological order a project would have to run through.

4.1 Background

Construction projects or planned investments of a certain scale are regulated by legislation, and so share common features that can be identified. In the research phase I have become aware of the relevancy of this regarding my thesis, as the legislation of these processes is very strong and thus provides a framework for the relevant party to take into consideration. This puts in place the groundwork regarding what can be done and not. In any case, each project begins with someone having an idea or seeing a need that needs to be fulfilled.

4.1.1 Concept Studies

When planning any project in Norway that is publicly funded with a budget above 750 million NOK Norwegian law requires a concept study. The purpose of a concept study is to assess alternative solutions to the need described. The study is done by the relevant expert agencies, in the case of “Harstadpakken” by Statens vegvesen (SV). A concept study is divided into six focus areas, which are:

1. Why is the project needed?
2. Strategy – goals for the project and the area.
3. General requirements
4. Assessment of opportunities in the project and for the area.

6. Guidelines for the pre-project phase.

After the assessment a third party is engaged to carry out a quality control. This is done in two parts. Part one (Kvalitetssikring 1, KS1) is meant to assure the chosen concept before the government decides on it. The second part (KS2) examines the managing of the project itself and also reviews cost estimates for the project.

4.1.2 Framework and requirements

From the national government there are also guidelines that have to be followed. These are published and known as “NOUs”, an abbreviation for “Norges offentlige utredninger”, in English named Norwegian Official Reports. In 2014 an NOU was published regarding governmental planning guidelines for coordinated housing-, area- and transport planning. In terms of Harstadpakken this NOU has had a decisive role when it comes to priorities given to different aspects of the project.

4.1.3 Global issues to consider

Harstadpakken is a local project aimed to solving local needs and demands. However, it is evident that in today’s world the project has to take into consideration the fact that entire world community is facing the challenge of climate change and increasing climate gas emissions in the atmosphere. Norway as a nation has issued guidelines for construction projects such as Harstadpakken with this a background. These guidelines are based on Norwegian policies that are relevant to the matter, but these guidelines and decisions are also based on international and global agreements in order to change the development into more environmentally friendly approaches. An important aspect in this is the “Agenda 21” action plan.
“Agenda 21” is the name of a action plan of the United Nations in regard to sustainable development. It is a non-binding and voluntarily implemented by the UN member nations. The measures it suggests can be implemented on the local, national and global level.

The plan is divided into four main sections:

- Section I: Social and Economic Dimensions
- Section II: Conservation and Management of Resources of Development
- Section III: Strengthening the role of major groups
- Section IV: Means of Implementation

In section 1.3 the plan describes itself as “addressing problems of today and also aims at preparing the world for the challenges of the next century” (United Nations 1992). It also states that the responsibility for its success is in the hands of governments. It is encouraging the creation of national strategies, plans, and policies and so on as a crucial part in order to achieve the goals it sets out.

The implementation of “Agenda 21” in Norway on a local level is described as slow (Bjørnæs, 2002, 245). According to Bjørnæs the accepted reason for this was the coinciding implementation of the program “Miljøvern i kommunene” Environmental Preservation in the Municipalities (MIK). This was a substantial effort put into action and a result was a delayed implementation of Agenda 21 (Ibid.). Even though the efforts of Agenda 21 were supported it was not until 1997 that the major breakthrough came. In 1997 a White Paper published by the Norwegian Parliament made the local implementation of Agenda 21 one of the governments four priorities in regards to the environment. The result was among others a high increase of “Agenda 21” activity in the municipalities, and a 1998 conference on “Agenda 21” efforts in Fredrikstad. Here the signing of the “Fredriksstad Declaration” became the official starting point for many municipalities. The declaration commits the municipalities to work for and towards sustainable development through the local “Agenda 21” action plan.
Later a guideline was issued to the municipalities with recommended criteria to apply in the work. They were:

1. A new dialog. The focus here was the external oriented parts of the plan such as enacting new policy, making information available to the public and bringing together local interest groups.
2. Sustainable economy and resource management. Deals with environmental indicators and routines for controlling environmental development and sustainable management.
3. Coordinated control and monitoring of results. This part focuses on the political and administrative level on various issues on what each municipality can do.
4. Global involvement. The goal is to integrate the local perspective of “Agenda 21” to the local level.

The “Agenda 21” plan resulted for the Norwegian context that the environmental responsibilities of the municipalities increased and the change was substantial. Perhaps the most important result was the change of focus from what is being described as less important goals to bigger aims. Before the implementation of “Agenda 21” on local levels in Norway the environmental focus was on a different scale and with a different focus. The attention was turned towards “bushes, benches and garbage”, which had its effects, but was not causing the necessary changes needed (Aall, Høyer, Lafferty, 2002,16).

4.1.4 Local issues

The project was planned according to standards that are set for these kinds of projects. The first stage of this process is on the regulatory side from Harstad Municipality. In 1995 the municipality’s own regulatory agency delivered its plan for how development of transport is to be carried out. In the report there are several measures and initiatives lined out to guide development until 2000. The transport plan called for a build-out of the main road “Riksvei 83” from the area of Kanebogen to the downtown area. It also included plans to improve traffic
flow by restructuring intersections and building bike and pedestrian lanes. However, due to several political factors, such as political change much of the plans ended up being postponed due to new debates. Only small parts of the original plan were built from 1995 to 2000. Then in 2009 after much back and forth Harstad municipality asked SV to begin work on a concept study for improving transportation in Harstad. A team of four from SV conducted the concept study. The result ended up being three alternatives that were as follows:

1. Alternative 1 suggested that the issue of traffic increase was to be solved by improving the public transport system while also heavily decreasing parking areas by 30 to 50 percent. Separate system of infrastructure for pedestrians and bicycles were also to be constructed. Car based improvements consisted of changing intersections into roundabouts and prioritizing public transport in one traffic light regulated intersection.

2. Alternative 2 suggested the same as alternative 1, but in addition adding a tunnel diverting traffic away from the downtown area.

3. The third and final alternative suggested no improvements or any measures on the public transport side, but keeping the tunnel in alternative 2, and also increasing lane capacity from two to four lanes between downtown and Kanebogen Center. In addition the intersections mentioned in the other alternatives were to be transformed into roundabouts for better traffic flow.

After a political process on the different alternatives alternative 2 was passed on the municipal board to be approved and building started in 2015.

The concept study discusses several reasons and background data, in order to give a rationale for developing a new transport system. The environmental considerations also play a role and are defined by municipal planning and legislation as well as state level.
4.1.5 National development goals and policy

There are policies on the national political and government level, which provides guidelines for planning and building projects in Norway. The document “Areal og transportplanlegging” (Miljøverndepartementet 1993) is one such guiding document. Its intention is to put in place foundational guidelines that seeks to 1) explain national goals of concern in area and transport planning cases, 2) clarify important principles for what to emphasize in the planning process and, 3) to point out needs for cooperation and responsibilities in the execution phase. The guidelines included in this document focuses on coordinating development projects so that transportation needs can be limited and green. It also suggests other measures such as densification of buildings to promote less need for transportation over long distances. It also suggests that the authorities on different levels cooperate in order to meet these guidelines.

Another aspect to bring into this is the position on transportation in the white paper on climate enacted by the Norwegian parliament in 2012. It states in its section on public transport that the government has a goal that growth in passenger traffic is to be managed by an increase in public transport, and traffic by bike and by foot. This aspect is most relevant in terms of the concept study, which will be presented and discussed later in the thesis.
5. Presentation of the data

This chapter will provide a presentation of the data, that is the gathered documents and the transcribed interviews with the planning team members. As stated in chapter 1.5 the analysis relating to discourse and the research questions will be provided in the next chapter.

As there is a substantial amount of data the findings will be presented in the following way: The first four sections of this chapter will be regarding the documents that make up the municipal plans. In the case of Harstad municipality, there are between 1972 and 2011, four independent plans that each lay out a rationale and policy for development within its borders. The 1972 plan is somewhat independent compared to the other plans, but objection letters from various interests groups is accompanying it.

The 1995 transport plan is focusing only on the development of the transport section in the municipality. It is accompanied by an official municipal document titled “Environmental- and Resource Management Program”. The latter will be included, as it is within the thesis interests to see how the latter informs and influences the first. It will also be examined for environmental discourses.

The next item on the list is the 2009 municipal regulation plan. This document is again a broader document than that of 1995, and it is accompanied by a plan on the environment that is concerning the time of 2008 to 2011.

The final set of document is based on the 2011 concept study, which forms the rationale and basis for the ongoing Harstadpakken project. The concept study will also be discussed within the light of the 2009 municipal regulation plan and the 2008 Environmental- and Resource Management Program. In addition, a 2011 municipal plan on energy and climate also has relevancy to the concept study.
Finally the transcribed interviews with the planners will be presented with a close connection to the 2011 concept study.

As I have read through this data I have found that the later documents build on the earlier, and so the data will be presented chronologically in order to provide this sense and understanding for the reader as well. I will also provide some commentary along the way for context and clarity.

5.1 Regulation plan from 1972

The 1972 regulation plan was enacted in December 1971 and was put into effect after the county and state-planning authorities reviewed it. The plan focuses primarily on the area in and around the city center were the “around areas” are along the main roads in and out of the city. The plan is divided into three parts, which are: Rationale and goals, registrations/assessments and comments from the population and interest groups. As this plan deals with many different aspects I will in the following limit the presentation to that which is relevant in terms of the research questions.

5.1.1 Concerning traffic planning, roads, public transport and parking

In the preface of the plan it is stated that the plan is shaped by the following view:

“The city center of Harstad should also in the future be the municipal and regional center that is to function as a stimulating factor for the municipalities business sector, which should be an asset to in the competition with other cities and towns, and should be the natural link and focal point of different parts of the municipality” (Harstad kommune, 1971, 4)
In short, the city center of Harstad is to be the hub of current and future business activity, as well as future development. This is further expanded upon such as providing storage and goods facilities for cargo, providing services to businesses and to the population, providing space and buildings for culture and so on. Environmental considerations are not mentioned in this part.

**Roads and parking:**

In terms of roads and transportation the plan lays out reasons and rationale why a restructuring is necessary. The plan sets out to move the main road away from the most frequented area in the city center. It also suggests placing long term parking on the outskirts of the city center area, but along the main road to provide parking places, but not to take up area in the city center. It also calls for a coherent network of walk- and bike lanes throughout the city center area.

**Public transport:**

The plan calls for an increase in the use of public transport, in this case public bus service. It also calls for a way to prioritize the buses over private car traffic in order to make this the preferable way of traveling.

**Environmental considerations and motives:**

When reading the plan it is possible to identify several ideas and measures that can be put into the categories of the environment and sustainability. There are in fact several factors that contribute to a better and friendlier environmental approach. For example the public transport mentioned above, or the increase in bike and walkways. There is also specific mention of the city space having a “high environmental standard”. This is further elaborated to mean creation of a high functioning city space, varied and well-adjusted buildings and architecture and the use of plants and trees to provide green areas.

There are also ideas and measures in the plan that can be connected to the environment. For example the placing of the main road outside the city’s main
area will be a good measure for the local environment. Another is prioritizing public transport, and more paths and lanes for bikes and pedestrians. However, the connection to the environment in these examples is not directly made, although they can be connected when examining them from hindsight.

On the other hand, the plan does later elaborate on consequences of highly increased car traffic, but this also is not connected directly to the environment, but the attractiveness of the city center.

“After the introduction of mass private motoring (masebilisme) the biggest threat to the city centers attractiveness is the increased access by car. The traffic plan gives cues such as: Traffic noise, air pollution, psychological stress, area consumption, appearance of slums” (Ibid. 6.1)

Examining inputs

In order to gain a better understanding of how the environment was treated in the creation of the plan I have also examined drafts and submissions sent to the planning committee with different proposals. There were over 60 in total. As above I am choosing to only present material that is relevant to the environment in any way. The submissions are presented according to categories:

Environmental submissions

From the political party “Sosialistisk Folkeparti” (Socialist Peoples Party) the following input was provided.

“The first question to be asked regarding the alternative solutions to a new city plan is which population is to have the maximum benefit from the plans?

A: Is the goal efficiency for business and the traffic system?

B: Or is it first and foremost function as a meeting place for the entire population, where thriving and aesthetics, clean air, non-dangerous streams of traffic, green groves are put in the front seat both when it comes to services and recreation?
We, Sosialistisk Folkeparti, want a plan that takes care of the points mentioned under point B." (Sosialistisk Folkeparti Harstad 1972)

In the beginning of their proposal they set out clearly what they want. The connection to important environmental aspects is clear such as clean air. They further expand this view by commenting on the traffic system as being not safe enough and calling it a danger to public health due to both noise and emissions from the traffic, but also due to traffic safety.

Another submission was provided by the Norwegian Society of Ancient Monuments (Norsk Fortidsminneforening) In their submission they call a reduction in car traffic, an expansion of public transport as well as walk and bike lanes and increased consideration towards nature (Foreningen til Norske Fortidsminners Bevaring, Arbeidsutvalget for Sør-Troms, 1972)

**Submissions from industry and business**

In 1972 there were several industrial scale production facilities in the city center of Harstad. One of them proposes construction of a new storage facility south of the city center in order to decrease traffic. Although the reasoning is not clearly tied to the environment the connection is still clear.

The same option is put forward by the local bus company, Harstad Oppland Rutebil AS, which states its intention to move its parking and repair facilities away from the city center (Harstad Oppland Rutebil, 21.11.1972). The data mentioned here complete the few that are in regards to the environment to this plan.

**Summarization**

To sum up, the original plan does not call for any specific environmental considerations or measures. From this it is possible to gather that the discourse of environment and sustainability is lacking in the plan itself. However as shown in the proposals given there are several propositions given that can be said to be of
environmental motivation and understanding such as reducing car traffic and increasing the public transport service. However, it is not specifically tied into the environmental understanding but can be seen as such in hindsight.

In addition to the original regulation plan of 1972 there are revisions made as early as 1974. In the revision we find four concise points that deals with traffic and also the environment. They are:

“Pedestrian connections:

Pedestrian connections: The pedestrian traffic between the city center and higher areas is important in Harstad. In earlier regulation plan proposals this was solved by having the walkways connect to overpasses above the West tangent. It is obvious that the pedestrian traffic with a tunnel can be solved in a way that makes the area much more attractive to be afoot in.

Traffic noise

It has earlier been assessed for the noise-related consequences of a four-lane western tangent. From here we find that more settlements will have more noise than what is allowed after current norms.

A reduction to a two-lane road will improve that somewhat, but the present option of a tunnel will be far better.

Air-pollution

The tunneling option will cause particularly bad conditions around the openings of the tunnel. Those between will have better conditions.

Visually

In the townscape as a whole it is evident that a tunnel will seem far less disturbing than an open western tangent. In the areas around the opening of the tunnel it will probably be more disturbing”

(Harstad kommune 1974)

When comparing the original plan to the revised edition it is possible to see a change to a greener approach. However, it could be argued that this is somewhat

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1 The West Tangent is in this regard a line going West by Southwest from the city center to the main road that brings traffic in and out of the city center.
superficial. The most important point however is that a strong rationale for change towards a more environmentally minded or friendlier approach is missing, though it is still as above possible to connect measures to the environment when looking at the rationale from a hindsight perspective.

5.2 The 1990’s - new plans

In 1995 a new plan was developed over a period of a few years in what was named “Transportplan Harstad 1995”. The plan provides a much more thorough plan for transport and development of roads compared to the 1972 plan. This is probably due to the fact that the 1995 plan is focused solely on issues dealing with transportation. While the 1972 plan provides a framework and rationale for developing the entire city center, the 1995 plan is narrower in its approach, but it also provides more depth. In order to get the most coherent understanding of development and environmental considerations in this plan, I have included the environmental plan that were in effect in the same time period, which will follow after the presentation of the transport plan.

5.2.1 Transportation plan 1995

The 1995 transport plan is a coherent plan for road and traffic development in Harstad municipality. Even though it calls itself a coherent plan it does not discuss every piece of road in detail, but focuses primarily on the main roads that are most frequently used by the public, public transport, transportation of goods and services. It also discusses Harstad municipality’s place and standing in the region as a hub for transport and economic growth, although in general terms.

The preface of the plan states that:

“The main intention with the transport plan is to have a binding document as an expression of the municipality’s expressed policies. This commitment will in this way contain budget- and economic planning commitments as security for the measures to be carried out” (Harstad kommune, 1995, 3)
In the preface the creation of the plan is also explained. Six groups were created to develop independent reports on specific subjects. The groups and subject were

- Parking
- Traffic safety and environment
- Public transport
- Good and cargo transport/ harbor related questions
- Traffic estimates/ main road network
- Finance

Each group report was worked into the final plan, however due to arrangements in bureaucracy and administration the report was edited by the municipal technical department before made into a proposal for political approval.

As made clear above the environmental aspect was treated together with traffic safety. However, as with the 1972 plan, other topics such as parking, public transport and traffic estimates of the main road network also has a strong connection to the environment and will be included in the presentation of findings below:

**Parking:**

“The parking policy adopted by the municipality is one of several tools to regulate car traffic into the city center area. With the help of different parking measures we will be able to some degree to steer the means of transportation used (ex. From car to bus)” (Harstad kommune, 1995, 32)

From this it is possible to see a clear awareness of how influential policies can be regarding parking and traffic. Further below in the plan this is repeated in relation to the environment:

“In general one may say that the consideration of the environment in the city center often will be in conflict with the wish to increase the amount of parking spaces. It is therefore important that the municipality actively uses parking time as a regulating tool in order to steer parking to designated areas (…)” (Ibid. 33).
Parking and use of parking is further discussed in the parking chapter. However, it does not discuss this any more in relation to the environment. It does discuss parking location and financing of parking, or what it can help finance.

**Traffic safety and environmental measures:**

The chapter on traffic safety and environmental measures consists of 4 subchapters. The first chapter presents background data for traffic accidents and incidents. For example, the different types of accidents such as pedestrians involved.

The second subchapter presents and discusses specific areas or sections that are prone to accidents. A list of five is presented as being most accident-prone, four of which are intersections. The total amount of intersections is suggested being a probable cause of the amount of accidents.

Subchapter three provides a list of prioritized projects for improvement. The list of five projects is presented with the following short introduction:

“We have made the following list of prioritization for traffic safety and environmental projects on county and municipal roads:” (Ibid. 38)

The list of prioritized projects contains five county road projects and seven municipal projects. Out of the five county projects all of them consists of constructing sidewalks and independent bike- and walkways. The seven municipal projects are all concerned with either improving existing sidewalks and bike- walkways or constructing new ones. The only road project is improvement of roads in the city center.

The following sub-chapter discusses important issues regarding traffic safety with issues such as safe passage to and from schools, increased funding and so on. It also discusses in some more detail if there is a sectoring of responsibility, a trend that might be too strong. This concludes the chapter on traffic safety and the environment. What is strikingly clear is the fact that no environmental measure is mentioned, nor is the environment discussed at all in this chapter.
The following chapter is titled “Measures for improving conditions for public transport”. It provides first a general assessment of the role of public transport in Harstad. It states that due to development over the previous twenty years, public transport is not really in a position to increase its usage. This development is in part caused by how roads were developed, and also how different parts of the city have been developed geographically. It is also pointed out that “some” have complex trips, meaning not just A to B, but with one or two extra stops in-between. However, the goal is despite the problems mentioned above to increase the use of public transport. Groups such as pensioners and handicapped are specifically mentioned as both a target group, and also as a reason for having this as a goal.

The next subchapter is concerned with conditions and issues that the municipality is able to do something with. It suggests the following:

- To actively work to move the bus terminal to a better area.
- That new residential areas are planned in a way that allows for the best possible service of public transport
- Building new bus lanes and improving existing roads and bus lanes.
- Measures to provide better terms for public transport. Such as designated bus lanes, prioritization of buses in intersections, better bus stops, shelters “and so on” (Ibid. 42)

It is also called for an increased awareness of the municipality’s parking policies.

The rest of the transport plan provides a similar analysis, discussions and presentation of measures in relation to different fields. These are aviation, railroad and finance. Nowhere else in the document is environment discussed in any direct way.

When going through this plan looking for environmental connections and understanding, a couple of things becomes quite clear:
For one it is evident that the environment does not in any direct way play a significant part in this plan. Even though a work group was created to work specifically on the topic of traffic safety and the environment the result is only work on traffic safety. One may make a case for indirect connections to environmental considerations and understanding, but from what is to be found in the chapter the environment is not given a substantial role for rationale behind any actions, or as a specific goal in itself. On the other hand it is possible to be more sympathetic to the environmental approach and understanding in the chapter concerning public transport. In the discussion in the beginning of the sub-chapter it is possible to observe some awareness of the importance of improving the public transport service, yet also here it falls through when it comes to the environment stating that goal is provide a good service to those without a car. An idea that public transport may become a viable option for more groups is not to be found.

All in all it is possible to conclude on this report alone that it does not provide much consideration or assessment of the environmental factor, although it is stated in the preface of the plan. However, an important point must be brought in; there are independent reports and plan for the environment outside this plan that also informs policy and development in Harstad municipality. So in order to have the full picture, the attention will be brought to this to see what may or may not be illuminated.

5.2.2 Environmental and Resource Program 1995-1998

The plan “Environment and Resource Program 1995-1998” provides concrete suggestions and thorough discussions on its various subjects. It assesses the following subjects: Accident prevention, pollution and waste, water supply management, outdoor activities (friluftsliv), biodiversity, environmental education, environmental protection and “eco-municipality”. The program holds a certain view and understanding of its approach, and what role and parts it calls relevant actors to play. The keywords can be said to be nature preservation and
access to nature. There is a brief mention of climate change and climate gas emissions, but it is not connected to what can be done by the municipality of Harstad directly or indirectly. It is merely stating the existence of climate gas emissions as an occurrence and as a fact.

The majority of the program is focusing on preservation and suggesting ways nature can be more accessible to the inhabitants of Harstad. In the case of nature preservation it focuses on rivers and lakes especially, with the added focus on preventing pollution from sources such as waste and industry. It also calls for the closing of the local garbage dump due to high emissions of methane. Finally traffic is specifically mentioned in relation to emissions of carbon dioxide gas. However, no measures are presented to solve or make the issue smaller in any way. It is rather stating traffic as being a cause for it.

The use and access to nature is also deemed an important measure to be implemented according to the plan (Harstad kommune, 1995).

5.2.3 Summarization of the 1990s

The plans made for traffic and for the environment in 1995 are meant to form policies and governmental guidance for development in Harstad. From what has been examined so far in these plans one may make the conclusion that the understanding of the environment in relation to traffic planning is lacking some major parts and understanding to be a comprehensive plan. One example is for instance the lacking discussion of environment in the traffic safety and environment chapter in the transport plan. Even though it is possible to find some connections in the following public transport chapter the document as a whole communicates a lacking understanding of environmental causes and effects. It appears that there might bit lack of knowledge by committee members and other writers of the planning documents.

If one were to compare the 1995 plan to the previous 1972 plan there are a few similarities and also a few differences. Just as the 1972 plan, the 1995 plan calls
for a development of road system in the city center of Harstad. Some of the same roads in fact, are to be restructured from the 1972 project, or the roads were not developed or restructured at all. For example is the proposed 1972 tunnel not built by 1995, but it is still being planned and called for as a necessary part of any road and traffic system development.

The rationale and argumentation for the tunnel has not changed in any significant way. The reasoning is still that it will help divert traffic away from the city center. It is also interesting to observe that a very much-expected growth in car traffic never occurred. The number of cars counted over a 24 hours period in 1986 was 12 100 vehicles along the main road per 24 hours. An expected increase over the next ten years, were varying from 14000 to 17000 in 1997. But as it turned out, it had a slight drop before returning to the same levels when predictions were made in 1986. In 1994 the numbers were at 13090 vehicles within 24 hours (Harstad kommune, 1995, 16).

5.3 The 2000s - a change is in the air

Between 1995 and 2008 no additional plan regarding the environment, traffic or road development was created. But in 2008 the municipal board of Harstad enacted a new environmental plan. Titled “Environment and climate plan for Harstad Municipality 2008-2011” it sets out to

“(...) facilitate and motivate sustainable thinking and action in Harstad municipality in terms of daily business, the local society and among the inhabitants of Harstad” (Harstad kommune, 2008, 4).

This new plan is miles apart from both the earlier plans of 1995. In order to understand how and what has changed, the plan will be presented in similar way as the plans of 1995, with a focus on traffic, roads and environmental understanding concerning these, and in general.

The first focus area is on community and society development and the management of resources. The first subchapter in this section discusses green
city development and restructuring. Due to decline in various industries in Harstad, such as shipyards and fisheries, new areas in the city are open for redevelopment into either different types of businesses or residential and commercial areas. The plan calls for this redevelopment to be carried out in accordance to new standards to green development, such as higher density buildings with bike lanes, sidewalks and public transport. Densification is especially called for:

“Densification rather than urban sprawl, should be a goal if Harstad is to be developed in a sustainable direction. Densification is a prerequisite to reduce the need for transport, and it will provide a better foundation for developing the public transport service. City development should therefore primarily be through densification and more efficient use of available areas within the regulated zone” (Harstad kommune, pg. 20, 2008).

Following this a section on green travelling and commuting follows. The plan cites the Norwegian Bureau of Statistics that about 50 percent of direct climate gas emissions come from road traffic, especially passenger cars. It also discusses how car traffic also causes local air pollution in the form airborne particles and emissions, noise problems and the increased risk of accidents. It also links car traffic to a high use of land area, as more infrastructure is required. This is put in contrast to the use of area for green transport such as bikes, walking and public transport. It suggests that increased use of the latter will ease congestion on existing roads as well as improving the conditions for those in need of car based cargo and such.

Public transport is also discussed with the premise that there is an untapped potential of public transport travellers. When the plan was created the average amount of public transport travel per capita was 50 travels per year. This is described as being very low. A possible reason for this could be an increase of available parking spaces in the city center area of 40 percent.

In terms of road development and construction a report by Statens Vegvesen is being cited. This plan is prior to the following concept study plan of 2011, but
contains some of the same measures. The geographical area that has been the focus of this plan is also very limited compared to the 2011 plan. It suggests a major build-out along the county road, increasing capacity in both directions from a two-lane road to a four-lane road. Bike and walkways are also to be included along this stretch.

The parking policy is also a matter of debate. It is suggested that the current situations is providing too much parking space for the general public. It is thus suggested that the amount should be decreased and replaced with other types of use.

Other topics that are discussed are the amount of green areas in the city. For example city parks and public squares. These with their greenery are connected to the issue of climate change with their ability to “hold” excess rain and water. The following section is about biodiversity and outdoor activities and life. In short it discusses lakes and rivers with proposed conservation of land and wildlife. After these various topics have been discussed a list of nine points is presented as being critical for success in the aforementioned areas. I will not mention all here, except for those relevant to the thesis. These are:

1. Harstad is to be planned and developed according to principles for a green city development.
2. Public transport, walking or biking is to be available as an option for as many of Harstad residents for safe travel to and from school, work and spare time activities.
3. Plan for an interconnected network of walkways and bike lanes in the municipality.
4. Activate membership in the bike-city-network (sykkelbynettverket).
5. Public transport to be strengthened, and number of travels increased by 5 percent by 2013.
6. Passenger car use in the city center to be reduced.
7. Facilitate for a functioning and green transport system. For example by changing local traffic solutions, tunnel for diverting traffic and synchronized traffic-light intersections.

These are then followed by a list of five measures, those of which are relevant are:

1. Replacing Transport plan from 1995
2. Create an overview/themed map of existing pedestrian- and bike lines in the municipality. To be a basis for planning a coherent network.
3. Create a similar type of map of existing short cuts used by the public.

Further on in the plan a section on climate and energy is presented. Presenting human caused climate change as a factor prefaces this section. The following section discusses climate emissions in Harstad. 62 thousand tons of climate gas emissions measured in CO2 in 2005. Road traffic was responsible for 53 percent of this. The 62 thousand tons is the same as 2,7 tons on average per capita in Harstad. This is below the average compared to other municipalities and cities in Norway. An awareness of a global understanding of the issue is also demonstrated when discussing the issue of “indirect emissions”, these are emissions caused by for example consumption of food, the clothes one wear, disposal of waste and so on.

The remaining sections are about other issues related to the environment, although not as so much relevant to this thesis. They are for example the issues of inner harbor pollution, soil pollution, waste management and so on.

As this plan is a plan on environmental issues it is obvious that it deals with the environment. We find here a very different understanding of the environment that is much more in line with the discourse in modern environmentally thinking. This is also the first plan that makes use of the word sustainability, although it does not explain or put it into context.
5.3.1 Municipal plan 2009 – 2025

The municipal plan of 2009 is a plan dealing with future development of Harstad in the time span up until 2025. It is the “overarching strategic guiding document for the municipality and its development”. What is of particular interest here is that it aims to not only provide guiding policies and actions plans but also aims to provide an assessment of the situation in Harstad in 2009. The scope of the plan is quite wide, but we will only focus on the environmental sections that are relevant to the thesis.

From the very start a connection to the environment is found. In its assessment of the situation, climate change is listed as the top challenge in the arctic region. However this is not elaborated on any further. In a section of development signs in the municipality it is stated that: “Area development is about creating attractive and green places, as a foundation for settlement and business development.” Further on we find a proposal: “The city environment in Harstad should therefore be improved with increasing pedestrian areas, parks and prioritized green roads, paths and streets.” This is claimed on the base of research although it is not specifically made clear what specific research this is.

In terms of infrastructure there is a lot to find. The plan divides its attention in terms of infrastructure to the city center area and infrastructure outside it. In the case of the city center area it is stated: “(...) limitations on car traffic is essential in order to create a city center with the wanted welfare and environmental qualities” (Harstad kommune, 2009, 9). Also in the section discussing transportation and infrastructure as a whole we find the same as in previous plans and reports the awareness of emissions caused by car traffic especially and other implications for the city center area. In addition to this there is also an awareness of the importance of forming or creating a green city structure:
“A foundational prerequisite for developing a green city structure is that new constructions utilizes existing infrastructure in the most optimum way. Conscious placement of businesses, housing and infrastructure in relation to each other can reduce the need for transportation and contribute to cleaner air, less noise, less use of energy and reduced climate emissions. Traffic infrastructure must in addition also be given a layout that prioritizes the alternatives to the passenger car, for example designated bus lanes, roads for cyclists, walk and bicycle lanes. Private and public services should be established around traffic junctions in the transport system. There should be facilitation of bike parking. New businesses should be established with close connections to the main road network.” (Ibid.15)

Further on we find a discussion on the situation for pedestrians and cyclists. The situation is described as being “behind the ideal in terms of facilitation”. This is due to a lack of connecting lanes across the city, and some areas are described as being unsafe. The long-term goal for traffic in the city center is “a green and easily accessible traffic and parking system” (Ibid.16).

In this plan we find a different approach to planning and development compared to similar plans in Harstad. The main difference can be found in the language and ideas communicated. It is very much a plan of overarching themes and subjects. This can in part be because of the much bigger time span it discusses, which in turn makes it a bit vague, but also allows for suggestions that are “lofty” and optimistic. In terms of environmental discourse there is also much to find. The plan is quite aware of challenges, but also very much aware of measures that can be taken in order to make the development on several areas more green and sustainable. One example is that the main goal is Harstad as the green or environmental city (miljøbyen) with a “focus and investment towards a sustainable and thriving community” (Ibid. 41).

All in all it can be said that this report has discourse of awareness in its understanding and approach to climate and environment. It could be more expanded on, but this could be due to the nature of the plan itself.
5.3.2 Energy and climate plan 2010 – 2013

The energy and climate plan of 2010 to 2013 was created after national guidelines stated that all municipalities are to have such a plan by July 1st 2010. The plan is presenting an overview of the situation in terms of energy consumption, unused energy resources and the emissions of climate gasses. In addition to this, the expected development in the case of climate gas emissions is presented. There is also a section describing measures for the municipality to enact in order to reduce its consumption of energy and to reduce emissions.

The plan is its in chapter 1, describing the role of Harstad municipality in comparison to the situation globally. It connects the dots from the global scene to the local level.

“Global warming due to human made climate gas emissions is the biggest environmental challenge we are facing. If we are going to be able to solve the climate problems in the future we have to do it where people live and work; in cities, towns and villages. About 20 percent of national emissions are connected to municipal activity. Norwegian municipalities own 25 percent of commercial buildings in Norway and also represent a third of the energy usage within the sector. As municipalities takes this issue seriously the collective result provide a substantial result to the global climate effort” (Harstad kommune, 2010, 2)

This is the clearest and strongest connection made in creating a connecting line between global challenges and local opportunity for being a part of the solution.

Further below we find a list of the measures and goals discussed in the 2009 municipal plan. Not all measures are listed, only those that are found to be relevant to the energy and climate plan.

In terms of transportation and roads the plan discusses several issues. Green transport is one. It is referred to the national legislation on planning and building as an expander of possibilities for arranging for green means of transportation and also regulating municipal controlled parking areas. It also stated: “(…)
future city development regarding area and transport presupposes solutions across municipalities and sectors” (Ibid. 33).

5.4 Concept study for Harstadpakken

The next plan is the very concept study made for Harstadpakken and a primary focus of my thesis. The concept study was ordered in 2009 and finished in 2011. A concept study is an assessment to be carried out before planning. This is with accordance with plan- and building legislation in Norway. The process begins with the Ministry of Transportation asking for a study. The concept study is then carried out, and then it is up to the national government to decide to bring it to a vote in the Norwegian parliament. The essentials of a concept study are as implied in its name to study various ideas and concepts regarding a given project. This is for example how a project can be conducted in various ways, depending on different ideas and available conditions. As the concept study suggests a specific concept or plan this idea is then to be one enacted, and the one to be built.

According to the regional manager of Statens Vegvesen the “Harstadpakken”-concept study was carried out unusually quick. Normally a concept study takes much longer and provides several suggestions or alternatives to be decided upon. However, the integrity of the study was upheld due to the nature of its scope. Planning a project within a city area is according to the regional manager quite different compared to planning an entire new stretch of road infrastructure outside city areas. Put quite simply, there are so many limitations on available concepts and options due to considerations of residents, terrain and so on that the available ideas are limited and somewhat set from the beginning.
The concept study for Harstadpakken consists of four main sections divided over twelve chapters. The background and necessity for the project is accounted for in the beginning of this thesis. But it will be repeated below, but with an analytical approach. An important aspect of the concept study is that it is a rather different
type of document than those analyzed above. It contains much more discussion on the different concepts and outcomes, within its specific case. I find it therefore necessary to include much more from this document in the analysis to be able to explain and analyze its content.

The introductory chapter begins as follows:

The work on new traffic solutions in Harstad was implemented due to the nature of the road traffic situation. The amount of traffic on national road no. 83 (riksvei 83) into and through Harstad has for several years been above standards made for capacity for a two-lane road. The amount of traffic leads to problems along the road and environmental problems in the city center. The transportation system in Harstad is to a little degree facilitating for public transport, and there is a lack of coherent pedestrian and bikeway networks along the national road (Statens vegvesen, 2011, 4).

The concept study reflects earlier plans and specifically mentions the tunneling option in “Transportplan 1995” as being a one of the measures in order to reduce traffic in the city center area.

The situation is further described and assessed: Within the geographical area of the project there is a population of 19000, and several business areas with high needs for transportation. Car traffic is assessed as being “relatively high” with little use of public transport and the lacking network for bikes and pedestrians.

This is in line with earlier assessments made by the municipality of Harstad itself. There is also a comprehensive presentation of different factors in Harstad municipality regarding traffic numbers and accidents. In short it is very similar to previous presentations of factors in Harstad, and it does not bring in any new information compared to data earlier presented. Nor is it very relevant to this thesis. But after this, it presents an assessment of needs.

Assessment of needs

The third chapter deals with the triggering factors for the project in relation to the city center, and the road that leads into, and through it. The assessment focuses
on different interests and needs that are connected to change, and development of the transport system. According to regulations for concept studies the needs are divided into the following areas: national interests, demand-based needs, needs of interest groups and regional/ local authority’s needs.

The national interests are normative, that is to say that these are based on regulations as well as legislation on the national level, and thus creates norms for development of this kind. This is according to White paper no. 16 (Stortingsmelding 16) of 2006-2009 and the national plan for transportation 2010-2019. (Nasjonal Transportplan). Both provide general goals for national transport policy. According to the National Transport Plan the transport policies of the period are to “be focused towards increased traffic safety, greener transport, regional development and an efficient and accessible transport system for business and population in general across the country” (Statens Vegvesen, 2011, 18).

Regarding the environment, this means that there is to be an improvement of cities environment by making it more attractive to use green forms of transportation. This also includes stimulating measures that limits passenger car use.

The concept study explains that the most important parts for the case of Harstad are:

- Improving the city center environment by reducing traffic.
- Improved facilitation for pedestrians, cyclists and users of public transport.
- Better accessibility for business- and public transport.

**Demand-based needs**

The following chapter on demand-based needs discusses needs within the transport system. It assesses a need for increased capacity based on statistics suggesting a population increase of 9.4 percent by 2040. In addition to planned
business development. There are also specific intersections that have higher traffic load than its capacity allows for.

It also discusses a need for improved accessibility to remove current delays. This is specific for national road 83. This road also has some issues regarding safety.

**Navigability needs**

The following chapter discusses better navigability citing a survey on the use of public transport. The survey found that most people did not use public transport because it was difficult to use it for their travels. The most important needs here are more, and universally formed bus stops, better frequency and clarity of bus routes, and better facilities for pedestrians.

**Traffic safety needs**

The next chapter discusses traffic safety with a need for reducing the number of accidents, especially in intersections. This section is rich in content on the topic of accident prevention measures, but nothing is added in regards to the environment.

**Needs for reduced negative effects**

Negative consequences such as excessive noise and air pollution are treated in this section. According to a survey conducted, there were no residents exposed to any excessive noise, nor was there air pollution above national thresholds. Still, according to national goals and the municipal plan, the city center environment is in need of improvement, which is to be carried out by reducing traffic in the city center.

**Needs caused by climate change**

The final subchapter deals with climate change. However, it is from the perspective of dealing with its effects, not its roots and what is causing it.
Specifically it details rising sea levels and how to avoid damages from future flooding.

**Interest groups**

In the discussion of the needs put forth by interest groups much of the same is repeated, only from another angle. It is the need for a better environment in the city center, better access and availability to public transport and so on.

In terms of interests from regional and local authorities there are a few points of interest. The concept study refers to the municipal plan of Harstad, which states that there is a strong focus on the need for a better urban environment in Harstad and also better conditions for pedestrians, cyclists and users of public transport. It also refers to the municipal plan stating that the municipality assesses limits on car traffic to be necessary for creating a city center with the wanted environmental qualities.

In addition the concept study has to take into consideration plans on the county level. The plans it is referring to is the County Plan no. 87 of 2009 stating that “the main goal of the communication- and infrastructure policy is:
Communications and infrastructure in Troms are to be managed and developed in a sustainable way in order to provide community and business with good terms for development and access to the market. This development is to be planned according to four considerations:

- Improved accessibility for all users of the system
- Increased efficiency in the transport system
- Greener means of transport across the county
- Improved traffic safety across the county

Further on it is stated that Troms County administration aims to bring the share of public transport by bus up to 7 percent by the year 2030 (Statens vegvesen, 2011, 23).
**Project triggering needs:**

In the preface of this section it is stated that there is a corresponding view from both national and local aims. These aims correspond well with the needs discussed above in the category of demand-based and needs put forth by interest groups. However, a list of specific project triggering needs is also provided. The main triggering needs for the transport system in Harstad are stated to be the need for improvement of the city center. It is reiterated that this is to be done by reducing the amount of traffic. The reasoning in this section of the concept study is for one that it is stated as a goal in the National Transport Plan (NTP 2010-2019, 2009) to improve city environments. This is to be done by providing green alternatives for transportation and by putting in place measures that limits car traffic. It is also referred to a municipal goal of Harstad to improve the city center environment.

The second project triggering need is tied to main road corridor. In times of heavy traffic load there is a substantial amount of waiting time for oncoming cars in the intersections. There is also a tendency towards congestion on the main road. It is pointed out that there are national goals to reduce delays caused by rush hour traffic for business transport and public transport.

**Goals:**

In chapter 4 of the concept study the goals of the project are defined. They are divided into two parts on the city center environment and on the county road going into the city center. The goals are:

“A: Harstad city center is by 2040 to have a transport system that provides a good living environment and that makes it pleasant to walk, cycle and reside in the city center.

B: The access corridor from the South is by 2040 to have a transport system that ties together houses and businesses along and across in a good way for all traffic user groups” (Statens vegvesen, 2011, 26)
Further these overarching community goals are to be measured by having the following by 2040:

1. Number of trips by car reduced from 70 percent to 60 percent.
2. National road no. 83 to be removed as a barrier in the city center. Car traffic on the road is to be reduced by 40 percent in the city center.
3. Possible to travel by bike in speeds up to 25 – 30 km/h on a connected and attractive cycling lane network.
4. Accessibility for car traffic on road 83 to be at least as good as today.
5. Accessibility on crossing roads from the larger residential and business areas to be as good as along road 83 in the access corridor.

It is immediately discussed that the effect goal of improved traffic handling in intersections will also provide improved accessibility for business- and public transport, but that it may also lead to an increase in passenger car traffic. It is described as being a possible conflict between this and the goal of an increase in the use of public transport.

In addition to the goals there is also a list presented with overarching requirements. These are based on the earlier mentioned needs and then reformulated into requirements. They are not absolute, but are meant to act as criteria in the comparison of the different concepts presented later.

5.4.1 Concepts considered

Three concepts for solutions were developed and brought into the concept study. In addition the current situation is also described as an alternative, seemingly in order to have a contrast to compare to. The concepts, including the current situation, are:

**Concept 0: The current situation**

National road 83 is a two-lane road on the entire route in question. The intersections from Ruggevika to Kanebogen are T-shaped intersections with an
extra left-turning lane. The main road has right of way priority. From Kanebogen to Sama there is a mix of traffic light controlled intersections and intersections regulated by duty to yield traffic signs. It is possible to walk or cycle without using the main road from Ruggevika to Kanebogen, and from Seljestad to Ervika, but there are no roads designated for cycling only. In the city center pedestrians use sidewalks, while cyclists use the normal roads.

**Concept 1: Public transport and walk/bike lane concept**

Measures: Public transport develops with the goal of a quick, easy and holistic public transport service. The concept presupposes a strong increase in parking restrictions, 30 to 50 percent increase of frequency on public transport routes close to the city, 20 percent improvement in travel time and road toll.

Walk and bike lanes as a separate system along road 83, except for the city center. Walk and bike lanes or sidewalks along county roads and municipal roads to residential and business areas.

Road construction: Road 83 to remain as a two-lane road. Seven intersections are redeveloped into roundabouts, and one intersection to be controlled by traffic lights with bus priority. Building off- and on ramps to, and from Gangsås.
Concept 2: Public transport and walk and cycling concept with tunnel

Measures: Public transport service in Harstad develops with the goal of an easy, quick and holistic service with a medium investment compared to concept 1. Further on parking restrictions and 30 to 50 percent increase of frequency on routes close to the city center.

Walk and bike lanes: Separate system for pedestrians and cyclists along road 83, except for the city center itself. Constructing sidewalks and bike lanes on county and municipal roads in residential areas and business areas.

Construction:
- Road 83 to remain two-lane road
- Tunnel from Seljestad to Sama
- Seven intersections redeveloped into roundabouts and one intersection to traffic light controlled intersection with bus priority.
- Off and on ramp to and from Gangsås

Figure 4 Map of concept 2’s measures.

Concept 3: Road development

Measures: No measures for public transport. Walk and bike lanes from Kanebogen to Seljestad

Road construction:
- Tunnel West of city center from Seljestad to Sama
- Development of road 83 into four lanes from Kanebogen to Seljestad.
- Seven intersections turned to roundabouts
- Off and on ramp to and from Gangsås

One concept was rejected. This option proposed a bypassing road as an alternative to the tunnel. But due to the terrain such a road would have to pass through residential settlements and was considered to only shift the problem to a new area and was found to be unacceptable.

In the following discussion in the document alternative 2 was found to be the option that provides the highest degree of achievement. Alternative 2 is also the chosen concept for the project and the construction is to be finished by 2017.

**Summarization of concept study**

When examining the concept study of 2011, it becomes clear from the very beginning the study’s main purpose is to be a tool for exploration of solutions and implementation of concept and solutions on how to develop the transportation network in Harstad. The rationale that is provided in its first chapter bases its mandate and reasoning on national government policy and standards set for traffic safety. For example:
“Through the national transport plan it is stated that transport policy is to be directed towards increased traffic safety, more green transport, regional development and an efficient and available transport system for the business and the population of the country” (Statens Vegvesen, 2011, 18)

The four proposed concepts for development could be described as green alternatives in what they propose. However, there is a seeming lack of connection between measures that can be described as green, and ascribing it to the current environmental issues in the world, such as climate change. This observation is interesting. Especially when it is stated that green transport is to be a part of it. The concept alternatives are put in context with local needs and normative interests, as expressed in national policies for this type of project.

Although this first impression of lacking environmental connection has some merit, it should be mentioned as well that even though the rationale in itself does not connect clearly to global environment issues, it is possible to understand the proposed ideas and measures as being environmentally minded. However, it is not put that way directly. Measures such as improving the public bus service, constructing a network of bike lanes and walkways, and the construction of the tunnel can all be described as green measures, and it is possible to see the benefit it can bring towards creating a greener community. Still, the main reason for improving alternatives to passenger car transportation is stated as being due to national policy, which states that all future passenger traffic increases is to be done with public transport or transportation with the help of bicycles or walking.

An interesting aspect of the specific case of Harstad, is that it is possible to analyze rationale for the same project over 40 years as the proposed tunnel was not built after the 1972 plan nor after the 1995 plan. When looking at the tunnel itself we find that there is in reality, no real change of rationale and reasoning within the various plans. The main argument remains that it will help the environment on a very local level for the city center area. The reasoning shifts from having the local environment as the main reason to removing the amount of traffic, which acts as a barrier for pedestrians in the city center. While the 2011
plan aims at reducing the traffic in the city center by 40 percent, the 1972 plan do not propose any such number. There is some sense of the aim being to offload or divert traffic from the city center, but it can be a stretch to claim that it is a very strong rationale. The transport plan of 1995 has some more urgency and awareness of this being an important aspect of constructing the tunnel. We can however trace significant change in rationale if we take a look at outside influences such as parliamentary papers and national guidelines.

5.5 The planners and their understanding

The planners that were interviewed were all involved in the work creating the concept study, except for one who represents the municipality as the city planner. The goal of the interviews was for one to learn about how the planners themselves understand and view environment, and also how they relate to the environmental perspective within their role as planners. Secondly, the goal was also to try to identify a discourse among them. In order to do this, the interviews were conducted focused on the first part, and then analyzed for discourse afterwards. In this chapter relevant excerpts that shows these discursive findings will be presented.

The planners’ view of the environment

The most basic issue is how the planners themselves understand and relate to the environment.

Informant K:

*Question: How do you understand the term or define environment?*

*Answer: Yes, that deals with both the external environment with all these things regarding dust, noise and pollution, biodiversity, animal life, and then it is also about internals of the project with for example the use of materials; is it local or imported from afar. Environment contains a lot...(Knudsen interview, 23.3.2015).*

Informant U:
Question: How is environment understood or defined in your view? ... Is it global or local? Or is it about pollution in the city, noise and such...?

Answer: I think it is the last two. At least when it comes to actions taken, and then it is in relation to pollution, noise and the statutory assignments. That is often the case, and that the measures that are set in place has that focus. But at the same time we have a community and municipal plan that includes an environmental aim on a higher level.

Q: Do you mean the downtown area?

A: Yes, and that you may have a better environmental quality in the city center. And then the planning of traffic is the crucial part if one is to have less traffic.

Q: And what comes with it? Noise, dust and so on

A: Yes, that you gain a reward in a lot of different areas (…)

From the answers provided it seems that planners understand the environment in terms of their role or job description. This is quite natural, as the topic of the conversation was on the project.

In the interviews it also became clear that the planners themselves saw the concept study and the decided concept for development as being much more intentional towards a green and environmental approach than perhaps is evident when just reading the concept study report (Uttakleiv interview, 12.12.2014).

Informant K:

A: Well, no one is exactly wearing the green hat if you will. But environmental focus permeates the entire project. So everyone is working with environmental issues you might say. If you look at the distribution of measures on the various groups of users (trafikantgrupper) then there is, if you combine the measures for pedestrians, cyclists and public transport it equals to 41 percent of the project. And then you can add the tunnel, which is 26 percent of the project; the tunnel is at least an indirect environmental measure for the city center at least (Knudsen interview, 23.3.2015).
Informant H:

Q: As I am interested in the environment and environmental considerations in the project... Is it your part to decide what is and isn’t?

A: I have an important role in meeting the intentions behind (the project). And in regards to how I understand your question one may say that in regards to the project that the environment was very much included from the beginning. But at that point one probably thought as much on delays, traffic safety and those things. And in the last few years the health perspective has also become a factor, which is also a part of the environmental perspective... it has also been introduced.

Q: You said earlier that you also have the responsibility of hiring for the project. Have you brought in anyone with an expertise on the environment?

A: No, I have not hired people with that as a special field, but I did, for example hire our plan process leader who is an architect with a background from SINTEF and who cares about the environment and the health perspective – pedestrians, bicyclists, public transport. The soft parts of the project you may say... (Haukland interview, 9.1.2015)

Informant N:

Question: Environment can mean a lot of different things, everything from noise conditions in homes, to creating environmentally friendly city spaces. Is it disorienting that so much meaning can be put into a single word?

Answer: Not necessarily. But we do have green transport that we are building, but with us it belongs in the category of pedestrian- and bicycle lanes. The result is that we are providing for transport in an environmentally minded way, but is not as such in the category of environment.

Q: What term does it belong to then?
**Q:** Well, we have various posts. There is traffic safety, and some is put there even though it has an effect on the environment just as the walk and bike lanes. And we do have environmental measures and measures for public transport in addition to traditional road-building measures. The thing is that even though a measure is placed within a certain post, any measure will also have an effect on other parts. It is very difficult to separate something to only affect the environment, or any one thing to only affect this and this (Naimak interview, 2.12.2014).

It is interesting to take note of the planners understanding of the project in relation to green development. When reading the plan it is absolutely possible, and perhaps almost natural to connect the dots between the different measures suggested and a green development. Still, it is also possible miss it, as much of it is implied, or expressed indirectly in-between the lines in the concept study. It is therefore interesting to note that the planners understand this connection perfectly, which of course is no surprise, as they actually made the plan.

There is also an understanding of holistic planning, especially in relation to the use of available resources. For example was one topic the excavated rubble that will come from the mining of the tunnel.

*Informant N:*

**Q:** The fact that the rubble excavated from the tunneling are perhaps to be put to use locally, is that part of an environmental strategy?

**A:** We wish that the rock masses are put to the most beneficial use for society as possible, either it is road projects or other things. And sure, if the transport is short... But an important aspect of it is contracts agreed upon and regulations as well. And the municipality’s plans and such. There is a lot of ongoing discussion on that topic (Ibid.)

*Informant K:*

(...)
K: You asked if there were environmental measures in the project that came from state and county level. Yes, we have received a lot of the same signals from the county government level when it comes to public transport and culture. Both the state and county are very active. And a lot of the same signals come from Harstad municipality both regarding dust prevention and noise levels, and regarding the landscape as well. (Knudsen interview, 23.3.2015)

Another aspect that I became aware of in the interviews is the dualism of development of the city and bringing in environmental measures. What is interesting is that the two were not brought together into a green development understanding, but were to some degree seen as opposite of each other. This became most clear from the perspective of the city planner in Harstad municipality:

A: (...) But a thing that I have not mentioned yet is the parking strategy. And it is a goal to have much less surface parking in the city center. And try to decrease the number of people driving into the city center area in order to find parking. And then you can get less traffic because of that. But then also you have to facilitate for parking in other places. (...) But then you have the relationship between that, yes, we do have environmental goals, but at the same time we have a few challenges with the development of the city. And that has to be balanced, and for Harstad’s part there is no denying the fact that parking is vital for the commercial interests. And business is important for the city in order to continue being a city.

Q: Right, it has to function and be alive…

A: Exactly. And there has to be movement. And the car is, either if you like it or not, a factor that brings with it movement and passage through the city. So that is something we have to balance, and in reality right now the goal of bringing life to the city center is almost a bit higher right now than the environmental goals.

(...) It is my personal opinion but... We can not just push the environmental goals ahead of us in a categorical way when it comes to car traffic, because we are so small that we in a way have to... we have these big challenges with the city center in the process of dying! It’s a critical situation when you have this shopping mall here (points at map) (Uttakleiv interview, 12.12.2014).
The situation is described as being critical due to the fact that there are two big shopping centers outside the city center, one of which is in the process of expanding. The city center has seen some decline in recent years in terms of activity from businesses, although with a few stores that counter this development. The car is seen and expected to play an important role for the city’s inhabitants, even though there is a big push planned for public transport in the concept study, and by the municipality.
6. Discussion

In this chapter I will discuss the findings and bring them together towards a conclusion. The primary focus is to bring answers to the research questions, and to provide context for understanding the various discourses within. I find it helpful however to first briefly compare the different plans to each other, which I will below.

When examining the body of plans from 1972 to 2011, it is possible to observe a development of understanding and rationale for the measures and actions that are planned and undertaken. The plans are accumulative, building on and relating to the previous ones. One clear example is the construction of the bypassing tunnel, which has been discussed in every plan.

However, even though the plans are building on the previous ones, the way the environmental issues are approached and understood are not progressing in the same way. I find it clear that the 1972 plan is greener and more environmentally minded than the 1995 transport plan, and this is despite the fact that the 1995 plan was published the same year as a municipal plan on environmental issues. The 1972 plan overall appears to be more holistic in its approach than the 1995 plan. Even though the 1995 transport plan accounts for a wide variety of transportation options, and sees it both in the light of local, regional and national interests and needs, it does not account a whole lot for the environmental side. This can be explained by the existence of the environmental plan, but the environmental chapter in the transportation plan subverts such an explanation. The 1972 plan is more holistic in its approach, which is shown in the revised edition that was published in 1974. As accounted for in the previous chapter the revised 1974 plan brings a perspective that is considering the more obvious sides of environmental consideration, such as air pollution, but that also brings in new ideas such as having a visually appealing townscape and providing pedestrian connections. This approach is thus bringing in much more “than just green”
measures, but also considers the aspects of what it is like to live and visit the city center area.

The reason why this is can be difficult to pinpoint exactly, but I will present two points to consider. One reason that is worthwhile bringing into the discussion is the developmental history of Harstad as a city. Harstad as a town and regional center was founded on the shipping industry, which includes fishing, shipyards and eventually the oil supply industry. However, in the late 1980’s and early 1990s there were several challenges and changes in these industries, with a following downturn in the local economy. With this aspect in mind it is possible to see the transportation plan as a plan that is trying to restart some of the positive developments in Harstad, and that perhaps this could be the reason why environment considerations are not put more front and center.

Secondly, the fact that even though the “Agenda 21” plan was decided on, it took a long time to implement as discussed by Lafferty et al 2002. The environmental focus of this time was also, as discussed earlier, on the very issues the 1995 environmental plan considers as important: Nature preservation, facilitating for people accessing the outdoors and nature, and on waste management.

The implementation of the “Agenda 21” action plan and how it plays out can be seen in the next plan in line, which is the municipal plan of 2009. This plan is somewhat different in nature, as it is an overarching plan for a longer time period. However, the changes are notably and this is the first time the sustainability concept is really discussed and brought in as a goal. The shift towards a greener and more environmentally minded approach is significant in this plan, especially in comparison to the 1995 transportation plan.

Before bringing the 2011 concept study into the discussion there are two environmental plans that together with the 2009 municipal plan form much of the basis for the concept study’s goal and focus. In the environmental plan of 2008 we find a much broader scope of interest than the 1995 environmental plan. It has several signs from the “Agenda 21” plan, and brings with it a sustainable
understanding. The sustainability issue is reiterated in the 2011 energy and climate plan, as it is more relevant perhaps in this context. It displays an awareness of the global issues, and not just the local challenges, although they are important and discussed as well.

The final plan is the 2011 concept study. It is important to be aware of the fact that this concept study is somewhat different than other plans. As it is concerning a specific project it discusses primarily local needs and challenges. Perhaps most clear in how it relates to climate change, is when discussing needs to abate the negative consequences of higher sea levels in case of storm surges. However, when including the understanding of the planners themselves, we can see that there are some measures in the plan that take climate change and environmental awareness into consideration.

6.1 Discourses found

In turning to discourses I will present the found discourses in the same way as above starting with the 1972 plans and continuing through to the 2011 concept study. I will first discuss discursive findings for each plan before presenting an overview of how and what discourses have been present throughout the scope of research for the thesis.

In the 1972 regulation plan and its supporting documentation, including its revision of 1974, it is possible to identify two main discourses. The first can be named the growth discourse. I have named it after the focus it has on the growth and development of the city. The second main discourse is that of the environment, which focuses on green measures in the plan.

The growth discourse is concerned about the city as a whole, independent of other factors. The notion that the city should grow is something that is valuable on its own. This view and understanding is to be found in the regulation plan itself.
In addition to this there is a sense of growth for the city regarding its role in the region. This view is also found in the regulation plan.

There is also another aspect to the growth discourse. This is a minor one and it is found formulated as objections to specific parts of the regulation plan. That is to say that they do not oppose the growth itself, but rather the specific plans and would rather have different solutions for a specific area. For instance are there several businesses that in their submissions point out that the planned measures for the city will hinder their own growth. They do not necessarily oppose the idea of developing the city as much as they oppose specific measures that will result in various disadvantages for their business. For example is the letter from Bothner they point out that:

"Your (the municipality’s) proposal for regulation of this area will be in strong conflict with our plans that were carried out with your understanding and we must therefore protest against the proposed plans" (Bothner letter, 6.12.1972)

Environmental discourse

The environmental discourse of these planning documents is not as outspoken as the growth discourse, but it is nonetheless clearly present. It does not saturate the plan, but can be found in-between and especially in the section that is in the revised edition. The in between examples consists for example of concrete suggestions of measures that would promote green ways of transportation, such as the construction of a network of bike lanes and sidewalks. In addition, the public transport side of the regulation plan is suggested as being a viable solution to promote better transport.

Another aspect to be aware of in the discussion on what discourses emerges from the plan is the fact that even though each planning document may have one or

Leading discourse

The leading discourse in the documentation from the 1970’s is the one of growth. This becomes especially clear when reviewing the regulation plan page by page.
There is a notion of environmental adjustment and adaptation, but it is put forth in a way that it serves the bigger goal of growth.

The environmental discussion is compared to that of today quite similar. It is more holistic as it is discussing architecture and the likes of things that can be described as “soft values”.

Moving forward to 1995 we have two plans to examine for discourse. As there are two plans, it is fairly obvious that each plan has its own discourse, and they should be approached accordingly. However, I will attempt in bringing the discourses together, as the interest for the thesis is to identify a leading discourse.

**Transportation plan**

The transportation plan is as stated in the presentation chapter, and in the summarization above, concerned with development of transportation. In terms of discourses to be found in the plan there are similarities to the growth discourse of the 1972 regulation plan. The plan calls for, and suggests concrete ideas and measures that will help grow the city. For example is an important aspect of the plan to implement projects that will help the city’s business and industry connect easier to other cities in the region in order to grow:

> “Public transportation must be improved in order to create development in the South Troms region with Harstad as the regional center. This includes bus routes to Skånland, Gratangen and Lavangen, and boat routes in the Vågsfjord basin. The ferry connection Harstad – Sør-Rollnes and the Bygden tunnel creates new opportunities for better connection to Ibestad and Inner Troms” (Harstad commune, 1995, 11).

However, even though the transport plan is concerned with growth, it appears to be somewhat different from this as well. A major difference between the 1972 plan and the 1995 transport plan is while the 1995 plan is calling for specific items to be developed further or something to be added to an already existing project, the 1972 plan called for much to be built in the first place. This difference can help distinguish between the seemingly similar growth discourses.
Another reason for this difference can be the stagnation and challenges for the local industry and business in Harstad.

Environmental Resource- and management plan

The environmental plan of 1995 is obviously concerned with the environment, and thus obviously has a discourse on the environment. There are however some nuances in the environmental discourse that is worthwhile to examine closer. As mentioned in the past chapter the environmental and resource program´s stance towards the environment is one of protection, preservation and conservation. This stance may so be named the preservation discourse. The examples are already discussed above, but to reiterate them they are a focus on the protection of wetlands, riverbeds and bodies of water. There is also a strong focus on garbage disposal, urging policies that promote recycling for residential areas as well as businesses. In addition there is a section devoted to the importance of facilitating for the public´s access to wildlife and nature, the Norwegian notion of “friluftsliiv”. This is meant as a tool for engaging people in nature and hopefully increasing their connection and thus understanding for the need to have a preservation mentality. In regards to the climate on a global scale, there is a section that is concerned with climate gas emissions, but this is focused towards the ozone layer and the contemporary challenge of the ozone hole caused by chlorofluorocarbon-gases, CFC.

This discourse can be seen in connection to what Aall 2002 describes on the progress of environmental preservation policy in Norwegian municipalities. The reform known as “MIK-reformen” was a process of increasing knowledge and competence on environmental issues in the municipalities. Aall distinguishes between three main focus areas for the reform. The first one is increasing the formal competency within the environmental field. The second was improving the organizational competence, and thirdly to improve the nature preservation competence (Aall, 2002, 45).
6.1.1 The 2000s and new plans

In moving further ahead we come to a wider set of plans that are governing development and activities in and for Harstad municipality. Compared to the 1995 plans, and even the 1972 plan for that matter, the perhaps most striking difference is the existence of several plans that creates policy. Some, such as the 2009 municipal plan and the 2008 environmental plan are updated versions intended to replace the older 1995 plans. But the 2011 energy and climate plan is new. It is important to keep this in mind in the discussion, as the municipal policies now are spread across more documents. As with the earlier discussed plan, these plans will also be discussed in the light of discourse separately, and then brought together, in order to identify the leading discourse or discourses.

The 2009 municipal plan presents a new view compared to the earlier plans that have governed development in Harstad. The main intent of the plan is to be the highest governing tool, holding positions on a wide range of issues. The positions that are included in the plan are brought into the day-to-day activities of the municipality’s administration. As this document is somewhat overarching it could be expected that it relate to the issues according to what is prioritized as important. One could also expect the plan to be biased towards generalizations in order to communicate its message.

However, it does manage to some degree to do both, at least concerning the environment. In the introduction of the plan it discusses its role as being “somewhat tending toward generalizations” (Harstad kommune, 2009, 2), while later being quite specific on environmental issues. For examples in its discussion on development of the city center in Harstad it states that:

“A goal in the present municipal plan is to strengthen the existing city center in order to avoid sprawls. The development pattern from the 1970’s and forward has to a large degree contributed to a weakened development of the city center, and both residential and business developments have for the most part taken place south of the city center (…) (Harstad kommune, 2009, 8).
As with the earlier plans a primary goal of the 2009 municipal plan is development. However, as shown with the example above there is a different approach to what development means. It is especially contrasted with some of the objection letters to the 1972 plan that were calling for spreading various functions from each other. This development discourse can be named green development discourse as it calls for development, but with a green approach to it. Another example of this green development approach is one of the main goals that specifically state that Harstad is to be a green city (miljøby). Yet, another aspect that suggests that a green development discourse is present is an understanding within the plan that sees the environmental aspect as an integrated part of development. This again can be understood from having the environmental front and center as a main goal.

This green development discourse can be considered to be similar to green discourse as explained by Murray. It seems that green discourse is hard to define in specific terms, but they offer this definition:

*Broadly speaking, the green discourse can be defined as an approach in which environmental protection finally takes its place alongside the economy and social issues in decision making that affect the environment (Murray, 2010).*

However, it should be noted that Murray seem to understand the green discourse concept as something each individual can subscribe to, which is not the case of the examples found in the documents, as it is the municipality that is being the actor. Still, I find the definition helpful in order to explain what green development discourse can be. Especially, as it seems clear that the economy and development is taking place along green issues in the plan.

**6.1.2 Environmental and climate plan of 2010**

In the 2010 plan on energy and climate there are several signs of various discourses in the text. They are able to distinguish between, but they also form a total discourse. If we take a look at the separated ones we can observe the following: The first is a discourse that shows global awareness and focus. This is
most clearly seen in the discussion carbon gas emissions, as the emissions influence the global environment and adds to the global total amount of emissions. The climate gas emissions are also put in a national context, but primarily within a global context. For instance it provides an understanding of how the local emissions play into the sum of the global amount emissions.

The plan also displays a discourse on local awareness. This discourse is showing in the discussion on the local issues and challenges. It provides specific numbers on the amount of climate gas emissions released into the atmosphere, and discusses what can be done locally to turn this around and reduce the emission amount. In addition it is specific on local issues, such as green areas in the city like parks and playgrounds, and the local biodiversity and how this is to be taken into consideration.

Another discourse that can be identified in this plan is discourse focusing on future measures and goals. This discourse is primarily concerned with potential projects that can either help reduce energy use, or produce energy in a sustainable and green ways such as wind power and hydroelectric power production. This discourse can also be identified as a discourse on reduction, as it not only deals with future production and creation of emissions, but also discusses specific ways of reducing energy use and emissions. While on this topic, this discursive approach in the plan has stronger connections to the global awareness discourse mentioned above than to the local awareness discourse as the emissions it discusses is concerning global climate gas emissions.

Although there are several discourses to identify in the 2010 energy and climate-plan, it is also possible to identify its main discourse. This discourse can be identified as a holistic environmental discourse, were all major issues regarding the environment, green measures, reducing the amount of emissions is treated and understood. This is also very clear, as the plan specifically states that its intention is to be comprehensive both in how the municipality discusses and understands the environmental issues, but also how it is meant as a
comprehensive tool meant to work on the relevant issues (Harstad kommune, 2010, 38).

In the concept study it is possible to identify discourses that are very similar to earlier discourses discussed in the earlier plans, but they are not identical. The development discourse is clearly present, as the concept study and the finally chosen concept for building are about restructuring and developing the traffic infrastructure. Much of the discussion in the concept study is about providing a rationale for building and developing the infrastructure. The development discourse is to a high degree based on a wide array of needs, presented point by point in the past chapter in the thesis. It is therefore possible to make a case for the discourse in the concept study to be a needs-based development discourse. It is also possible to argue for the discourse being fixed in the local area, perhaps more so than other plans, as the scope of the project in some part is strictly geographically limited along the main road and the city center area. In fact, when environment is mentioned and brought into the discussion it specifically mentions environmental problems in the city center as parts of the rationale for the project.

Aside from this specific mentioning of the environment in relation to the city center the environmental discussion and thus discourse is present, but not outspoken in the document.

An environmental discourse is also present in the concept study, but as has been seen in the 1995 transport plan, the environmental measures are present, but not always clearly stated. Some of course is, such as making the connection between rush hour traffic queues and environmental problems in the city center. However, it is not explained what sort of environmental problem this is, rather it is described as a problem of delays (Statens Vegvesen, 2009, 18). In addition to this there is a connection made in the discussion on the needs for public transport as part of a national goal to “improve the environment in the cities” (Ibid.). But also here the term environment is left undefined and one is left to ones own
knowledge or imagination to understand or think about what this means. Of course, I should not over emphasize this fact, because on the one hand it is possible to understand what it means to some extent. Yet, at the same time it is possible that this lacking definition can also cause confusion and misunderstanding. In addition to this there is also an argument to be made that better definitions could help the goals be achieved and more easily measured. An explanation could be that in some aspects the plan is overarching and has to resort to generalizations, in order to communicate clearly. An example is the first part of the goal stated for the year 2040:

*Harstad city center is by 2040 to have a transport system that provides a good living environment and that makes it pleasant to walk, cycle and reside in the city center (Ibid. 26).*

The term “good living environment” is very vague, and can as a concept hold many variations of what it means. I find therefore the environmental discourse to be present in the concept study, but inaccessible to some extent. This inaccessibility is also a weakness to some extent as it makes it harder to understand what is meant.

### 6.1.3 The planners discourses

From the interviews with the planners the perhaps most helpful aspect is that it helps to understand the concept study better, and as well the identified discourses. As the interviews, with the exception of one, was conducted with planners with close connections to the concept study the interviews can be analyzed and discussed independently, but it can be more fruitful to do it in relation to the concept study. I will attempt both, but with a focus on the latter. As one of the interviews is with the municipal city planner this interview can also be tied to the municipal plans in the same way.

One big advantage by having conducted interviews with the planners of the concept study is the fact their understanding of the plan can be discovered. The planners’ view of the measures in the plan is something of a win-win discourse.
This discourse is focusing first of all on the different measures, and their primary goal and function. A suggested roundabout that replaces an intersection can for example provide better traffic flow allowing travellers to get to their destination faster and easier. However, the planners also viewed this as a good example in terms of the environment, as better flow results in fewer and smaller traffic queues, which again is better for the environment. Another example is the tunnel, as it allows for fewer cars driving through the city center.

All in all the planners saw the concept study as being green and environmentally aware. One example is the earlier cited quote in response to whom, if any had an explicit responsibility for the environment:

\[ W: \text{Well, no one is exactly wearing the green hat if you will. But environmental focus permeates the entire project. So everyone is working with environmental issues you might say. If you look at the distribution of measures on the various groups of users (trafikantgrupper) then there is, if you combine the measures for pedestrians, cyclists and public transport it equals to 41 percent of the project. And then you can add the tunnel, which is 26 percent of the project; the tunnel is at least an indirect environmental measure for the city center at least (Knudsen interview, 23.3.2015).} \]

It is quite interesting to read this quote. The informant is actually explaining the environmental side of the concept study. It may seem like an apologetic answer, both defending and proclaiming the environmental focus in the concept study. It can seem like the planners view is quite different to some degree on the environments role in the study. I also think this is a form of the win-win discourse as it is showing that there is advantages both for development and for the environment.

Another aspect on discourse regarding the planners is that just as the concept study is meant as an instrumental tool that provides guidance to construction projects there is a sense from the interviews with the planners that they view themselves much according to their professional role. Their role and function in relation to the Harstadpakken project is first to create the plan, and secondly to oversee that the plan is carried out in the right way by contractors. Regarding the
creation of the plan there is a sense that the view of their responsibility is to create a plan that answers to the needs described. This is an important key in understanding the creation of the plan, its goals and scope. The needs are the dictating terms, and so the planners’ role is to meet these terms and facilitate measures that answer them. If there had been a stronger focus on environmental issues and considerations in the needs stated for the project there may have been more discussion on the topic in the concept study and with the planners. This discourse can be named the “planner’s discourse”, as it is their role as a planner that is communicated.

6.2 Identifying leading discourses

After analyzing a vast body of plans from 1972 to 2011 including supporting documents it is possible to identify a leading discourse. The discourse that is the most prevalent throughout the array of plans is the development discourse that focuses on developing the city. However, there are some nuances to keep in mind as new plans are implemented, replacing the older ones. In the 1972 plan the development discourse of this era is much more foundational in its approach. It seeks to put in place both infrastructure and a system for further city development that will be a long-lasting contribution to city development and with it, influencing not just intersections, or limited areas, but the city as a whole for a long time ahead.

The leading discourse in the 1995 transport plan is also one of development, but it is also different in what it seeks to achieve. Where the 1972 plan sought to implement plans for long lasting change, the 1995 calls for development of the city that will benefit the city’s role in the region. It is possible to argue that these developments are meant to be long lasting as well, but it is not stated explicitly. It also calls for and suggests measures within the city itself, but these measures do not bring with it these lasting changes as the 1972 plan calls for. A counter argument to this narrative is that there is in fact no need for this to be the focus of the 1995 plan, as the 1972 plan fulfilled this. However, this is not the case. Much
of the proposed ideas and measures in the 1972 plan were not built or implemented. The tunnel is one example; another is the fact that the main road is still in the middle of the city center, even though it was proposed moved back and away from the harbor.

The development discourse is also the leading discourse in the 2009 plan. It is also a bit different than the earlier ones. The development discourse in this plan is greener and more environmentally attune. This is showed in several instances such as the displayed awareness of sustainability: “The municipal plan should be used actively as a tool to achieve a sustainable and robust city- and village structure” (Harstad kommune, 2009, 22).

Finally, the focus on development is also the leading discourse in the case of both the concept study and among the planners. This is also nuanced in that the concept study is very instrumental in its development purview, while the planners’ development discourse is one very much in line with the concept study.

### 6.2.1 Environmental discourse

As a major part of this thesis has been on the environment’s role in development I will also take some time to discuss this.

In the planning documents from 1972 to 2011 it is safe to say that there is an environmental discourse present. However, it is not the leading discourse. Although it is present, it is not as conspicuous as the development discourse. In fact, one may say that the environmental discourse to some degree is conspicuous by its absence. That is not so say that it is totally absent, but in many cases the environmental side requires that measures be interpreted with its best intention and with a green perspective.

In the earliest plans that were available for research there was a tendency for the environmental focus to be focused on nature preservation, facilitation of outdoor activities and outdoor life (friluftsliv). This finding is in line with the findings of Aall, Høyer, and Lafferty. (2012). In the book “Fra miljøvern til bærekraftig
utvikling, Lokale agendaer, tiltak og utfordringer i kommunene” the conclusion is that environmental work of most Norwegian municipalities was in the 1990s focusing mostly on nature preservation which can be examplified in “the three B’s”: Bushes, benches and garbage (boss, in Norwegian dialect) (Aall, Høyer, Lafferty, 2012, 16).

However, it is worth noting as mentioned in the analysis above that the focus is then shifted towards sustainability and thus other aspects of climate and the environment. This can be seen in accordance to a worldwide shift in environmental understanding and focus, which emerged after the Brundtland commission.

From 2009 and onwards this shift is seen, and it is most visible in the general municipal plan of 2009. Here it is stated that:

“The main effort must be on the actions of the individuals in for example their relationship to their consummation of energy, goods and transport” (Harstad kommune, 2009, 40).

As we bring the discussion forward to the concept study we can see that the terms sustainability is very much in use. This can also be argued to be a result of the times. The popularity and awareness of sustainability has grown in almost explosive terms. However, it is worth noting in what ways the terminology is used, and how the understanding is reflected.
7. Conclusion

In this thesis I have conducted a qualitative case study of the development project “Harstadpakken” in Harstad municipality. I have made use of a discourse analysis approach in order to find the leading discourse or discourses in the current project. In addition to this, I have also analyzed earlier development projects in Harstad, which are similar to the current one. This was in order to find if there has been a change in the discourse over time, and also to find what the discourses of those plans were.

The research questions for this research were:

1. What discourses on environment can be identified among the planners and in the planning documents?
2. Can a leading or hegemonic discourse be identified? What are the main points in this discourse?
3. How does the current discourse compare to discourses in previous plans made for Harstad municipality?
4. Do the discourses lead to a result in how the project is carried out?

The discourses were found and classified by searching for the shared meaning among the informants, and in the documentation on the current and earlier plans.

7.1.1 Environmental discourses

In the thesis I have been able to identify environmental discourses among the planners and in the planning documents. The environmental discourses are notable across the data collected, but most prominent in the plans that deal directly with environmental issues. The environmental discourses can be classified based on the approach shown towards environmental issues and understanding. There is the preservation-focused discourse, which focuses on guarding forests, rivers and so on, seeing these as something that requires protection. Another manner of the environmental discourse is one focusing on sustainability and green development. This discourse expresses an awareness of
global issues and challenges, and connects global and local considerations, such as carbon gas emissions.

7.1.2 The leading discourse

The leading discourse can be identified, and was found to be the development discourse. This is the case in each of the planning documents, and also among the informants. However, each of these development discourses has some variation from each other. The earliest development plan has a development discourse that is fairly straightforward as it is calling for measures that will significantly develop and change the city. However, there are signs of green ideas in its foundations, expressed in the discussions surrounding the plan. They are however not explicitly expressed in the original document, but in the revised plan.

The second variation of the development discourse is one that is more focused on economic development. This description applies to the 1995 transport plan as an intention is to bring in place infrastructure capacity and transportation networks that will help grow the city’s business, industry and economy.

The third variation on development discourse is the green development discourse found in the 2009 municipal plan and in the 2011 concept study for the “Harstadpakken”-project. Both documents have some similarities to the economic development discourse. However, by applying Murray’s (2010) understanding of green discourse we can label it green development discourse.

When looking at the development discourse overall the main points of it, is first and foremost to put in place measures that will have a positive effect on the city’s development. This development is understood as improving facilitation for the city’s population, and the many different aspects of city life. It also makes a point to improve aspects for business and industry, by for example making sure transport of cargo can be done effectively.
This change has most likely been caused by local variations in what was needed at the time, but also by requirements that were applied from a higher national level. The variations in development discourse grew to be more comprehensive over time. Especially in the change towards sustainable, or green development this was very clear.

7.1.3 The current discourse in comparison to the others

Regarding how the current 2011 plan’s development discourse compares to the other discourses, it can be described as being more holistic. It is holistic in the way the environmental perspective is brought in as a part of the development plan, and not as something on the side. There are some signs of this in the 1972 plan as well, but it is expressed in a clearer way in the 2011 plan.

Regarding if, and how the identified discourses influence the projects it is possible to conclude that each discourse does contribute to the plan. In the case of the development discourses it can be argued that the development discourse of each plan acts to reinforce the main goals, and that it can be a help into defining these as important, and thus bringing them to fulfillment. In a scenario where the plan is undergoing revision, the main discourse of the plan can act as a shield to outside interests, keeping the plan and its goals on track as well. From the research is seems clear, that the role discourse play in the planning papers, and among the planners is very important. It will most likely be in the advantage of the planners to be aware of this fact when constructing a plan, such as the concept study.

7.1.4 Suggestions for further research

Even though the significance of discourse in planning is found to be important, the most significant factor, which decides what is included in the plan or not, is not the discourse itself, but the legislation and guidelines that creates and expresses the policy on the higher, guiding level. These guidelines are created on the county level, but ultimately on the national level of policy making. It can be
helpful and interesting to investigate these policy plans and their policymakers’ discourse more thorough to learn more about planning processes and their influencers.
8. References:


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**Interviews:**

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